

## F. KEY FINDINGS

This short but intense investigation into education evaluation and development yielded a wide range of data on the state of the education system in South Africa. Unfortunately, not all this information—the submissions, the interviews, the documentary evidence—can be represented in this Report. The Committee restricts itself therefore only to those findings that have a direct bearing on the Brief: to advise the Minister on the establishment of a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit. In this regard, the Committee tables 14 key findings.

- 1. that there is broad recognition of the crisis in education and the limitations of existing evaluation instruments to, in themselves, remedy the situation*

Throughout the country, in each of the provinces, from government officials, unionists, and teachers alike, the Committee heard the strongest expressions of concern, often in very passionate terms, that there was an indisputable crisis in education, and that it needed to be resolved as a matter of urgency. The unanimity of the response lent courage to this report; indeed, it would be a serious mistake to underestimate the depth and intensity of concern among all education stakeholders.

The crisis in education cannot, of course, be simply linked to the limitations of existing evaluation strategies; nor can the various instruments for monitoring and assessment, in themselves, resolve this crisis. Still, whatever is being done through monitoring and evaluation, it has not shifted education performance in the desired direction at a systemic level.

This means that whatever is proposed by this Committee in terms of an accounting system on the status of schooling, such proposals must be read in the context of systemic collapse of schooling, at least for the bottom half of the education system. This does not mean that schools do not operate on a daily basis with some degree of functionality; it simply means that whatever is happening (or not happening) inside

schools, it has not altered the unmistakeable fact that the academic achievement of learners as a whole does not match the levels of investment in the school system.

This does not mean, also, that there are not pockets of excellence within the school system, among districts, and even within provincial structures. The Committee found striking evidence of exceptionality. Such observations, on the one hand, give cause for hope but on the other hand give cause for concern—since the school system cannot be transformed as a system on the basis of exceptional performance among the few. It is fundamental to the vision of government that all schools succeed and that all learners achieve. But having excellent models of good schools—especially in disadvantaged communities—is a priceless resource when trying to lift the standard and improve the practice of the rest of the education system.

The proposals that follow in this report take full account of the systemic crisis around public schools, and seek to convey a measure of realism about what is possible under such conditions with respect to evaluation and monitoring. At the same time, the proposals convey an urgency in which the significance of monitoring and evaluation under such conditions are clearly spelt out.

- 2. that there is widespread consensus on the need for stronger accountability measures alongside developmental support to be introduced into the school system*

The Committee finds that the present system for school accountability is weak, uneven and limited in scope. The accountability system is weak because of a pervasive culture of resistance to strong measures of accountability within schools. The deep negativity towards the apartheid inspection system should not be ignored in the way government crafts a new and comprehensive system of accountability touching all schools.

Stakeholders interviewed testified readily to resistance among organized teachers to classroom visits and observation by officials from the provincial departments of education. The Committee found that in some provinces, and in some districts of other provinces, such external observation was allowed and sometimes even welcomed. Often

the nature of local school politics and the skills of a particular department official could make access to classrooms easier or more difficult. But what this means is that in terms of access to schools and classrooms, there is considerable unevenness in the national system.

The Committee also found that while teachers were often singled out for attention in public and media criticism of failing schools, the accountability net stretches wider than individual teachers. The Committee heard harrowing stories of incompetent and incapacitated district officials. The Committee heard repeated stories of the lack of coordination of support at the level of provinces. The Committee also heard of the confusion generated by the plethora of policies that placed heavier and heavier administrative demands on teachers that drew professionals away from the classroom into never-ending paperwork.

What this means is that proposals for new systems of accountability must of necessity account for performance at all levels from the teacher, to the principal, to the governors, to the district, provincial and national department authorities. While the teacher is undoubtedly the most important influence on learning in the classroom, the extent to which the act of teaching is nested within other supporting contexts cannot be overstated.

The current system for accountability relies heavily on terminal examinations, in the case of Grade 12 learners, and on systemic evaluation which targets only selected grades (3, 5 and 9) and that on a sampling basis i.e. it is not an account of every school, classroom and learner. A national system of accountability including learner assessment data but also other kinds of data (such as teacher knowledge and classroom support) must form part of the proposed comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluation of schools.

3. *that there is reluctance in some quarters to change existing monitoring and evaluation initiatives not only because of the potential disruption but also because recent measures (such as IQMS) have not yet had enough time for expression in educational practice*

The Committee found a pervasive sense of reform fatigue among South African teachers. Whether it was curriculum change or assessment reform or new educator regulations, teachers were tired of “yet another” round of changes to their work.

This sense of being overwhelmed by never-ending external demands on their work predisposes teachers towards apathy, at best, and resentment, at worst, in the light of what is interpreted as another round of changes through NEEDU. Teachers felt strongly that teaching time was eroded by the distractions of countless policy changes.

In this context, there was a need expressed that existing and still relatively new measures, such as the IQMS, be allowed to run its course in all schools before changing the earlier attempt to streamline three previous reforms (DAS, PM and WSE) into a single measurement instrument. In other words, to introduce another form of appraisal just as teachers were becoming familiar with IQMS would send the wrong signal to practitioners.

In this respect it was clear to the Committee that despite firmly expressed views on the limitations of IQMS, this policy enjoyed political support through the ELRC agreement, and that this consensus process had to be taken into account. Moreover, it appears that in some provinces the core staff working with schools on IQMS was establishing some operational rhythms in the implementation and was understandably reluctant to change again.

It would not complete the picture, though, if the Committee did not also report confusion and incapacity in other provinces where IQMS has hardly got off the ground. In fact, it is reported that the recently appointed “moderators,” whose work it is to judge the adequacy of implementation, have been able to visit more schools in certain provinces than the IQMS district/circuit personnel.

The judgment of this Committee is that there is no evidence, at this point, that IQMS in its present form will be able to serve as an effective mechanism for accountability; on the other hand, there might be a case for continuance with further refinement and refocusing of IQMS with particular attention to learning achievements. This will also offer some confidence to teachers and officials concerned about the withdrawal and replacement of IQMS.

