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A group of children are gathered around a large table, engaged in a collaborative drawing activity. The central focus is a large, colorful drawing of a school building with a clock tower. Surrounding the building are various school-related items, including books, pencils, a ruler, a clock, a backpack, and a desk with a lamp. The children are using colored pencils and markers to complete the artwork. The drawing is surrounded by various school-related items like books, pencils, a ruler, a clock, and a backpack. The children are using colored pencils and markers to complete the artwork.

Education and inequality
in south Africa: a tale of
'two unequal nations' –
side by side but missing
the connections



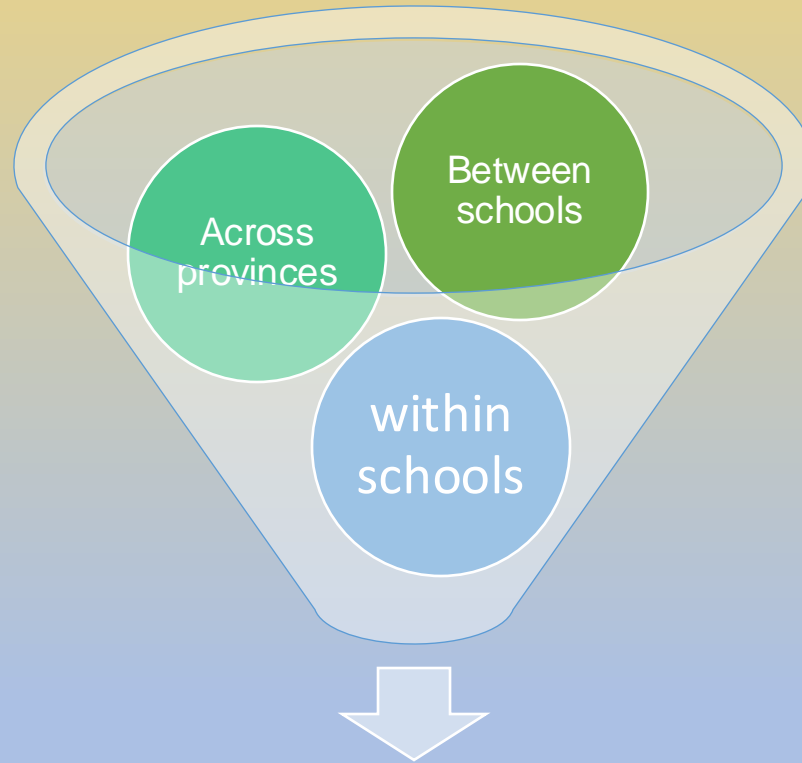
Inequality

- ❖ In 2014, Oxfam reported that the 85 wealthiest individuals in the world have a combined wealth equal to that of the bottom 50% of the world's population, or about 3.5 billion people. Oxfam also reported that two richest South Africans have the same wealth as the bottom half of the population. The poorest 20% share only 2.5% of national wealth in South Africa, about 21.7% of South Africans live in extreme poverty, not being able to pay for basic nutritional requirements; while 37% of people do not have enough money to purchase both adequate food items and non-food items forcing them to sacrifice food to pay for items such as transport and education. The Gini coefficient which is a measure of inequality indicates that in 2011, South Africa was one of the least financially equal countries making us significantly more unequal than it was at the end of Apartheid.

A brief chronology – too much policy – too little implementation?

