The Maskew Miller Longman Foundation's School Support Project

2008 Baseline Study Report

Towards identifying the
curriculum implementation support that schools need

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Introduction

This Baseline Study, conducted as part of the Maskew Miller Longman Foundation's School Development Project over a six-month period in 2008, reports on trends emerging from 14 schools across 4 provinces. 8 of these schools are Primary and Combined Primary Schools, and 6 are High Schools.

The trends that have emerged from this in-depth study provide invaluable insight into the kinds of support each of these schools, and their supporting Districts, will need over the next 2 years in order to more successfully implement the National Department of Education's Improving Quality Management Systems (IQMS) and Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The trends have already directly influenced the kinds of school support interventions the School Development Project is implementing, and how they are being implemented.

Although the trends from this study emerge from a very small number of schools in South Africa, the correlations between them and the findings of other significant evaluations conducted in recent years, suggest that these insights may well be useful in understanding the kinds of support that the majority of less advantaged schools in the country actually need.

Examples of other evaluations that point to similar trends are:

- The Department of Education's Systemic Evaluations of Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 3 and 6 over the past few years, which have revealed alarmingly low learner performance results.

- The international TIMMS and PIRLS Mathematics and Science, and Literacy competency ratings, which place South African schools close to the bottom of the rankings.

Examples of recent publications that also point to the challenges schools face are:

Christie, P., Butler, D., Potterton, M. (2007) Report to the Minister of Education: Schools that Work.

Christie, P. (2008) **Opening the Doors of Learning: Changing schools in South Africa.**

Fleisch, B. (2008) **Primary Education in Crisis. Why South African schoolchildren underachieve in reading and mathematics**.

Reeves, C. (2005) Literature review: Contextual, Institutional, Classroom and Systemic Level factors that impact on the success of Black learners in High School Mathematics and Science.

Taylor, N. (2008) What's wrong with South African schools? Presentation to the Conference - What's Working in School Development.

PART 1

The Maskew Miller Longman Foundation

The Maskew Miller Longman Foundation is an Educational Trust that is funded by the Maskew Miller Longman Group of Companies.

Purpose
The Foundation's purpose is to support best practices and solutions to improve teaching and learning outcomes within challenging, under-resourced and disadvantaged contexts in South Africa.

Focus
In addition to its ongoing contributions to the education community through bursaries, book donations and other initiatives, the Maskew Miller Longman Group of Companies has established the Foundation so that it is able to support improvement and excellence in educational institutions more directly.

Objective
The Foundation has been established for charitable and educational purposes and its principal objective is to carry out public benefit activities and/or to raise or provide funds, assets and resources for beneficiaries linked to all aspects of education and training in South Africa, with the aim of improving and/or assisting general South African education and training standards.

The Foundation's School Development Project

The School Development project has been set up to:

- Work in a small number of schools that represent the full range of school types in South Africa, over a 3-year period.
- Conduct a Baseline Study at each school to determine its general level of functionality in terms of NCS focus areas 3 – 5, and it's Grade 3 and 6 learners' competencies in Literacy and Numeracy before commencing with support interventions.
- Implement school development interventions aimed specifically at assisting schools to achieve their core purpose of delivering quality teaching and learning within the framework of the NCS.
- Monitor the impact of the interventions on learner performance over the 3-year period
- Develop successful school support and development models that can be replicated in other South African schools.

Criteria for selecting the schools:
The schools were selected to represent the full range of government schools in South Africa as follows:

- Most of the schools were to be drawn from the least advantaged and least resourced schools from both rural and urban areas (Quintiles 1, 2 and 3).
- At least one 'ex-Indian', one 'ex-Coloured', and one 'ex-Model C-type' school (Quintile 4) to be included to ensure that the challenges of both previously disadvantaged and advantaged schools are understood and incorporated into a model or models applicable to all Schools in South Africa.
- The schools should be reasonably accessible to facilitate regular school-based support visits from the project partners.
- The schools should not be receiving any special attention or support from the Education Department, or other Development Agencies, outside of normal Departmental support activities.

Participating schools

Province	School	Type	MOI	Quintile	Grades	Educators	Learners
Western Cape	Primary	Suburban	Eng	4	R - 7	23	798
	Primary	Urban Township	Eng & Afr	4*	R - 7	19	755
Eastern Cape	Junior Senior Secondary	Deep rural	Xhosa& Eng	1	R - 9	18	689
	Junior Senior Secondary	Rural	Eng	3	1 - 9	42	1 337
	Senior Secondary	Deep rural	Eng	1	10 - 12	28	687
	Senior Secondary	Rural	Eng	3	10 - 12	15	487
KwaZulu-Natal	Primary	Suburban	Eng	4*	R - 6	14	504
	Primary	Deep rural	Zulu & Eng	2	R - 9	10	323
	High	Deep rural	Eng	1	8 – 12	8	239
	Secondary	Township	Eng	2	8 – 12	24	878
Mpumalanga	Junior Secondary	Deep rural	Sepedi & Eng	2	R - 7	12	542
	Junior Secondary	Deep rural	Sepedi & Eng	2	R - 7	12	453
	Senior Secondary	Rural	Eng	3	8 - 12	28	812
	Senior Secondary	Rural	Eng	2	8 - 12	17	320

* Quintile 4 Schools whose learner profiles have changed dramatically over the last 5 years and who believe they should be reclassified to Quintile 2 or 3 schools as a result.

The 'representivity' of the participating schools
The selection of schools includes a range of variables that reflect many of the realities in the South African education system. Some of these variables are:

Relative advantage or disadvantage
Notions of relative advantage or disadvantage in schools are often difficult to define clearly for a whole host of reasons. For the purposes of this Project, schools are classified as relatively/more advantaged, or less advantaged/disadvantaged as follows:

More advantaged schools refer to those that are classified as Quintile 4 schools, have access to a range of good Departmental District Support Services; access to a range of Community, Social and Local Municipality Services; have opportunities to initiate fundraising activities involving local and business communities; and have supportive to partly supportive parent bodies.

Less advantaged schools refer to those that are classified as Quintile 1 to 4 schools that have either always been disadvantaged due to socio-economic conditions and limited access to resources and services; or have previously been relatively advantaged but have experienced significant changes in the community and learner populations they serve. Either way, less advantaged schools do not have easy access to the range of services that relatively advantaged schools do. In addition, less advantaged schools are generally situated in isolated or under-resourced communities where they are perceived as a support resource to the community, rather than the other way round.

By Quintile
Departmental Officials identified schools from Quintiles 1 to 4 (least advantaged to relatively/more advantaged) for possible participation in the Project. Quintile 5 schools were not considered because of their 'most advantaged' status and because less advantaged schools really needed the kind of support the project offered. The spread of Project schools across the Quintiles is:

Quintile 1: 3 schools
Quintile 2: 5 schools
Quintile 3: 3 schools
Quintile 4: 3 schools

By rural urban divide
2 schools are suburban
4 are township schools
8 are rural schools

By Province
The degree of relative disadvantage in the project schools varies according to Province as follows:

In the Western Cape, both schools are in Quintile 4. Both are significantly more advantaged than the other project schools, but at the same time, significantly less advantaged than the average Quintile 5 schools. They are all situated within or near to Cape Town, the best-resourced part of the Western Cape. All have access to educational, community and social services. However, the learner profile of 1 of these schools has changed significantly in the last 5 years. As a result, this school also has to contend with many of the socio-economic issues that less advantaged schools do.