*4. that there is considerable variation in the capacity of provinces and schools for the interpretation and implementation of existing evaluation and development measures*

For historical reasons that are well-understood, the better resourced provinces are better able to *technically* administer Whole School Evaluation, IQMS and other monitoring and evaluation policy instruments. However, the technical capacity to administer national policy does not necessarily translate into the managerial capacity to bring about change and improvement in all schools.

Still, the Committee was on the one hand impressed with the craft and capacity available in some provinces, the strengths of the professional teams, the quality of the documentation, the institutionalization of policy processes, the strategic thinking orientation of the leadership in the bureaucracy, the intellectual scrutiny applied to school evaluation and teacher support, and the general dedication of key staff.

The Committee was on the other hand concerned about the lack of skill and capacity in other provinces, the weakness and uncertainty among designated staff, the incomplete and inadequate documentation, the confusion about policy and planning processes, the crisis management ethos in the department, the lack of opportunities to stand back from operational work, and the sense of lethargy in parts of the system.

It is clear to the Committee that the now overused adage used to criticize policy positions and planning strategies—that one-size fits all—applies not only at the level of schools but also at the level of districts and provinces. In order to attain uniformity of

educational outcomes across the country, it will be crucial that a phased and strategic approach be followed that recognizes both the diversity and the inequality still resident in parts of the education system and its capacity to respond to the needs of teachers and their schools.

The problem also calls for greater proportionality between expectations on schools and their capacity to meet them. School improvement planning depends on an accurate assessment of strengths and areas for improvement, and this in turn requires training, practice and experienced support or mentoring. It is also a characteristic of schools not used to internal evaluation that they find the ordering of priorities difficult, particularly when asked to prioritise measures which will be of greatest benefit to the achievement of learners and the standards they meet. Similarly, external evaluators are prone to listing too many recommendations in weaker schools which lack the capacity to deal with them.

Once again mentoring can be invaluable; in the experience of the Independent Quality Assurance Agency (IQAA) in South Africa,

*[the] approach is one of mentored internal evaluation for purposes of development. The [trained] school personnel form the nucleus of an internal evaluation team and once a school has booked an evaluation a mentor is appointed to work with them as they undertake their evaluation...The IQAA method depends largely for success on the quality, commitment and enthusiasm of the mentors, as well as on their manner and tone while in the schools*

What these observations reinforce is the critical role of dedicated and skilled professionals if any form of monitoring and evaluation is going to work in South Africa's fractured school system. It is especially important that those charged with the delivery of vitally needed training and support be consummate professionals with the capacity to advise and direct teachers and schools, and win their respect on the basis of such capacity and credibility.

This is the single most important lesson that must guide the appointment of key personnel for the proposed National Education Evaluation and Development Unit. Where the appointments processes are sloppy, and where people are appointed for political or other irrelevant reasons, the entire monitoring and evaluation infrastructure for schools is compromised. It is also important that the proposed unit draws on the expertise and capacity within the relatively well-resourced provinces and bring such professionals to the centre of the national monitoring and evaluation function.

5. *that both authority and expertise at all levels (teacher, HOD, principal, school, district, province, national) remain important requirements for effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation*

The Committee finds that in order for an effective and credible system of accountability with respect to schools to be established, both authority and expertise is needed.

Expertise should provide the backbone of the NEEDU proposal requiring, as explained earlier, highly trained, competent and experienced professionals to take charge of the monitoring and evaluation of schools and teachers.

However, expertise will mean little unless the experts are endowed with the authority to observe classrooms, evaluate teachers and principals, advise on support strategies, propose penalties to act on bad behaviour, and make judgments about schools. Without such authority, experts would not be able to impact on the school system in a constructive manner. This point was made repeatedly in written submissions to the Committee, such as the following sentiment by Khulisa Management Services:

*... one of the key concerns that we have noted working as evaluators and auditors of the DoE is the need for authority. When the Consortium goes into schools, it has only minimal authority vested in us through the DoE letter, which is not always recognised or accepted by the schools (for example: principals refusing access and in one memorable case, abducting and holding a fieldworker)*

The Catholic Institute in its submission is strident in its recommendations on the question of authority and independence: "An independent unit for evaluation should be granted wide powers of oversight and monitoring. In making the unit accountable to the Minister, we run the risk of future executive interference."

The insistence on authority does not, of course, mean that anything goes when approaching schools. Visiting times would have to be negotiated; structured feedback could and should be demanded; evidence for judgments should be shared professionally; accounts should be sensitive to matters of context and resources in particular; and developmental follow-up can and should be required. But none of these conditions should be allowed to stand in the way of, even deny, access of designated experts to schools and classrooms.

In this regard, it is important that any observation-based evaluation takes due account of barriers to, and enablers of, effective teaching.

Such authority for officials to enter schools can only partly be secured through legislation. It also has to be established through political agreement with the unions, on the one hand, and through authoritative support from government, on the other hand. There is evidence in the recent history of monitoring and evaluation agreements between unions and government that despite consensus achieved through negotiations, access can still be denied or delayed at the school gate or the classroom door.

This Committee recommends a *political compact* between unions and government that lend authority to monitoring and evaluation experts to enter schools and classrooms in every province and district of the country.

Authority and expertise exist in a symbiotic relationship inside schools. Experts gain their authority on the basis of superior knowledge and professional approach. This implies a programme of thorough training for experts so that their ability to advise and transform schools through their actions gains them credibility in the eyes of local practitioners.



6. *that deeper and more fundamental problems (e.g. curriculum organization, time on task, school dysfunctionality) undermine sophisticated efforts to monitor and evaluate school and teacher performance*

Monitoring and evaluation, as indicated earlier, cannot resolve systemic collapse. The Committee received consistent reports from schools about confusion, suspicion and at times outrage about the underlying dysfunctionality of schools.

Teachers and principals report on time lost because of absentee teachers, incompetent principals, and under-prepared district officials. The culture of teaching and learning has, for all intents and purposes, disappeared from especially rural and township schools.

The crucial variable of time is lost through inattentiveness to instruction, on the one hand, and the distraction of administrative work, on the other hand. The Committee finds ready confirmation of the simple fact that schools are highly unequal in terms of their attention to instructional time in classrooms.