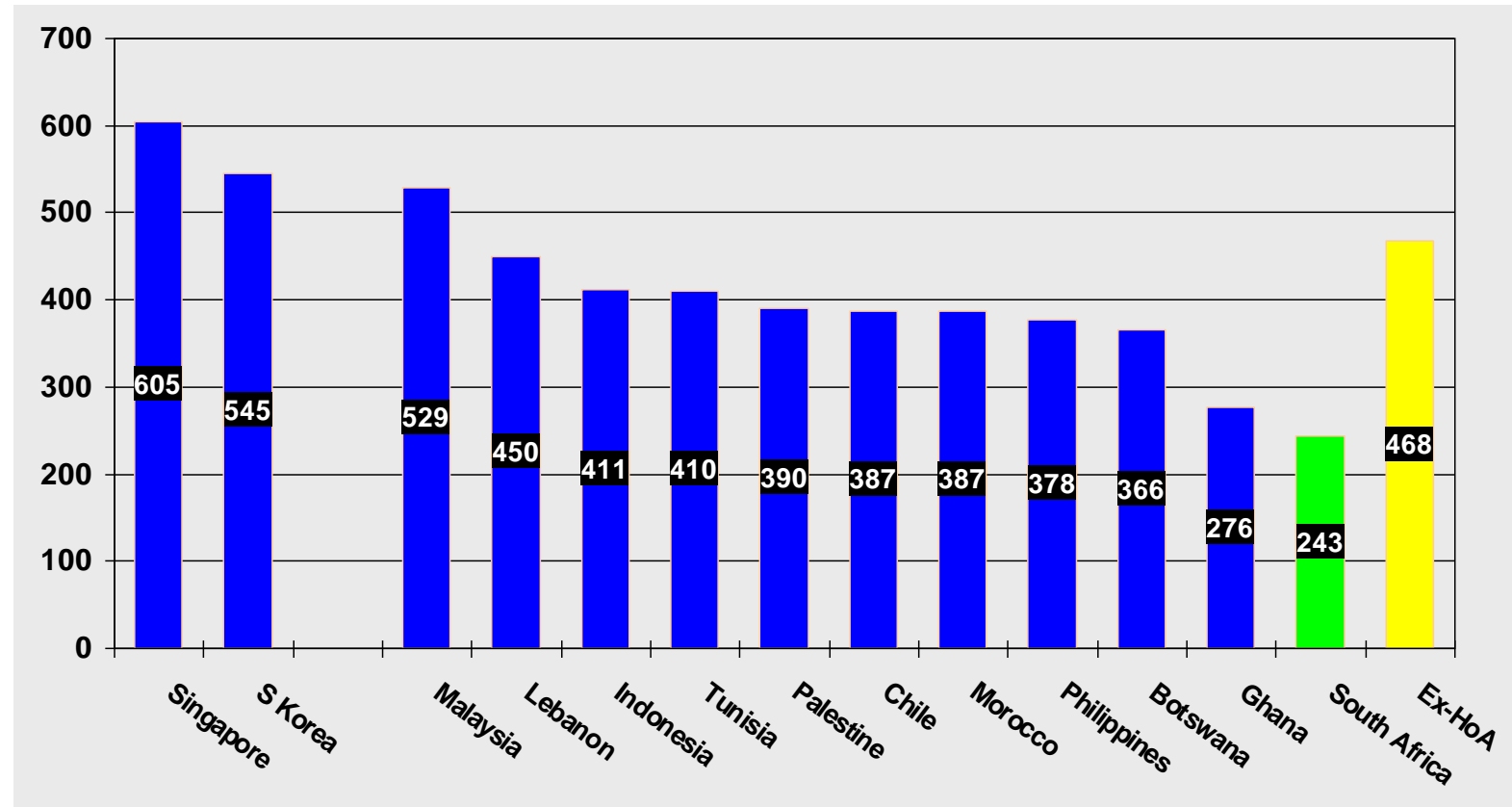
Period	Focus	Key changes
1994-1999	Policy frameworks and documents ‘Framing and frames’	NEPA, OBE, NQF, SASA,
1999-2004	Policy implementation and systems development (delivery) ‘Tirisano’	Values Manifesto Split between GET and FET Mergers and closures of HE
2004-2009	Improving quality ‘measuring impact’	FLC Revised Assessment Framework Fee free schools
2009 - ...	The split between basic and higher ‘performativity’	Green Paper on performance Service agreement with Ministers 3 streams Revisions to GET Revisions to governance
2024	The GNU government	30 years of progress?? Sharing of power