In KwaZulu-Natal, there is one Quintile 1, two Quintile 2 and one Quintile 4 schools. All four are situated in or near to disadvantaged rural sections of the former Kwa-Zulu Homeland.

In the Eastern Cape, the schools are two Quintile 1 and two Quintile 3 schools. All are situated in disadvantaged rural areas of the former Transkei.

In Mpumalanga, the schools are three Quintile 2 and one Quintile 3 schools. All are situated in disadvantaged rural and township areas that were formerly part of the Limpopo Province.

Relative functionality
Only schools that were functioning well enough to support a meaningful intervention were selected by their Education Departments. This included schools that were technically dysfunctional or underperforming, but that had potential and demonstrated

commitment to change. Dysfunctional schools, such as schools with regularly absent principals and teachers, or with a poor work ethic were not considered.

General and Further Education and Training
Of the 14 schools, 8 are Primary or Combined Primary Schools and 6 are High Schools.

Language group diversity
The schools include a broad range of language groups as follows:

- 1 Xhosa Medium Primary School, changing to English Medium in Grade 4, catering for Xhosa speaking learners. All learners are from rural areas.

- 1 English Medium Primary School catering for Xhosa speaking learners. The learners are from a combination of township and rural areas.

- 2 English Medium High Schools catering for Xhosa speaking learners. All learners are from rural areas.

- 2 Sepedi Medium Primary Schools, changing to English from Grade 4, catering for a combination of Sepedi, Tsonga and Zulu learners. The learners are from a combination of rural township and rural communities.

- 2 English Medium High Schools catering for a combination of Sepedi, Tsonga and Zulu learners. The learners are from a combination of rural township and rural communities.

- 1 ex-Indian, English Medium Primary School that caters mainly for Zulu speaking learners and a small number of English speaking Indian learners. Most learners are from informal settlement and rural communities and a small number from suburban communities.

- 1 English Medium Primary School in a Zulu speaking rural community, catering mainly for Sotho speaking learners and a small number of Zulu speaking learners. All learners are from rural communities.

- 2 English Medium High Schools catering mainly for Zulu speaking learners. The learners at one school are mainly from township and informal settlement communities, and at the other all are from rural communities.

- 1 Muslim English Medium Primary School that caters mainly for learners from English or bilingual English and Afrikaans communities, and a small number of Muslim learners from other African countries. Most learners are from suburban and township communities.

- 1 Dual Medium Primary School that offer English and Afrikaans Medium streams to a combination of English and Afrikaans learners, increasing numbers of Xhosa learners and a small number of learners from other African countries. Most learners are from a combination of township, informal settlement and rural communities on the fringes of informal settlements.

Duration of the Project and progress to date
The Project was established in January 2008. It is planned to run in each school for a 3-year period. During this time, it aims to collaborate with Regional and District Education Officials and the educators at each school to identify and prioritize those needs that the Foundation can assist in meeting, and then to systematically and intensively address each need in order of priority over the 3-year period.

Project staff spent the first 6 months of 2008:

- Approaching 6 Provincial Education Departments for permission to implement the Project in their schools.

- Negotiating Project Agreements with each of the 4 Provinces that agreed to participate in the Project and collaborating with these Departments to identify 4 Project Schools in each Province.
- Negotiating Project Agreements with each of the 16 schools and setting up working parameters for the project in each school.

Between July and November 2008, Project staff conducted a Baseline Study of:

- School Functionality in all 14 schools
- Learner achievement in Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 3 and 6, in 8 Primary Schools.

In January 2009 textbooks to the value of R1.8 million were delivered to the Project schools for all learners in all Learning Areas across all Grades.

In February and March 2009:

- Feedback was given to all schools on the findings of the 2008 Baseline Study.

- School Development recommendations were made to each school.

- School Development recommendations were prioritized and incorporated into each School's School Improvement Planning process.

- Sine then, ongoing, training and support are focused on the following main areas:

  Strengthening School Management Teams, particularly in relation to curriculum leadership and management.

  Developing, implementing and monitoring School Improvement Plans, particularly in relation to curriculum leadership and management.

  Organizing Educator Portfolios.

  Using textbooks and Teacher's Guides to prepare, teach and assess more effectively, in order to meet learners' needs and to fulfill NCS and Foundations for Learning Programme requirements.

  Developing Educator's confidence to teach in English, in English medium classes.

The School Development Project's Baseline Study

As already mentioned, the Baseline Study aimed to determine the following in order to develop specific support programmes for each school:

- Each school's general level of functionality in terms of Focus areas 4 - 6 of both the Improving Quality Management Systems (IQMS) and National Curriculum Statements (NCS) requirements.
- Learner's Literacy and Numeracy competencies in Grades 3 and 6, in the 8 Primary Schools.
- Each school's own perceptions of its need for OBE and NCS-related support.

The Baseline Study included the following core components:

1) Meetings and interviews with District Support Officials to determine the nature and extent of District Support provided to each school.

2) Meetings and interviews with School Principals and SMTs to determine the nature and extent of District Support received by each school.
3) Needs Analysis Workshops to determine each School's perceptions of its own professional and curriculum support needs.
4) Meetings and interviews with School Principals.
5) Meetings and interviews with Phase and Learning Area HODs and Teams.
6) Interviews with individual Educators.
7) Reviewing Educator and Learner Portfolios to determine compliance with NCS requirements.
8) Extensive classroom observation in order to understand teaching and learning practices at schools and to determine their compliance with National Curriculum requirements.
9) Administering Grade 3 and 6 Learner Assessments in Literacy and Numeracy in the medium of instruction at each Primary School.

The primary aims of the assessments were to:

- Assess how well learners are coping with the medium of instruction in Grades 3 and 6, and their readiness for English (or Afrikaans) medium in the next Grades, as determined by each School's Language Policy. For this reason listening and speaking and reading aloud activities were only included in the English and Afrikaans assessments.
- Enable us to determine areas in which the learners need specific support.
- Help us to determine areas in which educators may need support.

The criteria for selecting the activities were that they should:

- Address all of the Learning Outcomes for Literacy and Numeracy, and integrate Learning Outcomes from other learning areas.
- Assess knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and beliefs.
- Be selected from existing approved textbooks that will be supplied to the schools as part of the Foundation's support programme for 3 years from 2009.
- Reflect OBE assessment practices.

All of the assessment activities were selected from approved and widely used Grade 3 and 6 textbooks to ensure that learners were assessed through the sorts of activities they are expected to be doing in the course of a normal school year.

Care was taken to ensure that the level of difficulty was more or less the same as across all languages.

Presenting the Baseline Study and Learner Assessments to the educators
At each school, the Baseline Study was explained to the staff in detail. This included explaining the parameters of the study, its purpose, the process of gathering the data and the process for giving them feedback on the data.