It was instructive for the Committee to listen to the principals of turnaround schools. Over and over again school leadership emerged as the critical force in transforming schools from dysfunction into productivity. Whatever it is that NEEDU does, its critical interventions will have to hinge on the school leaders, especially principals, if schools are to deliver education quality.

There also appears to be continuing problems around curriculum. There is still suspicion about outcomes based education and whether or not it is the policy-in-practice of government. There remain, in some provinces, very articulate expressions by school managers and teachers about the failure of curriculum implementation to address the basic competences of literacy and numeracy in schools. The Committee heard harrowing stories about official instructions to raise test scores across the board to compensate for curriculum failure.

The Committee also felt that the lack of clarity around the specific learning outcomes and achievements at the end of each phase (e.g. the foundation phase) might also contribute to the lack of curriculum effectiveness in schools.

In other words, there are both external (in terms of district support, for example) and internal (such as curriculum organization) factors that would make it difficult for *any* system of monitoring and evaluation to be effective.

*7. that the system for evaluating teachers and schools is still considerably immature, with the incapacity for self-scrutiny among many (though certainly not all) professionals*

The Committee found that internal evaluation was simply unlikely to produce valid and reliable results especially when such evaluation was part of the chain of data for decision-making about teacher compensation and advancement. As was the case with continuous assessment, when schools are left to make their own judgments about scholastic performance, those results are often out of sync with more objective, external measures of the same achievements.

The ideal of internal evaluation must be upheld. It advances professionalism and promotes democratic participation when teachers and indeed schools are allowed to participate in evaluations of their own performance and capabilities. It should in fact be the aim in every school to build a culture of monitoring and evaluation – by teachers, peers and leaders – which is developmental in purpose. In such a culture, teachers learn from each other, share and consult on their planning, and observe lessons among themselves. Here the views of learners are also sought and the school grows as a learning community.

However, this ideal is not attainable in an immature education system which is highly uneven in resources and capacity. In this regard the Umalusi submission warns against “instruments [that] are developed to address homogenous school communities” and in a separate submission, the experienced educationist Professor Richard van der Ross

similarly cautions against “the narrow interpretation of equity” that makes the same demands on diverse communities and school cultures.

For internal evaluation to work—that is, where teachers and their peers make judgments about their own labour—it requires the capacity for self-criticism and for objective judgment. This does not exist in the South African school system (and we suspect outside of it in the broader society) for a complex of reasons. In this respect the Committee does not believe that this problem is primarily one concerning the technical expertise of teachers for self-evaluation.

First, there are real questions of solidarity. A culture has developed in South African schools in which teachers gravitate readily towards a defensive position of support and camaraderie especially in relation to perceived external threats. Given the lingering sensitivities around the external evaluation of teachers and teachers’ work, teachers work to protect their colleagues and to seek maximum advantage for their peers. To act “professionally” in making judgments about your peers based on detached, objective assessments of what a colleague can/cannot do, is frowned upon in this culture of solidarity.

Second, there are questions of collegiality. Should colleagues criticize each other? Is there not a collegial bond that prohibits such judgment by another colleague or peer? Are there not professional bonds in the working environment that preclude judgment by others? Just as solidarity imposes a political constraint on peer judgment, collegiality imposes a professional constraint on the same.

In the short-term, the only way to moderate internal evaluation is to balance it with a strong sense of external evaluation. In the long-term, the task should be to reconstruct notions of solidarity and collegiality by foregrounding the primary interests of the child.

As schools engage in self-evaluation, their efforts should be supported by training and guidance. Credit should be given to self-evaluation reports which are frank and open about what the school does well, and what it needs to do better; evidence-based,

accurate self-evaluation reports, which include the views of stakeholders, should be acknowledged. At the same time, self-evaluation reports that tender excuses, cover up, engage in blame, and breed complacency, should be discredited.

The Commission feels that it is important not to lower expectations of teachers, any more than one would of learners. But, equally, teachers need to be given the tools, training and opportunities to meet those expectations.

There is also an urgent need for a nation-wide strategy for the re-professionalisation of education provision which is not confined to teachers but which includes administrators and officials responsible for the support and development of teachers and principals, among others.

8. *that the issue of excessive complexity in existing evaluation instruments is still not resolved inside the crowded ecology of evaluation, appraisal, and development policies, plans and processes*

The introduction of IQMS was supposed to address a common complaint about the main monitoring and evaluation instruments at the time: the Development Appraisal System (or DAS), the Whole School Evaluation (or WSE) policy, and Performance Measurement (PM). Yet despite the fact that the IQMS was to “streamline” evaluation instruments, there is still considerable confusion among practitioners in the field about the status of these various policies and how they relate to each other.

For example, IQMS did not replace WSE for there are still “units” in some provinces conducting WSE in a weak relationship to the IQMS processes. It does not help that WSE's founding document claims that this policy “does not interfere with” any other evaluation-related policies.

There is still not sufficient clarity of distinction between DAS and PM, a point raised also in other review reports (see Class Act 2007). There is still confusion between SIPs

(School Improvement Plans) and SDP's (School Development Plans), and the corresponding plans for districts.

The policy language in IQMS remains abstract and ambiguous lending itself to multiple and conflicting interpretations across the education system e.g. the meanings of rating descriptors and performance standards.

The purposes and locations of these different policies contribute to the confusion. At national level, for example, IQMS and WSE fall under different directorates (though officials rush to say this is being corrected). Similarly, at provincial level these monitoring and evaluation functions fall under a range of different units and directorates each with their own logic, resources, capacities and meanings. The Committee also found that some provinces are quite adept at interpreting and re-interpreting IQMS for their own purposes (for example, the moderation instruments) so that what the policy looks like in one province might be very different in another province.

The complexity resides not only in policy design across these various instruments, but also in their implementation. Once again the variable capacity in the provinces for making sense of these various instruments leads to a wide range of implementation approaches and outcomes. In some provinces and districts, Development Support Groups function well, while in others IQMS is simply another burden for which there is simply no time or capacity. In this regard teacher unions like the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie were adamant in its submission that "The implementation of NEEDU must under no circumstances imply an additional administrative burden for educators."