3 levels of education inequities



Inequalities of process and outcomes
- the failed rainbow nation

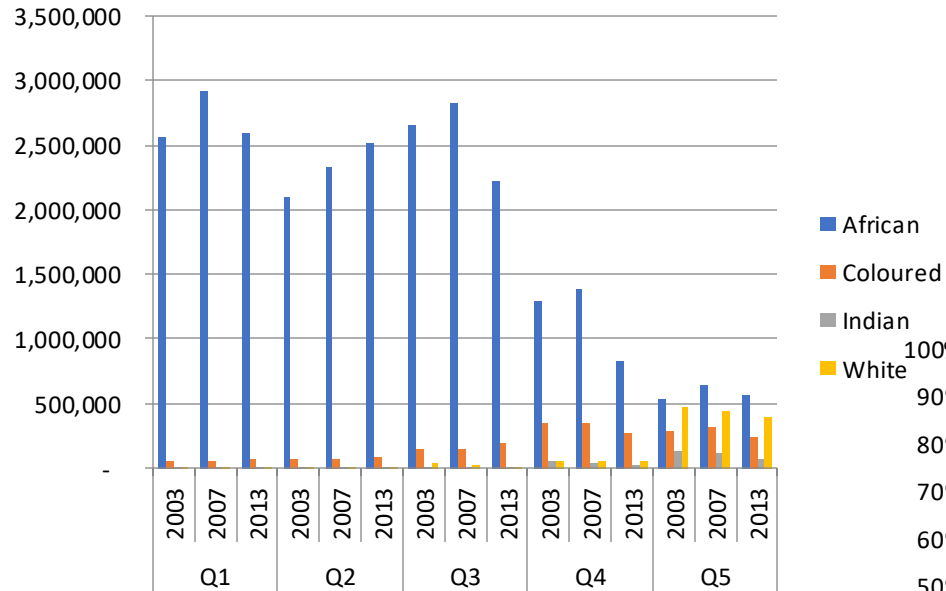
Education in South Africa: progress in deracialising but the failed rainbow nation? Class trumps Race???



2003 TIMMS

Inequalities in education (racial hopping and racial clustering)

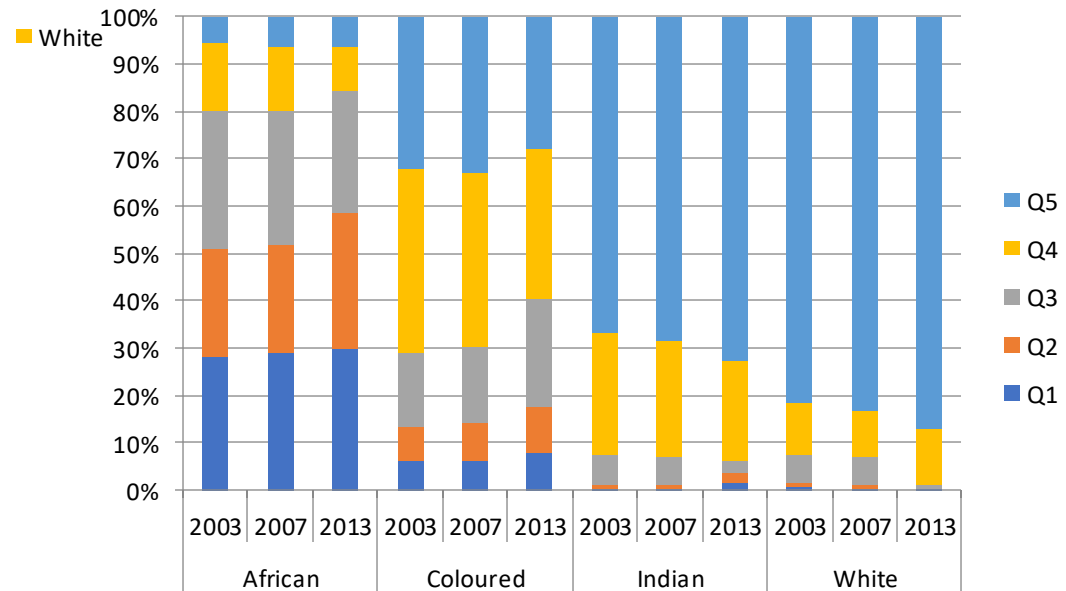
Racial integration at school



- ❑ Only quintile 5 schools have significant mix of race, and quintile 1 to 3 schools are predominantly black

Source: Adopted from (FHI 360 2015)

- ❑ In 2013, 87% of learners from the most privileged racial group (white) go to Q 5 schools while only six present for least privileged counterpart (African).



Drop out – the hidden crisis

- Using a combination of its own calculations as well as StatsSA data, the department indicated that the 'survival rate' per 1,000 students **was around 520**, meaning that the effective drop-out rate is **closer to 48%**.
- The data shows that the higher grades typically had the highest number of drop-outs. Grade 11 had the largest percentage of dropouts (24.08%) followed by Grade 10 (14.84%).