Similarly, the rationale for the Learner Assessments, the purpose of doing them, and the criteria for selecting the assessment activities were explained in full. The teachers were then taken through each assessment activity and the associated marking memorandum and marking notes before they administered the assessments in their own classrooms.

Teacher reactions to the assessments
There were two main reactions to the assessments. In the more advantaged schools, the educators were very impressed by the selection of activities and enthusiastic about the results they would reveal.

In almost all of the less advantaged schools, the educators were anxious that their learners would not be familiar with many of the selected activity types, and worried that they would not be able to do many of them. In several of these schools, the educators admitted that their learners had not been exposed to some of the activity types. A number of the Grade 6 teachers said that their learners had not used protractors or calculators (required for the Grade 6 Numeracy assessment) before because the learners could not afford them, and their schools did not have any of their own.

Marking and moderation
The educators from only one of the more advantaged primary schools accepted the invitation to mark the Grade 3 assessments. All other educators preferred not to mark them due to work pressure at the time. For this reason, freelancers who are qualified Primary School teachers marked the assessments using the marking memoranda, and the Foundation's Project Managers moderated the marking.

Working through the marked assessments with the educators
This will take place as part of the teacher development work of the project during the first term of 2009.

PART 2 – Summary of trends

Learner Performance

Results
- In the two more advantaged Western Cape schools (Quintile 4), learners are performing at between 50 and 70% of the Literacy and Numeracy NCS expectations.

- In the six less advantaged schools in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu/Natal and Mpumalanga (Quintiles 1 – 4), learners are performing at between 19% and 35% of NCS expectations.

  In the Project schools in these three Provinces, most learners are functioning about 2 or 3 Grades below NCS expectations.

Learner Performance and Activity Types
In the 2 more advantaged schools:
- Learners coped well with most activity types, apart from a few more sophisticated activities requiring the application of higher order thinking skills.

In the 6 less advantaged schools:
- Many learners struggled with rudimentary activities like one-word and single sentence responses.
- Most learners struggled with listening, speaking and reading activities and with questions requiring more than one answer, reasoning, and providing reasons to support answers.
- Almost all learners struggled with activities requiring the application of higher order thinking skills.

Learner performance and Language Policy
There appears to be a relationship between learner performance and the number of contextual factors supporting or undermining the implementation of a School's Language Policy.

Factors impacting on teaching and learning

- Socio-economic factors impact profoundly on teaching and learning in almost all schools.

- The majority of learners is not school ready and up to 50% is not ready for promotion to higher Grades.

- School language policy choices do not seem to be serving the interests of the majority of learners.

- The emphasis on Grade 12 results has had unintended but significant negative consequences.

- District Support is generally under-resourced and emphasizes administrative compliance at the expense of practical implementation.

- Good leadership and management appears to have more to do with the qualities of individual Principals and Heads of Department than with Departmental training and support.

- Most teachers are not qualified to implement the NCS.

- Most schools are struggling to comply with the IQMS requirements meaningfully. Their administrative compliance mirrors the Department's emphasis, and does not seem to have had a significant impact on the way things are done.

- Most schools are not implementing the NCS in anything like the way it is intended.

- Teacher Portfolio compliance ranges from comprehensive in a few schools, to non-existent in many others.

- Learner Portfolios and exercise books reflect comprehensive curriculum coverage in very few schools and as little as 10% and 50% in many others.

- There is no evidence of NCS-type learning environments in the majority of classrooms in less advantaged schools.

- The majority of educators use a single teaching method. Little seems to have changed about teaching and learning practices since the days of Fundamental Pedagogics.

- Very few teachers use NCS approved textbooks systematically as intended.

- Most learners are exposed to less than 10% of the range of learning activity types required by the NCS and provided in NCS approved textbooks.

PART 3 - Baseline Study Findings

Learner Assessment results

Trends
The Foundation's Baseline Study Learner Assessment results for Literacy and Numeracy confirm trends that have already been widely reported on:

- Grade 3 and 6 learners in 8 Project schools, in 4 Provinces, across Quintiles 1 – 4 performed at around 40% the NCS requirements.

- When the results of 2 more advantaged schools from 1 Province are excluded, the remaining less advantaged schools in 3 Provinces performed at about 30% of the NCS requirements.

A comparison of the results of more advantaged and less advantaged Project schools reveals that:

- In the two more advantaged Western Cape schools (Quintile 4), learners are performing at between 50 and 70% of the Literacy and Numeracy NCS expectations.

- In the six less advantaged schools in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu/Natal and Mpumalanga (Quintiles 1 – 4), learners are performing at between 19% and 35% of NCS expectations.

  In the Project schools in these three Provinces, most learners are functioning about 2 or 3 Grades below NCS expectations.

NOTE: For more details about the results, please see the Appendix on page 31.

Learner Performance and Activity Types
In the two more advantaged schools, learners coped well with all activities apart from a few more sophisticated activities requiring the application of higher order thinking skills such as:
- reasoning
- interpreting
- comparing
- synthesizing
- expressing independent opinions
- re-expressing information in a different format.

In all twelve less advantaged schools, a number of learners coped reasonably well with activities such as those requiring:
- one word answers
- a single response with no supporting reason or explanation
- extracting answers directly from the activity itself

All learners in these schools, really struggled with all activities requiring anything more than the simplest responses such as:
- simple sentences
- simple paragraphs

Very few learners were able to engage meaningfully with activities requiring:
- simple reasoning
- more than one answer to a question

- reasons to support answers

None of the learners engaged meaningfully with activities requiring the application of higher order thinking skills.

NOTE: For more details about how learners coped with activity types, please see the Appendix on pages 32 and 33.

Learner performance and Language Policy
The Language Policy of a school seems to have a significant impact on learner performance. The following trends emerged from the 8 Project schools across both Literacy and Numeracy:

- Learners achieved **65 – 82%** in Grade 3 **followed by a drop of around 15%** in Grade 6 when:

    MOI = Language of Teachers + Most learners + Community in all Grades

    This applies in urban Afrikaans and English medium schools where Afrikaans, English, or fully bilingual teachers teach in English or Afrikaans to mainly English or Afrikaans learners from urban, township and informal settlement communities in all Grades.

- Learners achieved **35 – 65%** in Grade 3 **followed by a drop of between 20% - 35%** in Grade 6 when:

    MOI = Language of Teachers + Most learners + Community up to Gr 3, THEN changes to ≠ from Grade 4

    This applies in Xhosa and Zulu medium schools where Xhosa and Zulu teachers teach Xhosa or Zulu learners from rural communities in their own language until Grade 3, and then in English from Grade 4.

    AND

    MOI = Language of Teacher + 50% of Learners + 50% of Community up to Gr 3 THEN changes to ≠ from Grade 4

    This applies in Sepedi schools where Sepedi teachers teach in Sepedi to mixed classes of Sepedi, Tsonga and Zulu learners from rural township communities until Grade 3, and then in English from Grade 4.

- Learners achieved **16 – 24%** in Grade 3, **remaining more or less constant** in Grade 6 when:

    MOI = Language of Teachers BUT ≠ Learners OR Community in all Grades

    This applies in a small town English school where English teachers teach in English for mainly Zulu learners from rural Zulu communities in all Grades.