It is not the lack of uniformity but the lack of common purpose that is in question in this confusing array of monitoring and evaluation policies and plans. The goal should be "simplicity and significance" argues Professor Maureen Robinson in her submission to this Committee, rather than "a complex infrastructure."

9. *that the existing system for evaluation and appraisal faces a growing credibility crisis because of the functional breakdown between school/teacher evaluation and developmental follow-through actions to effectively address problems identified*

The Committee found a generally positive attitude among teachers and principals towards monitoring and evaluation through interventions like IQMS and WSE. In some provinces professionals testified openly about the value of expert visits, the opening-up of educational work to outside scrutiny, the positive advice shared, and the first opportunities to engage with peers about teaching and learning inside the school.

What disturbed these school staff was that after having their expectations lifted, the intervention would come to an abrupt halt. There would be no follow-up visits. There was no action on the data collected. Having sacrificed the time and resources to provide documentation and evidence for their work, the school and its staff would not hear again from the visitors. In some provinces, this emotional disconnect with monitoring and evaluation was expressed strongly.

At this point the blame game begins. The school blames the evaluators. The expert staff who did the visit blames the districts. The districts blame the provincial authorities. The provinces blame the national department. The fact remains, the schools feel they were "set up" and that there was no development benefits to their participation in these processes.

The Committee feels strongly that for future monitoring and evaluation to enjoy credibility among educational professionals, it must be followed-up strongly and quickly with concrete development gains for the schools and teachers concerned. There is already a despondency and deflation among teachers and principals because of the added demands on their work; not to demonstrate positive gains for their participation in external evaluations is to completely lose the attention and motivation of those on the ground.

Credibility rests with identifying not only observed strengths in place but also the barriers to effective learning. Follow-up action must lead to a mechanism for referring those problems that reside outside the school's control and providing support and guidance for those that problems that can be resolved within the authority of the school.

Such problems are not unique to South Africa, but have been successfully confronted elsewhere by strategies such as:

- assessment of the performance of the local authority responsible for schools;
- co-option of a representative of the school staff onto WSE teams;
- follow up visits by an external evaluator after a set period of time to assess the extent to which recommendations have been implemented, and the factors which enabled or acted as barriers to implementation;
- joint observations of lessons with the principal or other staff so as to assess the capacity for internal evaluation; and the
- increased use of experienced and effective principals as mentors to those facing significant challenges.

The Committee's proposals will further show that it is important to separate inspection and evaluation from development and support; that is, those who make judgments about school or teacher performance cannot be the same persons who provide the development function. Yet separating these functions carries the risk of non-delivery unless there is a functional or organizational mechanism that binds these two tasks.

Whichever route is followed, the Committee wants it to be clear that the credibility of evaluative interventions in the future depends crucially on the evidence of practical support and follow-up among those evaluated.

*10. that the co-mingling of developmentally-focused evaluation and remuneration-focused appraisal compromises the validity of measures of school or teacher performance*

The Committee found that where evaluation measures were related to remuneration, it provided less valid or reliable information for decision-making. That is, the pressure to boost compensation within the system distorts any value that evaluation-for-development measures might have. This is what was referred to earlier as an immature system where the chances of objective, evidence-based information are reduced because of compensation pressures.

Teachers and schools focus more attentively on matters of development and change when the only outcome of interest is how to improve the conditions of teaching and attainments of learning. There is far less pressure, with such a focus, to artificially boost achievements for non-educational purposes.

The Committee therefore strongly recommends that the two important functions be separated: data used to make decisions about levels of teacher remuneration, and data used to make decisions about development support. This does not mean that the system is already mature enough to respond credibly and accurately to development-driven inspection or evaluation; it simply means that an additional pressure to boost achievements artificially is now removed.

The complete separation of the two data sets is, of course, not achievable in (or recommended for) practice. Those working with school improvement will be interested in aggregate as well as individual teacher performance data in order to transform teaching, learning and managing in a particular school environment. Those making decisions about remuneration would invariably draw on performance data (among other kinds of evidence) in making compensation judgments.

Provided the “drawing down” of teacher data happens under two separate authorities, and provided teachers are clear what the data is being used for (development versus



compensation), there should be no conflict of purposes where the goal is remuneration, on the one hand, and improvement, on the other hand.

The evidence-based remuneration function rightly belongs within the national Department of Education from which base the necessary salary negotiations with unions and other parties would proceed. The evidence-based developmental function is ideally located within the provincial departments of education from where training and support interventions are launched in the schools. The Committee will recommend that such a capacity for separate development support is crucial to the work of the proposed NEEDU.

11. *that in practice the evaluation instruments do not monitor the impact of policy on teaching and learning; they monitor policy compliance*

The Committee heard that many schools and teachers perceive some of the IQMS school and educator performance standards to be directed at the monitoring of policy implementation. These teachers felt that the evaluation items are designed to give the department more control over whether schools and teachers comply with the new policy directives. Given the long history of teacher suspicion of external interference in schools, the policy monitoring function of government officials does not help change attitudes.

The Committee was told that the existing list of performance standards is cumbersome and time-consuming as it generates considerable volumes of paperwork for heads of departments, and that it did not really capture adequately the most important core function of schooling, namely the level of learning achieved in schools among their particular learners.

Teachers also felt that there should be performance standards that are quicker and easier to deal with, and that what should enjoy greater attention in monitoring and evaluation is their work with learners and the reasons why academic underperformance continues in the schools responsible for these learners.

District and provincial officials also confirmed that the evaluation instruments made it difficult for them to monitor the quality of teaching and learning occurring in different schools, quite apart from the causes for such low levels of education quality.

The evaluation instruments focus on useful aspects of the work of schools and teachers but do not allow officials to identify and probe into the real causes behind the level of performance.

The monitoring of policy implementation and the establishment of compliance with government policy are, of course, important bureaucratic and administrative functions.

But where concerns with policy fidelity become the sole or overriding preoccupation of government officials working with the schools, there are two negative consequences. One is that teachers begin to feel “probed” rather than assisted more effectively by the provincial departments to improve their practice; the other is that the policy (*policy* understood for the moment as *a formal declaration of official intent*) itself escapes scrutiny as a possible problem contributing to school, teacher or learner failure.

