2024 Reading Panel

Background Report

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READING PANEL

The former Deputy President of South Africa Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka has convened the annual '2030 Reading Panel' to bring together respected South African leaders to ask: "What needs to change for us to ensure that all children learn to read by 2030?" The panel will meet annually until 2030.

The panel comprises the following members (listed alphabetically): Commissioner André Gaum, Bobby Godsell, Colin Coleman, Prof Jonathan Jansen, Noncedo Madubedube, Jay Naidoo, Prof Njabulo Ndebele, Prof Vuyokazi Nomlomo, Prof Sizwe Mabizela, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Hulisani Ravele, Prof Michael Sachs, Judy Sikuza, Elinor Sisulu, and Prof Catherine Snow. More information is available at
readingpanel.co.za

This background report was prepared by Sipumelele Lucwaba at the request of the Chair of the 2030 Reading Panel. The views and opinions expressed in the document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of individual Panel members or the sponsors of the Reading Panel. Recommended citation: Lucwaba. S. (2024) 2024 Background Report for the 2030 Reading Panel. Johannesburg.

- 13 February 2024

Executive Summary

1.   Introduction

How many learners can read for meaning?

The release of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2021 results in May 2023 revealed that 81% of South African grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language. South Africa experienced the largest declines of all countries who participated in PIRLS in both 2016 and 2021, with learners in 2021 50-60% of year of learning behind 2016's grade 4 learners. A comprehensive catch-up plan for 2021's Grade 4 learners and a national-level strategic initiative to drastically increase the number of learners who can read for meaning are alarmingly absent. The dearth of targeted action continues to perpetuate the country's ongoing literacy crisis, leaving a critical need for effective measures to address and reverse this trend. There is however a new window of opportunity in this election year for political parties and the next administration to make decisive steps to ensure universal literacy. Since 2021, we have seen impressive moves by provincial education MECs and their leadership teams to implement evidence-based, province-wide reading interventions, and we implore current and future leaders to continue and build upon this important work.

2.   What can we learn from PIRLS 2021?

The number of grade 4 earners who do not possess even the most basic decoding and fluency skills, i.e. learners who cannot read at all, has doubled from 13% in 2016 to 27% in 2021. Learner achievement gaps also increased across socio-economic and language lines. Compared to a child in the wealthiest 10% of schools, a child in the poorest 70% of schools was 5 times less likely to reach the low benchmark in 2016 but was 10 times less likely to reach this benchmark in 2021. Further, the difference between learners testing in English and the lowest-achieving African language, Setswana, was 171 points (~1,8 years of learning). Whilst there is no reason why the system should not return to pre-COVID trajectories and show improvements in PIRLS 2026, based on current projections, it would still take South Africa 80 years for all children to read for meaning. Finally, the impact of COVID-19 indicates that when there is pressure on the system, the poorest learners are those most heavily impacted. Similarly, as we move into times of increased fiscal austerity, if we do not have guaranteed minimums in place to support reading, the learners most impacted will be those in no-fee schools (i.e. Quintiles 1-3).

3.   Institutional constraints

What is holding the education system back from improving reading outcomes?

The national reading barometer reflects a constrained reading ecosystem. The barometer illustrates the system's poor outcomes (low reading abilities), limitations on inputs (Learning, Teaching and Support Materials (LTSM) and quality teacher training) and the weaknesses in the institutional

frameworks that should support reading. These weaknesses will only be intensified by a severely constrained education budget. Based on the medium term expenditure framework, real spending per learner will decrease over the period from R24 000 in 2020 to R21 635 by 2025. The anticipated austerity budgets, compounded by the financial pressures of the 2023 wage bill (which led to a R30 billion shortfall over the MTEF), necessitate challenging decisions about provincial expenditure. Where these decisions are not aligned with a strong strategic framework, with obvious priorities, there is a real risk that budget cuts or the freezing of spending will happen where the budget line items are most fungible – LTSM and new teacher posts.