    AND

    MOI ≠ Language of Teachers + Learners + Community in all Grades

    This applies in an English medium school where Zulu teachers teach mainly Sotho learners and some Zulu learners from rural Sotho and Zulu communities in English in all Grades.

Factors impacting on teaching and learning

The following is a summary of trends that have emerged from the Baseline Study. Most of these trends provide important contextual information that helps to explain the poor learner performance results discussed above.

Socio-economic and contextual factors

Socio-economic factors impact profoundly on teaching and learning in almost all schools.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
Of the 3 Quintile 4 Schools, there are 2 whose learner and parent body profiles have changed dramatically over the last 5 years.	School leaders and teachers believe that they function more frequently as Social Workers than as Educators.
As a result, many of the poverty-related factors impacting on less advantaged schools also impact on these schools.	For many learners, school is much more a safe haven where they are nurtured and fed, than a place of learning.
Both schools believe that they should be reclassified as either Quintile 2 or 3 schools so that they qualify for increased funding, and the Department's feeding scheme.	Many learners are de-motivated, constantly tired or sick, and unable to pay attention or show any real interest in learning for much of any school day.
	Most school leaders and managers spend a large proportion of their time attending to non-curricular activities such as:
	Fundraising for basic food and uniform needs of learners, food parcels for unemployed parents, and arranging Pensions and Social Grants for unemployed, illiterate parents so that they can provide for themselves and their children.
	Coordinating social services to meet these kinds of needs in the school community, at the school and for the learners. Services they coordinate include: Public Works, Home Affairs, Social Services, Health and Welfare, Clinics, Community Police Forums and Feeding Schemes.
	Many learners spend large chuncks of school days and several days of the school year out of school due a combination of factors such as: Traditional customs and responsibilities. Learner-led household responsibilities. Weather conditions, particularly the rainy seasons. Unreliable transport systems.

School and Grade readiness

The majority of learners is not school ready and up to 50% is not ready for promotion to higher Grades.

- The majority of Grade 1s, even at Quintile 4 project schools, are not school-ready. This means that:

  In the Quintile 4 schools, Grade 1 and at least the first half of Grade 2 are dedicated to school readiness or ECD and Grade R 'catching-up' activities.

  In the Quintile 1 – 3 schools, the lack of school readiness is much more pervasive. It impacts on the whole of the Foundation Phase, and continues into the Intermediate and Senior Phases.

  According to school leaders and HODS in both Primary and High Schools, as many as 50% of the learners never catch up, and are simply 'carried through' the system until they drop out somewhere in High School.

- All schools have indicated that the Department's 'condonement' policy guidelines are a significant contributing factor to this problem. Although the policy is based on good intentions, it results in large numbers of learners being promoted to successive Grades before they are ready. At more advantaged school, Heads of Departments estimate this to be at least 30% of every class. In less advantaged schools, the percentage is closer to 50% of every class.

- In addition, 'mid-stream enrolments (new learners coming into all Grades each year from other schools), exacerbates this problem because many of these learners are neither school-ready, nor ready for the Grade they enroll in.

- The cumulative impact of the above, particularly in disadvantaged schools, is that the entire school going population is:

  Functioning as much as 2 to 3 Grades below NCS expectations.
  AND
  Engaged in a continuous 'catching up' process, which is not acknowledged by Officials or the Department.
  WHILE
  The Department continues to demand administrative evidence of compliance to Grade expectations most learners are a long way from achieving.

School Language Policies

School language policy choices do not seem to be serving the interests of the majority of learners.

- Trends across all 8 Primary Schools suggest that learner performance is good when the medium of instruction is:

- The Home Language, or one of the main Home Languages of the teachers.
- The Home Language, or one of the main Home Languages of the majority of learners.

- The main language, or one of the main languages actually used regularly by the teachers and learners.
- A language that teachers can and do teach confidently and competently in.
- The language actually used by teachers and learners for teaching and learning activities, and for social interactions at school.
- Supported by learner and teacher support materials.

Learner performance seems to deteriorate in proportion to the number of these conditions that are not in place as follows:

- The two Primary Schools that scored the highest Literacy and Numeracy results have most of these conditions in place. These are the two more advantaged schools in the Western Cape.

- The four Primary Schools scoring average to good results in Grade 3 and then poor results in Grade 6, have more of the conditions in place to support the medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase than in successive Phases. They use an African language as medium of instruction up to Grade 3, and then change to English form Grade 4. Two of these schools also have multi-language learner populations.

- The two Primary Schools that achieved the poorest results have very few of these conditions in place. Both are implementing English as the medium of instruction for African language learners from Grade 1.

The emphasis on Grade 12 results

The emphasis on Grade 12 results has had unintended but significant negative consequences.

- Provincial Departments have invested heavily in Grade 12 learners and made sure that they have all of the textbooks they needed. This is however, undermined by the fact that Grade 12s are the only Grades that actually have all of the teaching and learning material that they need.

- Schools are under immense pressure from their Departments to 'teach for Grade 12 results'. Although based on good intentions, this emphasis has contributed towards some significant, but unintended consequences. For example:

    Teachers in general lament the unintended neglect of Grade 10 and 11 learners, and to some extent also Grade 8 and 9 learners, in order to put as much effort into the Grade 12 examination preparations as possible.

    Learners who are not likely to pass particular subjects are 'encouraged' to take other subjects; or are not registered for the Department's examinations at their school. Instead they are registered as 'private exam' candidates so that their results are not reflected in the school's results.

    Some school's excellent official Grade 12 pass rates hide very high drop out rates between Grades 10 and 12. For example at one school, of a cohort of almost 400 learners enrolled in Grade 10, only 95 eventually registered for and passed the Department's Grade 12 examinations.

District Support

District Support is generally under-resourced and emphasizes administrative compliance at the expense of practical implementation.

- The extent of District Support to the Project Schools in the 4 Provinces varies significantly, depending on the resources available to the Districts.

- Support in all 4 Districts emphasizes administrative compliance to Policy and Programme requirements rather than the qualitative aspects of practical implementation.

- In general, it seems that many Officials have not received thorough orientation to the rationale for the Policies and Programmes they are required to oversee, or training in how to train, monitor and support their practical implementation.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
In the Western Cape Project schools, District Support is relatively well resourced and efficient. The 2 Project schools are also well-organized, able to function relatively independently, and do not require very much direct District Support. When they do need support, they generally ask for it, and it is relatively easily accessible.	In the other 3 Provinces, District Support in the 3 Project Districts has been under-resourced, and is more easily accessible in the urban and peri-urban areas than it is in the rural areas. Prior to 2008, there were no Subject Advisors/Curriculum Support Officials to provide curriculum training and support directly to schools. NCS training took the form of a centralized 'cascade' model, involving a few teachers from each school who were expected to return to their schools and train their colleagues. This model has not been effective. During 2008, all three Districts appointed teams of Curriculum Support Officials for the first time. Many of the newly appointed Officials have been appointed from teaching posts where they had not received the kinds of support they are now required to provide. Many require support in coming to terms with their new roles and responsibilities, while under a great deal of pressure to produce results. During 2008 and 2009, there has been a stronger emphasis on training workshops for Principals and Educators. However, these are still centralized and the emphasis still appears to be on administrative compliance rather than practical implementation. The distribution of resources to schools is

	uneven. For example, a number of rural schools still do not have running water, electricity or flush toilets. One school does not have toilets at all.
	The payment of subsidies to schools appears to be erratic making the planning and management of school budgets difficult.
	Centralized procurement procedures are cumbersome and slow, causing delays and inefficiencies.