The lesson for a new National Education Evaluation and Development Unit would be, of course, to keep these two ambitions in balance—monitoring compliance and facilitating improvement at the school level.

*12. that the failure to separate curriculum support and advisory roles from curriculum monitoring roles constrains the credibility of both*

The Committee heard many schools and teachers complain about some curriculum advisers who, when they visit schools, do not manage to provide adequate support to teachers. And yet when teachers are monitored for their work performance by the same district officials, they are accused of not implementing properly what they were asked to do.

These schools and teachers felt that there was a problem with districts being expected to support and monitor teachers at the same time, as they were then acting as both players and referees in the education drama. If some of these district officials do not support teachers properly, it is not fair for teachers to be monitored by them.

What was missing in the system, it was said, is an independent authority which could evaluate the supporting work of these district officials in schools. If not, then officials should in turn be evaluated by the schools and teachers they serve

However, the Committee also heard from some district officials that there are some teachers who do receive support but who are reluctant to change and implement what

they were trained or taught on back in their classroom. The reasons include the lack of support in the school environment for those returning from training; and of course the risk and the discomfort of disturbing familiar and comfortable pedagogical, curricular and administrative routines.

This double role of advisers and monitors did not exist in the case of the WSE. Indeed, the Committee heard that the WSE supervisors monitor schools but are not expected to support them except through the recommendations made in their report. District officials, together with the schools, are expected to act on the reports of the supervising monitors, and support schools in specified areas of concern. This situation felt more acceptable to many of our respondents.

The implications of separation are, of course, not this simple. By separating the two functions (monitoring and support) there is the threat of distancing these roles. By combining them there is, as shown, the threat of confusing the two roles in the experiences of teachers.

The proposed National Education Evaluation and Development Unit will have to recognize this tension, and work around it so as to address both the governmental function to monitor and the professional obligation to improve schools and teachers.

*13. that there is an unspoken complicity between school and district that compromises the monitoring of IQMS educator performance*

The Committee investigated the problem of reliability in the IQMS ratings, as reported also in the Class Act report. It heard from many schools and teachers that it was very difficult to make an objective interpretation of school or teacher performance out of context. Although the IQMS acknowledges that contextual factors can influence the final ratings, the scoring process remains a very difficult one because of the high amount of subjectivity in the interpretation of scores.

Some district officials also mentioned that at this stage of the reconstruction of the education system, it was not a good idea to have internal teacher appraisal, especially appraisals that combine professional development and performance management. This explains why teachers were keen to assign high scores in order to receive the payment reward. District officials also mentioned how difficult it was to moderate teacher scores as educators and their development support groups often argued that they did the best they could under poor school conditions and the challenging circumstances from which the learners come.

In the end, many district officials agreed that they did not change many of the original scores of teachers. It was the interpretation of the Committee that, because districts and schools felt both overwhelmed by policy demands and paper work, they felt it easier to accept teachers' initial scores. Such acceptance of teacher's scores was also a way to prevent critical attention being visited on the districts and their officials because of the low scores of schools and teachers under their control.

*14. that leadership is critical at provincial and school level to make the best out of the complexity of evaluation and development efforts and instruments*

The issue of evaluation and development will always be a complex and contested issue in schools. However, through its work with the principals who manage to turn-around struggling schools, the Committee found that strong and credible leadership on the ground can mediate and manage interventions such as external evaluation in ways that advance school improvement.

Because of the reluctance of many teachers to change in relation to new demands on their work, it is clear that leadership assumes critical significance. In such cases, the role of leadership is to manage fear and anxiety, on the one hand, and move teachers and other stakeholders towards change, on the other hand. The leader has to convince followers that change works in their best interests as teachers, and advances more effective teaching and learning in the school.

Such leadership can be developed and sustained at provincial and school-levels by ensuring that networks of provincial officials and school staff develop to promote and disseminate good practices in evaluation, monitoring and development.

## G. Core Recommendations

### Introduction

The Ministerial Committee accepts that the decision to establish a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit has already been made, and that its task was, per the Brief, to advise on the character and content of this unit. The recommendations that follow do not therefore question or challenge the proposal for a unit to be established, but offers focused advice on the nature and purposes of the unit based on evidence collected from the various sources accessed for this inquiry.

The Committee spent some time in deliberations on what this body should be called so that it signals the kind of policy focus and intent for the unit in an unambiguous manner. Several suggestions were made by members, including The South African Inspector General for Education (SAIGE, pronounced Sage); the Independent National Evaluation and Monitoring Agency; the South African Council for Educational Evaluation and Monitoring; and many others, including of course the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit.

The majority of Committee members felt that any reference to "inspection" or "inspector" or, for that matter "inspector general," would be a very sensitive matter among most education practitioners and that such naming could distract from (and even undermine) the essence of the recommendations in this report.

In addition, naming such a body should also be sensitive to other existing agencies concerned with quality assurance.

The Committee therefore does not take a position on the naming of the body. It should be clear though that while the naming of the body could be a sensitive matter, the contestation over the appropriate name does not, in the view of the Committee, diminish or weaken the functions and objectives of this new initiative as spelt out in this report.

For simplicity of communication, the body will be referred to in the rest of the report as the UNIT.

## **Recommendations**

### **Authority**

1. The Ministerial Committee strongly recommends that the UNIT function as an independent, statutory body operating at arms length from government but with direct reporting authority to the Ministry of Education.
2. The authority of the UNIT should be established in legislation with two goals in mind. First, to ensure that the UNIT has the legal authority and the political mandate to conduct its work; and second, to clarify the mandate of the UNIT in relation to other statutory bodies such as UMALUSI and of course the national Department of Education itself.
3. The UNIT officials must be endowed with legal and political authority to enter classrooms for purposes of monitoring and evaluation. Without such authority, it is impossible for the UNIT to deliver on its mandate of accounting for education quality in every South African school and classroom.
4. The UNIT will operate as a unitary structure at a national level with functional responsibilities in the provinces; in other words, the provincial offices of the UNIT will not enjoy a statutory status or authority of their own.