4. Proactive Provinces

Are any provinces implementing evidence-based, budgeted, province-wide interventions to improve reading?

Between 2023 and 2024, two additional provinces have developed province-wide responses to the reading crisis. In 2023, the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) ring fenced R24 million to implement their new Reading Strategy. Given limited funds, they have focused on ensuring that each learner in the foundation phase is provided with an anthology of graded readers, with additional sets of readers delivered per class. Similar to the province's rollout of anthologies in 2019-2020, the ECDoE has provided these to all 485 000 learners in the province at a cost of R17 per learner. The province's second priority is the training of all foundation phase teachers in the teaching of reading, targeting all heads of department (HODs) in 2024. The Northern Cape Department of Education (NCDoE), has partnered with the DBE, UNICEF and Zenex on a program to scale-up results achieved in the Early-Grade Reading Study (EGRS). The program will be rolled out to all schools in the province between 2024-2027, starting with Setswana Home Language (HL) schools (2024-2025) and then Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa Home Language (2026-2027). The program will cost R26 million in 2024 and is currently fully funded by donors.

5. Promising programs

Is there evidence of small-scale programs significantly improving reading outcomes in SA?

Broadly, interventions that have shown the largest impact on reading outcomes fall into three categories: (1) LTSM (including workbooks with aligned quality teacher guides and graded readers), (2) the effective use of Teaching Assistants (TAs) and (3) teacher coaching. New results from the Funda Wande intervention (2021-2023) show large gains in the number of learners performing at grade-level in schools utilising only materials, as well as those leveraging TAs. A recent 6-week pilot which utilised Educator Assistants (EAs) from the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI) to build letter-sound knowledge increased the number of grade R and 1 learners performing at grade level from 29% to 42%. Given the announcement of phase 5 of the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES), scaling up the lessons from both of these programs is politically and financially viable. In phase 2, the basic education allocation (R6 billion) of the PES allocated around 8% (R460 million) of the budget for training and operations management, of which only (31%) was utilised. This allocation dropped to round 2% (~R150 million) by phase 4, but it sill presents an opportunity

to better utilise this budget for quality learner outcomes. We cannot afford to continue ignoring the lessons from interventions that work as the financial cost and the cost to learners only compound.

6.   Teacher retirements

What more do we know about teacher retirements?

Research analysing the teacher salary database (PERSAL) shows that 58% of Limpopo teachers are aged 50+ in 2021 and will retire in the next 10-15 years, with similarly high percentages in the Eastern Cape (51%) and Mpumalanga (50%). A large portion of these teachers are senior educators which includes HODs, principals and other members of the senior management teams. This raises concerns regarding effective succession planning and management within schools. Some of the provinces with the highest rates of projected teacher retirements (Limpopo and Mpumalanga) also have some of the largest class sizes in grade 3. If not managed effectively, teacher retirements will serve to exacerbate large class sizes on top of management challenges. This is particularly concerning in the current austerity environment as there is evidence of provinces historically freezing the hiring of senior management posts to balance the budget.

7.   The current and future administrations

Is there a new dawn ahead for reading?

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is in the process of developing a new Reading Strategy which seems to address some of the important improvements for which we as a sector have been collectively advocating, for example a minimum set of LTSM in the classroom, which includes graded readers and story books, and working with universities to improve initial teacher preparation. However, the delays in publishing the document does begin to raise concerns around the process underway and the extent to which it will be effectively implemented.

As we move into an election year, we need to be cognisant of the stated priorities of political parties. This is even more important given the increased likelihood of political coalitions. At the time of writing this report however, none of the top 3 parties (ANC, DA, EFF) had launched their election manifestos (only ActionSA has published an education manifesto). None of these parties' manifestos from the 2019 elections make any mention of literacy, although reading had long been in crisis. The Reading Panel will release a supplementary report focused on political party focus areas in basic education once the manifestos become available.