School leadership and management

Good leadership and managementappears to have more to do with the qualities of individual Principals and Heads of Department than with Departmental training and support.

Of the 14 Project schools, 4 are well managed, 3 are reasonably well managed under difficult circumstances. Most of the other schools appear to be grappling with leadership and management challenges, and some are struggling to overcome legacies of poor management they have inherited.

Few Principals or School Management Teams appear to have clear understandings of school leadership and management roles and responsibilities. Most appear to operate mainly in response to de-contextualized Departmental Directives and administrative compliance requirements, rather than from a holistic sense of leading and managing their schools as teaching and learning organizations.

Degrees of good school leadership and management that go beyond minimum compliance expectations, appear to have more to do with the qualities of individual Principals and Heads of Department than with consistent, systematic training and support.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
There is clear evidence of good internal management at all levels of these schools.	In many schools, Principals appeared to be doing, or trying to do most of the work, while School Management Teams were not functioning effectively.
While much of this management activity is focused on 'compliance' and 'deadline' issues, in response to District requirements, there is also a strong emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning through the School Management Teams and heads of Departments.	As a result, most teachers 'do their own thing' without coordinating with each other across Grades, Phases or learning areas.
	Roughly half of the school's buildings and facilities are well maintained, while in the rest, poor maintenance is more of a norm than an exception.
In these schools, expectations of their Officials, educators and learners are much higher than in the less advantaged schools.	Many schools are under-resourced and do not have enough classroom furniture, textbooks or stationery supplies for the learners.
	In a number of schools, an atmosphere of low expectations was pervasive before Project

	implementation.

Teacher qualifications

Most teachers are not qualified to implement the NCS.

The majority of qualified teachers in the Project schools have a Matric/Grade 12 and either a teaching Diploma or a Certificate. Some have an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). Very few have undergraduate degrees.

Teacher qualifications (or lack thereof) do not appear to make a significant difference to the way teachers teach, or to the quality or quantity of teaching done in any particular school. The accepted 'culture' at a school and within a District, appears to function as a much more powerful determinant of accepted 'norms' and expectations.

Most teachers have not had direct or sustained NCS training.

Training that has taken place does not seem to include demonstrations or practical modeling of desired classroom practices.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
	In 3 of the Districts, increasing numbers of newly employed teachers have only a Matric/Grade 12 and no professional training or experience.
	Teacher turnover is high in the rural areas where it is difficult to retain qualified staff.
	Many teachers are teaching subjects/Learning Areas they have not been trained to teach.
	Many teachers lack confidence in their own Learning Area content knowledge.
	A high proportion of rural teachers lack confidence in general.
	Many teachers teaching in English medium classes speak very little English and do most of their teaching through an African language.

Implementation of Improving Quality Management Systems (IQMS)

Most schools are struggling to comply with the IQMS requirements meaningfully. Their administrative compliance mirrors the Department's emphasis, and does not seem to have had a significant impact on the way things are done.

All of the Project Schools are aware of the IQMS Programme and its requirements and have received either orientation, or some form of training in relation to its implementation.

As already mentioned, most of this orientation and training has focused on administrative compliance rather than on practical implementation.

3 of the 14 Project schools are complying with the IQMS requirements and implementing them meaningfully. These are the three Quintile 4 Project schools.

The other 11 are Quintile 1 to 3 schools. All are grappling to comply with IQMS requirements and implement them meaningfully. In general, their implementation reflects the Department's emphasis on compliance with administrative requirements.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
In the Western Cape schools District, IQMS training and support has been more thorough than in the less advantaged Districts. The Project schools are generally complying confidently with most of the requirements, although fulfilling the Teacher Performance and Curriculum Delivery Focus Area requirements are problematic due to mismatches between learner readiness and curriculum expectations.	In the other 3 Provincial Districts, orientation and training has been less thorough. Most schools receive Directives and paper work to be completed, but little or no contextualizing training. Most schools are attempting to comply with the requirements without understanding the underlying intentions of the Programme. As a consequence, their focus is generally on completing forms and delivering them to their District offices on time. Many schools perceived the compliance requirements as 'tacked onto' the normal everyday activities of a school, rather than meaningfully integrated into them. All schools require support with understanding the underlying intentions of the Programme and implementing its requirements meaningfully.

Implementation National Curriculum Statement (NCS)

Most schools are not implementing the NCS in anything like the way it is intended.

- In most Project Schools, NCS compliance and implementation roughly mirror the IQMS situation discussed above.

- Understandings of the NCS requirements are uneven across schools and dislocations between administrative compliance and the practical implementation in classrooms are significant.

- 2 of the 14 Project schools are successfully complying with the NCS requirements and implementing and adapting them meaningfully. These are both Quintile 4 Project schools.

- The other 12 are Quintile 1, 2, 3 and 4 schools. All are grappling to comply with and implement NCS requirements meaningfully.

- Most teachers, including Quintile 4 schools, believe that NCS expectations are:

    Over complicated, difficult to understand, and difficult to implement practically.

Accompanied by too much administration, which diverts enormous amounts of time from preparation and teaching.
Under-resourced in most schools.

Inadequately supported by Officials who don't necessarily understand how to implement, or adapt it, to meet learners' needs any better than they do.

Out of touch with the majority of learners' everyday life experiences and learning competencies.

Over ambitious, given the unsupportive domestic conditions of most learners resulting in their general lack of school and Grade readiness.

Emphasize sophisticated skills over basic skills much too early.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
Educators feel that they are genuinely grappling with how to bridge the gap between the NCS expectations and the learners' actual abilities. These schools have developed their own ways of compensating for what they perceive to be weaknesses in the NCS by integrating much of the 'old' way of teaching with the 'new' as required and over-emphasized by the curriculum. Ironically, successful annual pass rates appear to be due much more to the creativity and resourcefulness of the teachers to overcome the administrative burden of the curriculum compliance requirements, and to compensate for the weaknesses of the curriculum, than to full compliance with NCS requirements.	Teachers are poorly informed about the NCS, have had little or no training and lack the confidence to even try to implement it. Many educators admit to being intimidated and very confused by the NCS Learning Area and Assessment Guideline documents, and are not at all confident about how to use them to plan their teaching. In many schools, there is virtually no evidence of NCS teaching, learning or assessment practices in classrooms. Pre-1994 practices prevail. Heavy administrative demands and poor understanding of and confusion about the curriculum appear to have paralyzed educators. Instead of enabling them to change their practices, this situation appears to have undermined their ability to focus on understanding the requirements of the curriculum and how to deliver it.