### **Governance**

5. The Unit will be governed by a Board consisting of not less than seven and not more than nine individuals appointed by the Minister. The composition of the



Board must be based on expertise and not stakeholder-driven. The Committee therefore recommends that these individuals must be appointed on the basis of their knowledge and expertise relevant to the scope, functions and objectives of the Unit and not on the basis of the interests of stakeholders in the education system. The operational side of the UNIT must be headed by a CEO who must be an *ex officio* member of the Board and the DoE should also be represented on the Board. However, the majority of the members of the Board must be independent and appointed on the basis of their demonstrated competence as individuals.

### Scope

6. The scope of the UNIT is the school system as a whole, including independent schools; the UNIT will not therefore be concerned with other components of the education and training system, such as ABET and FET Colleges.<sup>3</sup>
7. The UNIT will not be responsible for the development or management of schools, nor would the unit have any executive authority. However, in accounting for the state of schools, the UNIT will make recommendations to the relevant education authorities accountable for action on proposed recommendations.
8. The UNIT will absorb the Whole School Evaluation function of the national and provincial departments of education as it currently stands, while the IQMS function will continue to be honoured as an ELRC agreement operating under the authority of the Department of Education.
9. The UNIT will, however, as part of its founding mandate have the authority to recommend changes to IQMS (and other evaluation indicators, as well as to

---

<sup>3</sup> The Committee recognizes the ongoing attempts to clarify the relationship between FET Colleges and the FET phase of schools, but believes that pedagogically and culturally these two spaces merit separate treatment in evaluation and monitoring

Systemic Evaluation) to ensure an overall alignment with the monitoring and evaluation function across government and within the UNIT itself e.g. the focus on learning and learning achievements as foundation for all other monitoring and evaluation activities. In particular, the UNIT strongly recommends that the two IQMS educator functions of appraisal for performance monitoring and appraisal for development should not be done and verified by the same people, whether within the school and the district.

10. In order for the UNIT to have optimal impact on development, the provinces through their districts will have to carry responsibility for focused school development support functions to enact the recommendations of the unit in a responsive and effective manner.
11. The focus of the UNIT will only be on accounting for the state of teaching and learning in South Africa and not on the evaluation of teachers for purposes of remuneration; while the teacher performance data might be used as part of the evidence for decision-making about personnel remuneration, the UNIT is not at all to be involved in teacher compensation issues, which is the mandate of the Department of Education.

### Functions

12. The UNIT will have the following core responsibilities:
  - 12.1 to provide the Minister of Education with an authoritative, analytical and accurate account on the state of schools in South Africa and, in particular, on the status of teaching and learning in all schools
  - 12.2 to *recommend* minimum performance standards for schools, mindful of the different histories, missions and capacities of South African education

institutions; evaluation in these circumstances must be seen to be fair, contextually sensitive and credible.

- 12.3 to account for the attainment (or otherwise) of those standards by all schools through a sophisticated monitoring and evaluation system
- 12.4 to identify on a system-wide basis the critical factors that inhibit or advance school improvement
- 12.5 to make focused recommendations for redressing the problem areas that undermine school improvement and, in this respect, to recommend appropriate developmental interventions to support schools
- 12.6 to propose appropriate sanctions to ensure that schools offer effective education for all learners
- 12.7 to strengthen internal evaluation capacity within schools in ways that reliably inform and complement external evaluation
- 12.8 to monitor the different levels of school support (governors, districts, provinces and the national department) and the extent to which there is considered action on proposed interventions, whether in the form of developmental support or in the form of disciplined action
- 12.9 to review and assess existing monitoring, evaluation and support structures and instruments on a regular basis to ensure clarity, coherence, and complementarity in the ways schools and teachers are measured and supported
- 12.10 to provide schools with evidence-based advice on how to pursue school improvement in their particular contexts

- 12.11 to promote school improvement through the dissemination of good practice

### Expertise

13. The UNIT will employ only the most skilled professionals drawn mainly from education, but also supporting professions (the management sector), and who have established reputations as credible and effective evaluators, managers and turnaround specialists in the field of education and allied fields. It is proposed that such highly skilled professionals be retained on performance-based contracts rather than absorbed as permanent appointees. There may also be a case for introducing the idea of professional partners, e.g. mentors who are reasonably successful principals of other schools. It is very important to this Committee that the professional expertise of the UNIT not be determined on the basis of party political affiliation or loyalties.
14. The UNIT must have an in-house research and evaluation capacity to conduct the mainly *qualitative* accounts on the state of schools as well as the assessment of existing instruments and data in other parts of the system e.g. directorates in government departments.
15. While the UNIT must have an in-house research and evaluation capacity of high quality, the large-scale, systems-wide and mainly *quantitative* monitoring and evaluation of the school system (akin to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, in the USA)<sup>4</sup> should be outsourced to an external agency such as the Human Sciences Research Council. The sheer weight of such a task could, if housed within the UNIT, limit the flexibility and adeptness of the new

---

<sup>4</sup> NAEP is a nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students know and can do in various school subjects. Since this assessment is done annually and administered uniformly, it is an authoritative account of education performance across that country. It not only makes for informed policy decision-making, it also is used to guide practice in the individual states—quite apart from the rich database for further research on schools and school improvement.

body to respond to immediate and regular accounts on the state of schooling in the country.