8.   Recommendations for government

Is government making progress towards the 2030 goal of all children reading?

The answer is a nuanced "somewhat". This year we have taken the decision to split some of the recommendations between the provincial and national governments, to better acknowledge the

progress that has been made by some provinces. At a provincial level, there are now four provinces - Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and the Western Cape, implementing planned and budgeted responses to improving early grade reading outcomes. This is however in the absence of a published and implemented national reading plan and budget.

The nascent strides made by provincial governments are important and significant, but in order to achieve coordinated and sustained changes for the entire system, there is a need for strong policy frameworks with interventions embedded as part of the system, with basic minimum norms provided for in classrooms. The overall recommendations from the 2022 and 2023 reports remain.

Advisory Notes

In addition to this background report there are a number of short advisory notes in the Appendix. The authors of these notes are listed alphabetically by surname below:

1. Ardington, C. & Makaluza, N. (2024) Results of the Funda Wande Intervention in Limpopo (2021-2023)
2. Bohmer, B. & Wills, G. (2024) COVID-19 and increased inequality in Grade 4 reading outcomes in South Africa.
3. Dube, A., Rudranarayan, S. and Mangele, T. (2024) Scaling Up Early Grade Reading Programs: EGRS in the Northern Cape
4. Fleisch, B., Schoer, V., Olivier, J., Poswell, L., and Zulu, Z. Zazi iZandi: Leveraging the public employment stimulus to lay literacy foundations in Grades R and 1.
5. Kelly, G. & Polzer-Nqwato, T. (2024) The National Reading Barometer: A Catalyst for Coordinated Action in Addressing the Reading Crisis in South Africa
6. Sachs, M. (2024) Education and the 2023 budget
7. Tywakadi, R. (2024) Implementation of the Eastern Cape department of Education (ECDOE) Reading Strategy
8. Wills, G. (2024) Reflections on early grade repetition in South Africa

1. Introduction

In May 2023 PIRLS 2021 was released indicating that **81% of South African grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language**. They cannot "locate and retrieve explicitly stated information or make straightforward inferences about events and reasons for actions". To place this into context, this represents a decade of progress at the system-level, with learners in 2021 performing at the same level as learners in 2011. Overall children in 2021 were 50-60% of a year of learning[1], behind children in 2016 (Böhmer & Wills, 2023). South Africa also experienced the largest decline in reading outcomes (-31 points) of all 33 countries/regions with data in 2016 and 2021.

Figure 1: % of South African learners who cannot read for meaning in any language
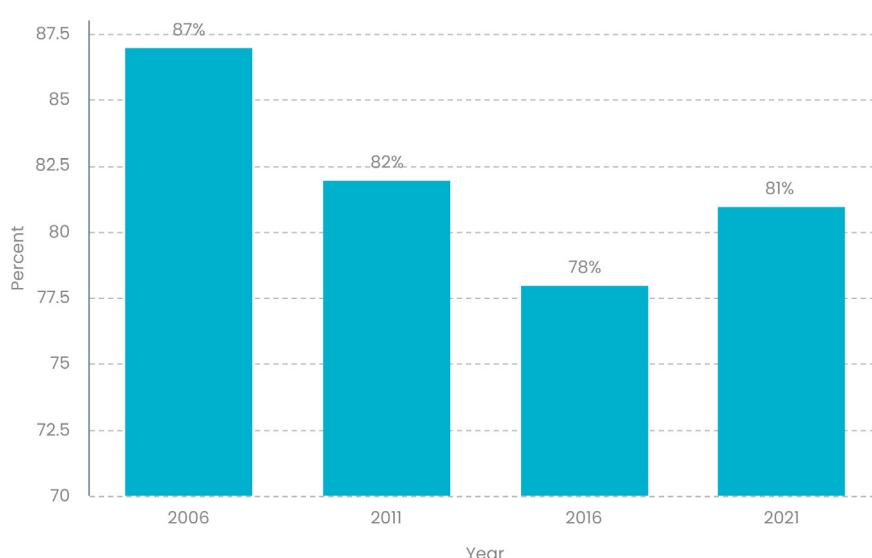
Whilst COVID-19 was a once-in-a-lifetime global catastrophe, and the 2021 grade 4s would have had a large portion of their foundation phase education disrupted, most striking was that at the time there was no plan to catch up learning losses for those learners. South Africa's reading crisis predates COVID-19. In the previous round of PIRLS, 78% of learners could not read for meaning. If we had stayed on the pre-COVID trajectory, we expect that the 2021 number would have been ~73% unable to read for meaning.