Teacher Portfolios

Teacher Portfolio compliance ranges from comprehensive in a few schools, to non-existent in many others.

These were reviewed between July and September in order to get an idea of how comprehensive each teacher's planning had been for the year.

Teacher Portfolio compliance ranges from comprehensive to non-existent.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
Teacher Portfolios are comprehensive and	In one of the 3 other Districts, Portfolios

comply fully with official NCS requirements. They are impressive and intimidating in their number, size, volume, weight and level of intricate detail. Each teacher has a set of 3 or 4 enormous lever arch files containing at least: School Policy documents IQMS documents and forms NCS documents Foundations for Learning Programme Documents Minutely detailed Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans for the whole year showing the integration of Learning Outcomes within and across Learning Areas, which Assessment Standards are covered when and in which Assessment activities. 'Banks' of Worksheets created or photocopied and accumulated over time for use as appropriate. Assessment Activities Records of a range of Assessment results. Also included in these files is evidence of how many times the forms and formats for recording and reporting to the Department have changed in the last few years. All of these educators claimed while these files do serve as guides for their teaching, but that necessary adaptations to meet learners' needs often make it very difficult to follow their planning closely.	ranged from impressive and comparable with the more advantaged schools, to inadequate – much like many of the less advantaged schools discussed below. In the other 2 Districts, Teacher Portfolios were much less impressive, but perhaps more realistic reflections of many educator's experience of the NCS. In these Districts, not a single educator had an organized Portfolio. Most Portfolios contained a few hand written tests and the associated marking memoranda and mark sheets. None contained IQMS, NCS or any other official Policy or Guideline documents. None revealed evidence of Departmental Assessment requirements for the year, or assessment plans for the year. Most teachers in these schools do not have access to computers or photocopy machines, which makes preparing and maintaining the required portfolios a significant challenge.

Learner Portfolios and exercise books

Learner Portfolios and exercise books reflect comprehensive curriculum coverage in a few schools and as little as 10% and 50% in many others.

These were reviewed between July and October to determine how much work would be covered by the end of a full year.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
Learner Portfolios and exercise books were: Typically well used and full of activities that covered the core of the curriculum content. Included a range of interesting projects and activities. However, exercise books for all Learning Areas revealed a strong emphasis on more	In one Primary school, less than 50% of the official requirements for the year had been covered. Most of these were in exercise books rather than in portfolios. All activities were of the more traditional pre-OBE, lower-order type activities at a lower

traditional, pre-OBE type activities focusing on a limited range of low and middle-order skills. In general, the portfolios and exercise books together represent the balance of more traditional and OBE approaches that teachers have adopted to meet their learners needs.	level of sophistication than required. In most of the other primary schools, Portfolios and exercise books together covered as little as 10 to 20% of the core curriculum. In a number of High Schools about 50% had been covered (excluding Grade 12 classes which were not reviewed due to examination preparations). In a number of the Primary schools, the written activities for each Learning Area dated from January to October, did not fill half of a standard exercise book.

Classrooms as learning environments

There is no evidence of NCS-type learning environments in the majority of classrooms in less advantaged schools.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
Classrooms are generally colorful, stimulating learning environments. Classrooms are crowded, but desks and chairs are arranged in groups to facilitate discussion and the sharing of textbooks and other resources. Textbooks and resource books are in short supply, but are arranged in neat piles in the centre of grouped desks and are easily and immediately available to the learners all of the time. Posters and teacher-created charts featuring letters of the alphabet, phonics, times tables and many other learning stimuli feature strongly. Learner's projects and posters cover every other centimeter of wall space and hang from strings tied across the width of the classrooms. There is clear evidence of teacher resourcefulness in making good use of basic resources like paper, cereal boxes, straws and wire to provide learners with what they need to construct models and posters Teachers and learners exude an air of pride in their classroom and their exhibited work. Teachers are proud to explain the processes involved in each of the projects and how much parental involvement there has been in each. Learners are keen to explain their projects and what they represent.	Only Grade 1 and 2 classes come close to the descriptions above, although the repertoire of visual stimuli is generally limited to charts and pictures in and around a teaching corner. There is no evidence of any learner project work. In the rest of the Grades including Grade R, Primary and High School classes, desks and chairs (often in short supply) are arranged in rows, with all learners facing the front of the classroom. A number of the Grade R classes are completely without resources, and appear to function as little more than a safe place to keep learners 'contained' during the school day. In other Grades, more often than not, there are no textbooks in the classrooms, and learners' exercise books have generally only emerged during lessons that we have observed. It is not uncommon to observe learners sitting at empty desks, without even pencils on them. With very few exceptions, the walls are completely bare, apart from the odd lonely Departmental calendar or poster that bears no relation to curriculum content.

Teaching methods

The majority of educators use a single teaching method. Little seems to have changed about teaching and learning practices since the days of Fundamental Pedagogics.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
Teachers present their lessons in a variety of ways that include a combination of more traditional teacher-led presentations and	The majority of educators use a single teaching method.

lectures, and a range of NCS-type creative, interactive activities. It is not uncommon for teachers to give learners individual, pair or group activities, and to move around the classroom to monitor and support learners who need help.	In increasing degrees of formality from lower to higher Grades, this is generally, but not always characterized by: A limited number of facts, notes or questions written on the chalkboard. Formal, lecture presentations and explanations punctuated by occasional questions addressed to the whole class and focussed on learner recall. Learner responses are limited to whole class chorused answers to questions and memorizing the notes on the board. Sometimes, a written activity is done. Generally it involves copying notes, points or questions from the board and writing the answers that have already been chorused during the lesson. Many teachers also rely on information written on the chalkboard for chorused reading activities. Most teachers rely on their own notes written on the chalkboard rather than on textbooks.

Use of learner and teacher support materials

Very few teachers use NCS approved textbooks systematically as intended.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
These Project schools have invested in photocopy machines rather than textbooks and Teacher's Guides. Use textbooks as teacher resources for preparing lessons, or as learner resources for completing projects or activities. Teaching and learning are largely driven by photocopied textbook activities or teacher developed worksheets.	Teacher's Guides and textbooks are not used as intended. Very few teachers use Teacher's Guides because: They don't know how to use them. Find them intimidating and difficult to read. Are insecure about implementing the variety of teaching styles and techniques they encourage. Very few teachers use textbooks. If they do, they do not work through them in anything resembling the systematic ways intended. Many teachers are not confident about their own ability to do many of the activity types in textbooks. Many learners struggle to read textbooks.

	As a result, most textbooks and Teacher Guides are stored, unused, in storerooms or staff rooms.
	Similarly, unused teaching aids and items of laboratory equipment are stored in storerooms.
	All teachers requested training in how to use the textbooks, Teacher Guides and teaching aids.

Exposure to learning opportunities

Most learners are exposed to less than 10% of the range of learning activity types required by the NCS and provided in NCS approved textbooks.

More advantaged schools	Less advantaged schools
	Most teachers have not exposed their learners to even 10% of the activity types required by the NCS, or provided in NCS approved textbooks.
	Learning opportunities are limited to the limited range provided by the single teaching method employed by most teachers.