### Approach and Methods

16. The UNIT will provide advice to the Minister of Education on the state of the schooling system in South Africa. The advisory reports of the UNIT will be uncompromisingly **evidence-based**, drawing only on the best available empirical data for its public declarations on the state of schools in South Africa. Unvalidated internal accountability and assertions about effectiveness by untrained educators carry little reliability.
17. In line with outcomes based education, the single most important measure of school effectiveness to be adjudicated by the UNIT should be learning outcomes i.e. the quantity and quality of learning achieved by every learner in the school. Other factors such as teaching, resources, leadership will only be assessed in terms of their capacity to produce and sustain high levels of learning for all children.
18. The UNIT will have the authority to use the most appropriate and effective methods to conduct the monitoring and evaluation of schools, mindful of and sensitive to the particular context. Such methods include
  - 18.1 the observation of classroom teaching
  - 18.2 the assessment of teacher knowledge
  - 18.3 the assessment of learner knowledge
  - 18.4 the evaluation of school leadership practice
  - 18.5 the capacity of school governing bodies
  - 18.6 the efficacy of district, provincial and national support

19. The sheer size of the schooling system (26,000 units) makes it impossible for the UNIT to monitor and evaluate performance standards in all schools even on a 3-5 year cyclical basis, even with optimal funding. It is proposed therefore that the UNIT phases in its work over a number of years e.g. Phase 1 could limit the monitoring and evaluation ambit to the weakest 25% of schools in all provinces as a priority for action. While phase 1 could include a disproportionate number of the weakest schools, it should also include a stratified sample of the rest of the schools in order to benchmark the system as a whole.
20. The UNIT will have to ensure that there is clarity and consistency about the defined role descriptions and task specifications of principals and other leaders in schools and districts. They can only be held accountable through evaluation in relation to clearly-defined expectations.
21. The approach of the UNIT would not be to apportion blame to any one level or stakeholder in the education system, but rather to provide focused analyses on what stands in the way of education quality as expressed in learning achievements, and on what can be done to remedy such problems. Moreover, apprehension and fear will be reduced by evaluating teaching rather than individual teachers.
22. The UNIT activities should place a high premium on reducing the administrative demands on teachers and school management as a result of this intervention; for this important reason, the UNIT has to define its work in relation to other and ongoing evaluation and monitoring activities in schools. The combination and streamlining of all monitoring and evaluation work will enjoy priority as part of the oversight work of the UNIT.

## Resources

23. The UNIT cannot function effectively unless it is adequately and amply resourced within the national budget. The capacity to deliver will depend crucially on what kinds of resources are available. The Committee feels strongly that the real test of the legitimacy, viability and capacity of the UNIT to deliver on its mandate will be the extent to which it is adequately prioritized and budgeted for in the national government.
24. The Committee did not make detailed estimations about costs and the appropriate financing model since it was unclear what kind of organizational arrangements and resource commitments are anticipated by government. However, one estimation was that in an annual cycle a fully staffed Unit would cost approximately R420 million.<sup>5</sup>

## Deliverables

25. The Unit will be required to
- 25.1 publish regular reports on the state of schools in South Africa such report including empirical findings, recommended actions, and accounting measures to assure responsiveness to identified problem areas. One form of reporting could be a quarterly or annual published statement called *The State of Schools in South Africa*
  - 25.2 present written analytical reports should the Minister require urgent information on the state of schools in the country

---

<sup>5</sup> This estimation works with 26,000 schools covering a period of 29 school weeks per annum with 892 assessors required to assess one school per week with associated professional and administrative costs and infrastructure. A more detailed breakdown of these costs are available if requested.

- 25.3 provide individual schools with status reports on teaching and learning achievements as well as barriers to achievement and strategies for school improvement



## H. Next Steps

The Committee believes that the time is right for urgent action on the recommendations in this Report and would like to advise on the most important and immediate steps that could be taken towards implementation:

1. it is important to introduce the UNIT into legislation as soon as possible. As the report makes clear, the UNIT will require legislative authority (akin to that enjoyed by Umalusi) as well as organizational clarity within the ecology of quality assurance-related bodies concerned with schools.
2. it is important to identify senior, key people in the meantime who could develop and elaborate the UNIT concept beyond what was possible in this Committee Report.
3. it is important to create a programme of initial training for key personnel using the best available expertise nationally and internationally to ensure that from the start the UNIT is launched on a solid foundation of professional expertise.<sup>6</sup>
4. it is important to resource the immediate work of the UNIT by securing large-scale funding commitments without which the work of this body will be undermined from the beginning.
5. it is important to found an Interim Steering Committee to move the UNIT to deal with the legislative, bureaucratic and political issues that must be negotiated en route towards implementation. The Interim Committee should also work towards a realistic and comprehensive budget.

---

<sup>6</sup> One recommendation from a senior management firm working with schools was that professional staff be certified as ISO 9000 "Quality Management Systems" people; they claim that "the effectiveness of this training in establishing and maintaining management systems was demonstrated in the exemplary work conducted in Gert Sibanda FET College in Mpumalanga."

### References

- Barasa, F. and Mattson, E. 1998. The roles, regulation and professional development of educators in South Africa: a critical analysis of four policy documents. *Journal of Education*, **23**, 41-72.
- Barber, M. and Phillips, V. 2000. Should large scale assessment be used for accountability: the fusion of pressure and support? *Journal of Educational Change*, **1** (3), 277-281
- Barnes, A. 2003. Policy at the chalk face: a case study of the implementation of the DAS in a primary school: Unpublished minor MPhil dissertation. Cape Town, University of Cape Town
- Bartlett, S. 2000. The development of teacher appraisal: a recent history. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, **48**, 24-37
- Class Act. 2007. IQMS implementation review, a DoE commissioned report. Johannesburg: Class Act
- Darling-Hammond, L. 1989. Accountability for professional practice. *Teachers College Record*, **91** (1), 55-80
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hightower, A., Husbands, J., LaFors, J., Young, V and Christopher, C. 2003. Building instructional quality: Inside and outside in perspectives on San Diego's school reform. Centre for the Study of Teaching and Policy. Retrieved from  
<http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/InstructionalQual-09-2003.pdf>
- De Clercq, F. 2008. Teacher Quality, Appraisal and Development: the flaws of the IQMS. *Perspectives in Education*, **26** (1), 7-18

Department of Education. 2007. *The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa*. Government Gazette no. 29832. Pretoria: Government Printer

Department of Education. 2005. *The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education* (COTEP). Pretoria: Government Printer

Department of Education, 2003. *Framework for Systemic Evaluation*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education 2001. *The National Policy of Whole-School Evaluation* Pretoria: Government Printer

Department of Education. 2000. *Norms and Standards for Educators*. Pretoria: Government Printer

Department of Education. 1998. *The Employers Educators Act*. Pretoria: Government Printer

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 2008. Draft of employers' amendment to Collective agreement 8 of 2003, Integrated Quality Management System. Centurion: ELRC

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 2003. Collective agreements 1, 3 (Protocol) and 8, Integrated Quality Management System. Centurion: ELRC

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 2002. Collective agreement 3 and 9 of 2002. Centurion: ELRC

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 1998. Collective agreement 4 of 1998. Centurion: ELRC

Fitzgerald, T. 2001. Potential paradoxes in performance appraisal: Emerging issues for New Zealand schools'. In Middlewood, D. and Cardno, C. (Eds.) *Managing Teacher Appraisal and Performance: A Comparative Approach*. London: Routledge Falmer Press, 112-124.