<https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/438509/this-is-the-school-drop-out-rate-in-south-africa/>

Dropout -
the hidden
crisis

DROP-OUT RATES FOR EACH GRADE

Table 2: Survival rates and drop-out rates, associated with each grade

	2016-2018 Pooled datasets (For those born 1992-1994)		
	Survival Rate	Survival per 1000 youths	Percentage dropping out after attaining this Grade
Total cohort	100%		
No schooling		1000	0,68%
Grade 1	99,32%	993	0,10%
Grade 2	99,22%	992	0,23%
Grade 3	98,99%	990	0,31%
Grade 4	98,68%	987	0,34%
Grade 5	98,34%	983	0,58%
Grade 6	97,77%	978	1,31%
Grade 7	96,49%	965	2,69%
Grade 8	93,89%	939	4,37%
Grade 9	89,79%	898	10,51%
Grade 10	80,35%	804	14,84%
Grade 11	68,43%	684	24,08%
Grade 12	51,95%	520	

Data Source: General Household Surveys 2016-2018, DBE own calculations

- The same trend can be observed in the 2015 results, where 139 127 quintile 1 learners wrote the matric exams, and produced 85 663 Bachelor passes. In contrast, 100 582 quintile 5 learners resulted in 91 290 Bachelor passes. In both 2016 and 2015, the Bachelor pass contributions of the quintile 1 and quintile 5 schools were inversely proportional to the number of learners writing the exams

<https://equaleducation.org.za/2017/01/09/matric-results-and-south-africas-youth-unemployment-crisis/>



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- *"The 2024 matric results are cause for celebration, with a record-breaking 87.3% pass rate - a significant milestone for South Africa's education system. More importantly, the Bachelor pass rate has surged to 47.8%, a substantial increase compared to the previous year. This progress is encouraging as it highlights that more students are now prepared to pursue higher education and contribute meaningfully to the country's skilled workforce," comments Daniel Mashilo, Senior Statistician at JET.*
 - *South Africa's national pass rate for the 2024 National Senior Certificate has therefore increased from 82.9% in 2023 to 87.3%," Minister of Basic Education Siviwe Gwarube said on Monday.*

<https://www.jet.org.za/news/news/matric-results-2024#:~:text=The%20Matric%20Class%20of%202024,other%20time%20in%20our%20history.>

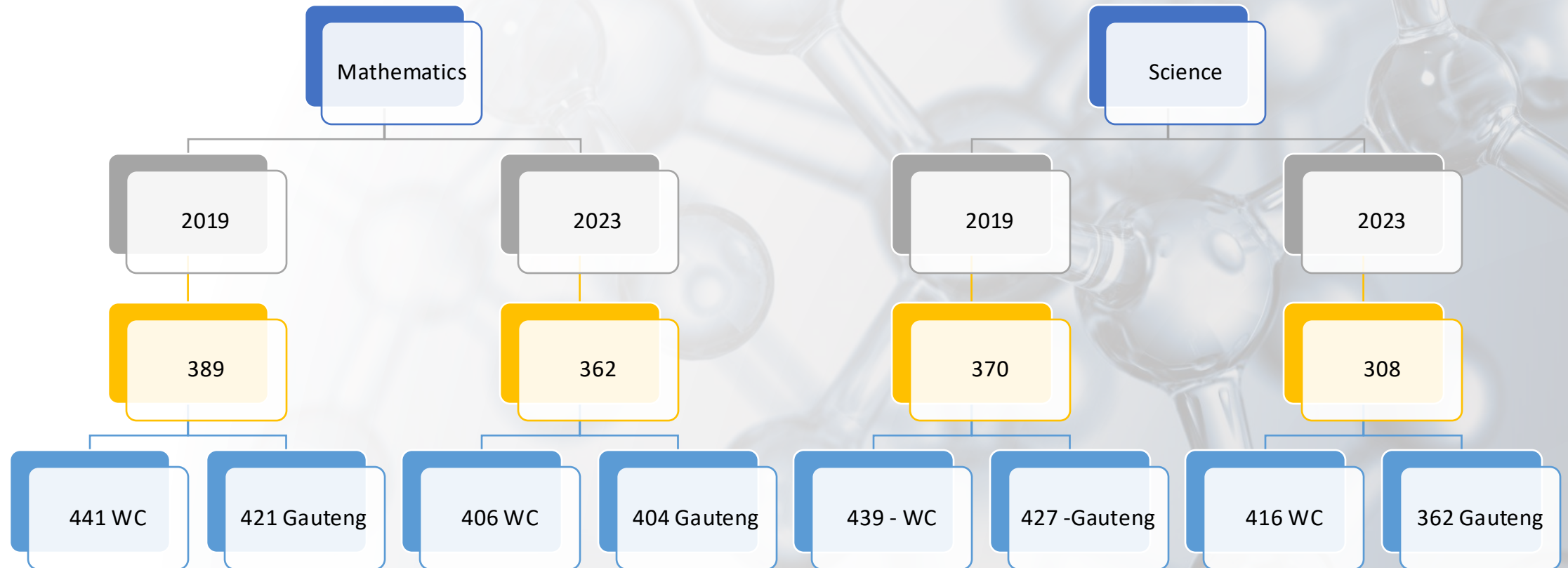
Of the 1.22 million learners who began school in grade 1 in 2013, only 614,562 passed matric in 2024, meaning that the country's "real" pass rate is just 50.25%. <https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/806729/south-africas-real-matric-pass-rate-is-only-50/>