District factors impacting on the use of donated textbooks

Newly appointed Curriculum Advisors' compliance expectations make teachers fear using textbooks that do not appear to comply with new Departmental Programmes exactly

- It would appear that at District level, a misunderstanding has developed around the use of approved NCS textbooks donated to support the Project schools to implement the NCS.

- The misunderstanding appears to revolve around new Curriculum Advisors' compliance expectations in relation to among others:

  Annual Departmental Work Schedules and Scope of Work Guidelines

  The introduction of new Programmes like the Foundations for Learning Programme

- This is significant because since the delivery of donated textbooks to the Project schools, many teachers have expressed anxieties about using the donated books because they do not comply exactly with new Departmental requirements.

- It would appear that these misunderstandings on the part of both Officials and teachers have led to situations where Officials are critical of textbooks and Teacher's Work Schedules based on these textbooks, if they do not appear to follow the new Departmental programmes exactly.

- This in spite of the fact that:

- Current practices in many schools have been far from compliant with NCS requirements for some time already.

- Following the donated approved NCS textbooks systematically, with the ongoing support of the Foundation's Project Managers, is specifically intended to support far greater compliance with NCS requirements than has been achieved so far.

PART 4 - Implications for the Foundation's School Support Programme

In terms of relative need, the 2 more advantaged Primary Schools do not need very much ongoing support from the Project. They can however play important roles as 'models of good practice' for the other schools.

The 12 less advantaged schools require ongoing support.

Since February 2009, we have begun to implement a support programme that aims to work in partnership with District Officials and Schools to determine realistic expectations for individual schools and the means of actually achieving them, as outlined below.

District Support
Support Circuit Managers and newly appointed Curriculum Support Specialists to focus more of their support to schools on the practical implementation of IQMS Focus Areas 4 - 6:

> Quality of teaching and teacher development
> Curriculum provision and resources
> Learner achievement

IQMS implementation
Support School Management Teams to support their teachers to:

- Engage in professional teacher development activities.

- Implement IQMS Focus Areas 4 - 6 practically.

National Curriculum Statements (NCS)
Support School Management Teams and/or Heads of Departments and Learning Areas to:

1) Plan the curriculum
- Find ways to reduce the administrative burden.

- Incorporate realistic expectations and curriculum planning from Grade R upwards, in order to address the widespread challenge of school and Grade 'un-readiness'.

- Ensure progression and continuity across and between Grades and Phases.

2) Implement the curriculum
- Increase teacher's confidence in the NCS and associated Departmental Programmes by providing training in:

> Their broader social aims.

> Understanding content, concepts, progression, integration, teaching methods, learning opportunities and assessment strategies and techniques.

- Reduce the dislocation between administrative compliance and actual classroom practices.

- Increase time spent actually teaching, facilitating learning and assessing.

- Increase attention on continuously improving teaching, learning and assessment practices.

3) Develop teacher competencies
- Encourage teachers to work systematically through approved NCS Learner and Teacher Support Materials with their learners that:

    Embody and model NCS teaching methods and techniques.

    Provide daily Lesson Plans that incorporate guidelines for teaching, facilitating learning, and assessment in line with NCS requirements.

    Provide and model a broad range of NCS-type learning activities.

- Foster the development of all teacher's listening, speaking and reading skills in the medium of instruction as a critical priority.

Leadership and management
Use the Project's Leadership Exchange Programme to:

- Create opportunities for the Project school leaders and School Management Teams to share their best practices with each other.

- Facilitate processes through which school Leadership and Management Teams and District Officials work more closely to develop their own strategies to address the challenges they face.

PART 5 - Implications for the Department of Education, Schools, Teacher Education Institutions and Publishers

The Department of Education
The learner performance results from this Baseline Study in 8 Primary Schools in 4 Provinces, confirm the results of the Department of Education's Systemic Assessments of Literacy and Numeracy over a number of years. This suggests that the findings from this study may apply to many more schools in South Africa than just those involved in the study. If this is the case, then the trends that emerge from this study about the factors that impact on teaching and learning, particularly in disadvantaged schools, may be helpful in understanding the reasons for poor learner performance in many South African schools.

The trends in factors impacting on teaching and learning in disadvantaged schools suggest that the following require urgent and ongoing attention.

At District level:
- District Support needs to be intensified in terms of the number of school support Officials available, as well as the nature of the support Officials provide to schools.

- The emphasis on IQMS and NCS administrative compliance needs to be supported by an equal emphasis on practical implementation.

- Circuit Managers and Curriculum Support Officials need to be thoroughly familiarized with the rationale for and intended outcomes of Whole School Evaluation, the IQMS, OBE and the RNCS, and how they relate to and complement each other.

- Circuit Managers and Curriculum Support Officials need to be able to provide both administrative compliance guidelines and practical modeling and demonstration of desired IQMS and NCS practices in training sessions as well as in school and classroom support visits.

- School Governing Bodies and School Leaders need to be enabled to make informed choices about school language policies so that their choices serve the educational interests of the majority of learners better.

- Early Childhood Development Programmes and Grade R classes need to be in place and well resourced in order to provide schools with learners who are school ready.

- The emphasis on Grade 12 results needs to be expanded to include every Grade in the school system, and modified to include a stronger emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning in order to reduce the number of learners who drop out of the system.

In schools:
- School Principals, their Deputies and their School Management Teams need ongoing school leadership and management training and support, as well as practical hands-on IQMS and NCS training and school-based support that demonstrates and models roles, responsibilities and required practices.

- School Principals, their Deputies and their School Management Teams need ongoing training and support aimed at facilitating ongoing professional development that leads to inspiring and enabling individual teachers to take responsibility for their own ongoing professional development.

- In-service teachers need to be:

- Thoroughly familiarized with the rationale for and intended outcomes of Whole School Evaluation, the IQMS, OBE and the RNCS, and how they relate to and complement each other.

- Thoroughly familiarized with the NCS Learning Area and Assessment Guideline documents for their chosen Learning Areas, as well as any other Departmental Programmes intended to complement them, such as for example, the Foundations for Learning Programme.

- Enabled to select and use suitable approved NCS textbooks and other teaching and learning resource materials meaningfully and effectively.

- Thoroughly familiarized with Departmental requirements for Educator and Learner Portfolios.

- Enabled to translate their understandings of all of the above into Educator Portfolios that include Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans, which show awareness of scope of work and realistic pacing.

- Enabled to develop Learner Portfolios that include suitable learning and assessment activities, tasks and projects, which demonstrate awareness of relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

- Given practical hands-on NCS training that demonstrates desired classroom practices, including: classroom organization, classroom management, teaching and facilitation methods and techniques, and assessment methods and techniques.

- Supplementary Academic Support Programmes are required for all Grades to address the needs of what appears to be large numbers of learners who are being condoned annually before they are ready for promotion.

In Teacher Education Institutions:
- Pre-service trainees should be:
  - Enabled to listen, speak, read, write, learn and teach competently and confidently in the medium or media of instruction they intend to teach through.

  - Enabled to teach learners the listening, speaking, reading, writing, conceptual and learning skills required for the Learning Areas they intend to teach.