Fleisch, B. 2002. *Managing educational change: the state and school reform in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.

Fleisch, B. 2006. Accountability in the Education Action Zone. *South African Journal of Education* 26 (3), 369-382.

Fullan, M. 1991. *The new meaning of educational change*, New York: Teachers' College Press

Fullan, M. 2003. *Change forces with a vengeance* New York: Routledge Falmer

Gallie, M. 2006. The implementation of the development appraisal in a low functioning South African school. Unpublished doctoral thesis (PhD), Pretoria: Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

Grubb, N. W. 2000. Opening classrooms and improving teaching: lessons from school inspections in England. *Teachers College Record*, 102 (4), 696-723

Heneveld, W. and Craig, H. 1996. *Schools Count: World Bank Project Designs and the Quality of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Hopkins, D. 2006. Quality Assurance and Large Scale Reform: Lessons for Chile: Synthesis report from the International seminar on 'Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems'. OECD and Ministry of Education, Chile

Hopkins, D. & Levine, B. 2000. Government Policy and School Development. *School Leadership and Management*, 20 (1), 15-30

Hopkins D. and McGilchrist B. 1998. Development planning for pupil achievement *School Leadership & Management*, 18(3), 409–424

Hopkins, D., West, M. and Skinner, J. 1995. Improvement through inspection? A critique of the Ofsted inspection system. *School evaluation in England and Wales. ZsE*, 1:5. Jg :337–350

Jansen, J.D. 2004, Autonomy and accountability in the regulation of the teaching profession: a South African case study, *Research Papers in Education*, vol. 19, issue 1, pp. 51–66

Katz, S., Sutherland, S. & Earle, L 2005. Toward an evaluation habit of mind: Mapping the journey. *Teachers College Record*, 107 (10), 2326–2350

Kyriakedis and Campbell. 2003. Teacher evaluation in Cyprus: some methodological and conceptual issues arising from teacher and school effectiveness research. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. 17 (1), 21–40

Lucen, A. 2003. Tracing the implementation trajectory of an educational policy: the case of the WSE, Unpublished Ph D dissertation, Pretoria: University of Pretoria

Matthews P., Moorman H. and Nusche D., 2008. *Building leadership capacity for system improvement in Victoria, Australia* in *Improving School Leadership*, Volume 2, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: Paris

Matthews P. and Sammons P. 2005. *Survival of the weakest: the differential improvement of schools causing concern in England*, *London Review of Education*, 3, 2, pp159–176.

Matthews, P. and Sammons, P. 2004. Improvement through inspection: an evaluation of the impact of Ofsted's work, London: Institute of Education and Ofsted

McBeath, J. 1999. *Schools must speak for themselves*, Routledge, London

McKinsey & Company, 2007. *How the world's best performing school systems come out on top*. [www.mckinsey.com/clientservice/socialsector/resources/pdf/Worlds\\_School\\_systems\\_final.pdf](http://www.mckinsey.com/clientservice/socialsector/resources/pdf/Worlds_School_systems_final.pdf)

Middlewood, D. and Cardno, C. (eds.) 2001. *Managing teacher appraisal and performance: a comparative approach*. London: Routledge/ Falmer Press

Piggot-Irvine, E. and Cardno, C. 2005. *Appraising performance productively: integrating accountability and development*. Auckland: Eversleigh Publishing Ltd

Sinemma, C. 2005. Teacher appraisal: missed opportunities for learning. Unpublished doctoral thesis (Ed D), Auckland: University of Auckland

Reezigt, G., Creemers, B. and de Jong, R. 2003. Teacher Evaluation in the Netherlands and its Relationship to Educational Effectiveness Research. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. 17 (1), 67-81

Reynolds, D., Muijs, D. and Treharne, D. 2003. Teacher evaluation and teacher effectiveness in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. 17 (1), 83-100

SACE. 2005. Supporting educators in compiling Professional Development Portfolios, June, unpublished document (South African Council for Educators)

SADTU 2005. Quality teachers for quality education training for a stronger teaching force. October, unpublished document (South African Democratic Teachers Union)

Sammons P., Hillman J. and Mortimore P. 1995. *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A review of school effectiveness research*, London, Office for Standards in Education and Institute of Education

Silbert, P. 2007. Understanding influences in policy-making. Whole-school evaluation and discourse. Unpublished minor MPhil dissertation. Cape Town: University of Cape Town

Taylor, N. 2002. Accountability and support: improving public schooling in SA, JET.

Taylor, N. 2007. Equity, efficiency and the development of South African schools, In Townsend, T (ed). *International handbook of school effectiveness and improvement*. Dordrecht: Springer

Teddlie, C., Springfield, S., and Burdett, J. 2003. International comparisons of the relationships among educational effectiveness, evaluation and improvement variables: an overview. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* 17(1), 5-20

Teddlie C. and Reynolds D. 2000. *The International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research*, Routledge/Falmer, London:New York

*List of organisations that made written submissions*

Catholic Institute of Education  
CfBT Education Trust, UK  
Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Pretoria  
Department of Education, Free State province  
Department of Education, Western Cape  
Hough & Horne Evaluators and Consultants  
Independent Quality Assurance Agency  
Khulisa Management Services  
National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa  
South African Democratic Teachers Union  
Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwyersunie  
UMALUSI

*List of Individuals that made written submissions*

Professor Richard van der Ross, Cape Town  
Professor Maureen Robinson, Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Dr AHC Uys, University of the North West

*The above list does not include the more than 150 people interviewed individually and in groups in each of the nine provinces*