Persistence of Inequality

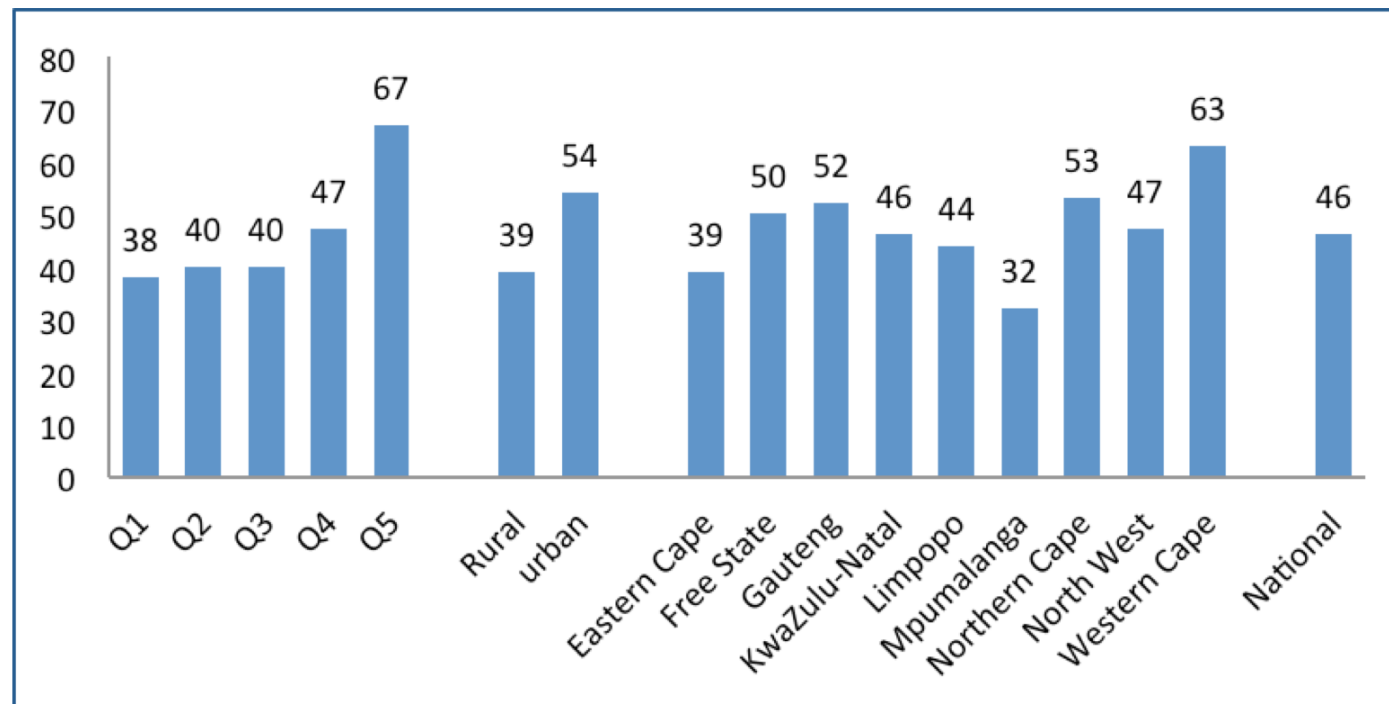
	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC
Primary schools allocation	5 889	4 461	11 299	17 300	9 099	6 885	1 979	5 109	6 368
Secondary schools allocation	14 187	3 131	8 161	11 810	8 376	4 121	954	2 407	4 051
Total allocation	20 076	7 592	19 460	29 110	17 475	11 006	2 933	7 516	10 419
Compensation of employees	18 101	7 000	16 804	25 382	16 202	10 202	2 755	7 383	9 389
COE as % total school allocation	90%	92%	86%	87%	93%	93%	94%	98%	90%
Residual / school subsidies	1 975	592	2 656	3 728	1 273	804	178	133	1 030
No of secondary school learners	614 454	244 813	677 137	1 538 012	680 471	387 617	91 930	259 678	335 343
No of primary school learners	1 130 356	367 909	1 052 827	1 057 454	850 275	575 576	165 862	447 931	584 754
Total number of learners	1 886 982	646 093	1 858 745	2 812 844	1 665 013	1 027 851	274 189	760 272	991 685
Estimated per-learner allocation	1 046	916	1 429	1 325	765	782	649	175	1 038
Average prescribed per-learner subsidy weighted by provincial poverty distribution	858	786	676	805	891	798	771	814	580
Variance	188	130	753	521	-127	-15	-123	-639	459