  - Thoroughly familiarized with the Learning Area and Assessment Guidelines as well as the content and skills they will be required to teach.

  - Thoroughly prepared to do everything that is required of in-service teachers, as outlined above in the section under schools.

- In-service School Principals, Deputies and members of School Management Teams should be:
  - Thoroughly prepared to do what is required of them, as discussed in the section on schools above.

By Publishing companies:
Publishing companies need to:

- Engage the National Education Department about developing more flexible and appropriate textbook approval criteria that will enable them to develop textbooks that meet actual teacher and learner needs.

- Ensure that their publishers, editors and authors are exposed to and familiar with a range of school contexts and that they understand teacher and learner life experiences and reading competencies, so that they are better able to produce books that more closely match these needs.

- Ensure that Sales and Training Representatives are able to explain and demonstrate how specific textbooks fulfill NCS Learning Area requirements and how they should be used practically in classrooms to fulfill these requirements.

PART 6 – Questions for further research

A number of questions for further research arise from the findings of this study. Many of them are already either relatively well researched, or have been part of broader public debate for some time. For example:

- How pervasive are the impacts of socio-economic factors on teaching and learning and what can be done to ameliorate them?

- How well do school language policy choices serve the interests of the majority of learners?

- What factors determine school language policy choices that do not appear to serve the interests of the majority of learners?

- How feasible is mother-tongue medium of instruction in 9 African languages?

- Does the RNCS serve the best interests of the majority of learners?

- Can existing teacher education institutions produce enough qualified teachers to meet the needs of the system?

However, there are also a number of questions that do not seem to be as commonly debated, or have not been given much attention, which lend themselves to further inquiry. These include:

- How familiar are District Officials with the IQMS and NCS Guidelines and their practical implementation requirements they are meant to oversee in schools? How equipped are they to provide the training and support required by schools?

- How closely aligned is the pre-service teacher education provided by Tertiary Education Faculties with the IQMS and NCS requirements in schools?

- What informs teacher perceptions that NCS expectations are unrealistically high for the majority of learners?

- How realistic are NCS expectations of the majority of teachers?

- What can be learned from the hybrid approaches to implementing the NCS that competent teachers have developed? Is there a path of gradual transition from current teacher and learner competencies towards ideal NCS expectations?

- Why do teachers and learners in disadvantaged schools not seem to be using Teacher's Guides and textbooks as they are intended?

- Are textbook approval criteria forcing publishers to develop textbooks that are beyond teacher and learner competencies?

- Given that English is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 in the majority of schools, how competent are the majority of teachers to actually teach their Learning Areas in English?

Appendix

Grade 3 average scores across 5 languages in 8 schools

	Including 2 more advantaged schools	Excluding 2 more advantaged schools
Literacy – reading and writing	44%	36%
Numeracy	48%	33%

Grade 6 average scores across 2 languages in 8 schools

	Including 2 more advantaged schools	Excluding 2 more advantaged schools
Literacy – reading and writing	38%	29%
Numeracy	38%	29%

English listening and speaking

Of a sample of 96 learners including the more advantaged schools	Scored less than 40%	Scored 0%
Grade 3	62%	30%
Grade 6	74%	35%

English reading aloud

Of a sample of 96 learners including the more advantaged schools	Scored less than 40%	Scored 0%
Grade 3	52%	25%
Grade 6	32%	17%

If the listening, speaking and reading results of the two more advantaged Western Cape schools are excluded:
- 70% of the sample of learners in Grades 3 and 6 scored less than 40%.
- Almost 40% of these learners scored between 0 and 10%, with the majority scoring 0%.

How learners across 5 language groups in 8 schools coped with Grade 3 textbook Literacy activities

Most learners can easily:
- Read, look, write and use simple language to provide one-word, or single sentence answers.
- Read and understand simple instructions.
- Read, interpret and respond meaningfully to simple pictures and tables, distinguish between and select from provided options.
- Rearrange jumbled phrases in a list to show understanding of meaning.

Many learners can with some difficulty:
- Understand pronouns
- Look, read reason and write
- Use visual clues to interpret time and select the right time from a set of options.
- Use visual clues to sequence jumbled sentences to give instructions in the correct order.
- Use a simple dictionary, interpret dictionary entries meaningfully and select the correct information to complete a table
- Recreate an intended meaning and work out the correct sequence for a passage and rewrite sentences in correct order to make a sensible paragraph.

Most learners struggled to:
- Listen, think, reason and retell or explain a short story
- Read aloud fluently
- Read and interpret a map and a table of distances, compare distances and do mental calculations.
- Read story sums and solve word sums
- Read a more complex table, read and understand a number of options, select correct options to complete a table.
- Read and interpret a bus timetable and a simple bus route.
- Understand symbols and words in the key for a map, interpret a map and work out problems.
- Read and understand a sequence for making things.
- Understand, interpret and compare information in two pictures, make choices giving reasons and do calculations.
- Read, look, think, reason and write
- Read and interpret a bus timetable and do calculations.

How learners across 2 language groups in 8 schools coped with Grade 6 textbook Literacy activities

Most learners can easily:
- Master language use
- Read, look, write and use simple language

Many learners can with some difficulty:
- Punctuate correctly
- Read, look and write standard comprehension answers.
- Use visual and verbal cues and clues to work out meanings of words

Most learners struggled to:
- Listen, think, reason and explain a short textbook passage
- Read aloud fluently
- Read, look, think, reason and write
- Read a dialogue, answer questions to show understanding and match sentences with reasons
- Read and interpret an organogram and answer questions to show understanding
- Read an advertisement, answer questions to show understanding and compare things
- Read and use an extract from a telephone directory to find information
- Read visual and textual information and re-express it in a flow diagram
- Read and write answers to show understanding
- Create and write their own original sentences in response to more open-ended questions
- Identify and list advantages and disadvantages.

How learners across 5 language groups in 8 schools coped with Grade 3 textbook Numeracy activities

Most learners can easily:
- Arrange numbers from smallest to biggest
- Count to 1000 in 50s and 100s
- Complete a pattern if the shapes are given to them
- Join the dots to complete shapes
- Colour in fractions

Most learners struggled to:
- Arrange numbers from biggest to smallest
- Count to 1000 in 99s
- Count how many lines are formed by joining the dots
- Identify place values
- Write numbers out in expanded notation
- Identify which fraction is bigger
- Read time
- Round off to the nearest 10
- Round off and calculate what has been rounded off
- Do basic operations
- Read a table
- Identify heavy or light animals

How learners across 2 language groups in 8 schools coped with Grade 6 textbook Numeracy activities

Most learners can easily:
- Colour in required fractions
- Work with 8 & 9 digit numbers

Most learners struggled to:
- Identify place values
- Round off to 5, 10, 100, 1000
- Round off, estimate and calculate the difference
- Read a table
- Solve and complete a number sentence
- Translate numbers into words
- Identify shapes
- Measure sides and angles
- Calculate mass using basic operations
- Calculate volume using basic operations
- Identify time
- Translate from digital time to analogue time
- Illustrate analogue time
- Tally