Across the system, after covering personnel costs, the ability for provinces to adequately fund schools as per the national policy guidelines is not the same. Source: (Rakabe 2014)

TIMMS 2019 & 2023



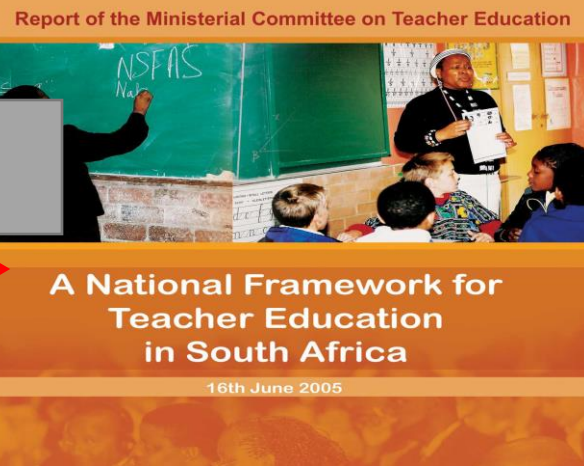
Math teacher correct scores on G 6 math test (SACMEQ 2007)



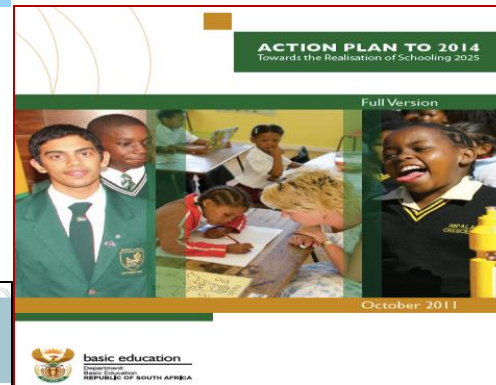
(Venkat & Spaul 2015: 12)

The National Teacher Education Audit 1995

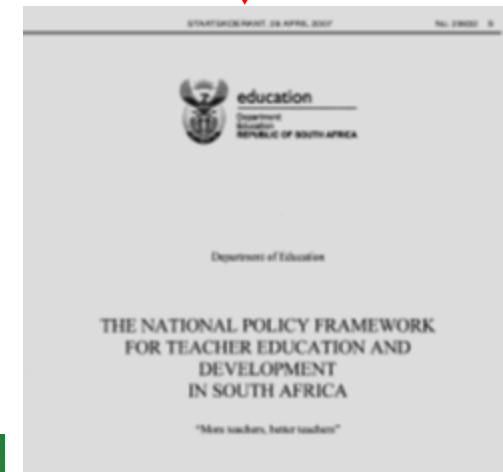
Transformative agent



Solution



Problem



The narrative of school governance – the BELA Bill – a progressive advance or racist defence of privilege?

- School admissions and the language of instruction will be regulated by government
- Home schooling will be regulated
- Parents who fail to ensure their child is in school may face jail
- Grade R, for four and five-year-olds, will be the new compulsory school starting level – a year earlier than currently
- The abolition of corporal punishment will be backed by fines and possibly jail time for those who administer it

Education and equity: overcoming barriers??



Tentative alternatives for SA

01

Revisit the governance arrangement: state as an active agent, circumscribe the ambit of devolved education control, tie education expenditure to learners, replace the quintile system

02

Erode the binary schooling structure: towards a comprehensive education system and away from semi-private public schools

03

Create new forms of accountability: district level monitoring, teacher accountability

04

Enhance school quality: a more focused curriculum, STM emphasis in all impoverished schools not nodal points, focus on the affective



Thank You
FOR Your Time