The fact that the majority of learners are unable to read for meaning in any language highlights a critical and ongoing issue in the basic education system. It's crucial to acknowledge that the need for catch-up programs extends far beyond just mitigating the learning losses caused by school closures and rotational timetabling. There has been a long-standing, urgent necessity to institutionalise and implement effective catch-up strategies and to accelerate the pace of learning across the board. This approach is essential not just for addressing temporary setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also for tackling the deeper, systemic educational challenges that have persisted over time. As we approach an election year, a new opportunity emerges at both provincial and national levels. This year presents a pivotal opportunity for any governing party, new or old, to take decisive action towards achieving universal literacy for all learners. Since 2021, there has been

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1   Böhmer and Wills (2023) define a year of learning in PIRLS as 55-60 PIRLS points

a notable shift, with provincial education MECs and their leadership teams implementing evidence-based, province-wide reading interventions. This progress sets a precedent, and it is crucial that both current and future leaders continue and expand upon these initiatives. The upcoming election period offers an ideal platform to reinforce and further these educational commitments, emphasising the importance of literacy as a cornerstone of national development.

2. What can we learn from PIRLS 2021?

The percentage of grade 4 learners who do not possess basic decoding and fluency skills doubled from 13% in 2016 to 27% in 2021. Böhmer and Wills (2023) use a threshold of 200 PIRLS points to analyse the performance of learners at the low end of the distribution. This is useful given that the majority of learners were unable to reach the low international benchmark (400), which limits the kinds of insights the benchmark can provide. Böhmer and Wills estimate that children achieving less than 200 points possess very few foundational literacy skills. In other words, these children are not able to read at all. Although 200 points is not an official benchmark, it is consistent with the doubling of learners who did not get a single answer on the assessment correct, which provides a solid basis for the use of this threshold. Through an

Figure 2: Grade 4 PIRLS reading benchmarks reached in 2016 and 2021

Source: Bohmer and Wills (2023).

item level analysis of items included in both 2016 and 20221, Böhmer and Wills find further sharp increases in the number of students who did not attempt a single question (2-3 times more), or were able to complete a single question.

Compared to a child in the wealthiest 10% of schools, a child in the poorest 70% of schools was 5 times less likely to reach the low benchmark in 2016, but was 10 times less likely to reach this benchmark in 2021 (Böhmer and Wills, 2023). As per figure 3 below, in 2021 only 8% of learners in the poorest 70% of schools versus 85% in the wealthiest 10% of schools were able to reach the low international benchmark. Learners who tested in Afrikaans and English saw no significant changes in performance, with all African languages experiencing declines, the largest in Setswana of 86 points (~1.4 years). In 2016 the gap between the average score of learners who tested in English and the highest performing African language learners (Sesotho/isiNdebele) was 53 points (~0.88 years) and the lowest performing (Sepedi) 96 points (~1.6 years). In 2021, this gap almost doubled; the difference between English and the highest performing African language (isiZulu) was 115 points (~1.9 years), and the lowest (Setswana)171 points (~2.8 years).

> **ⓘ** The average Setswana learner is **2.8 years behind the average English learner**

Figure 3: Proportion of students that reached the low international benchmark in 2016 and 2021 by SES of the school
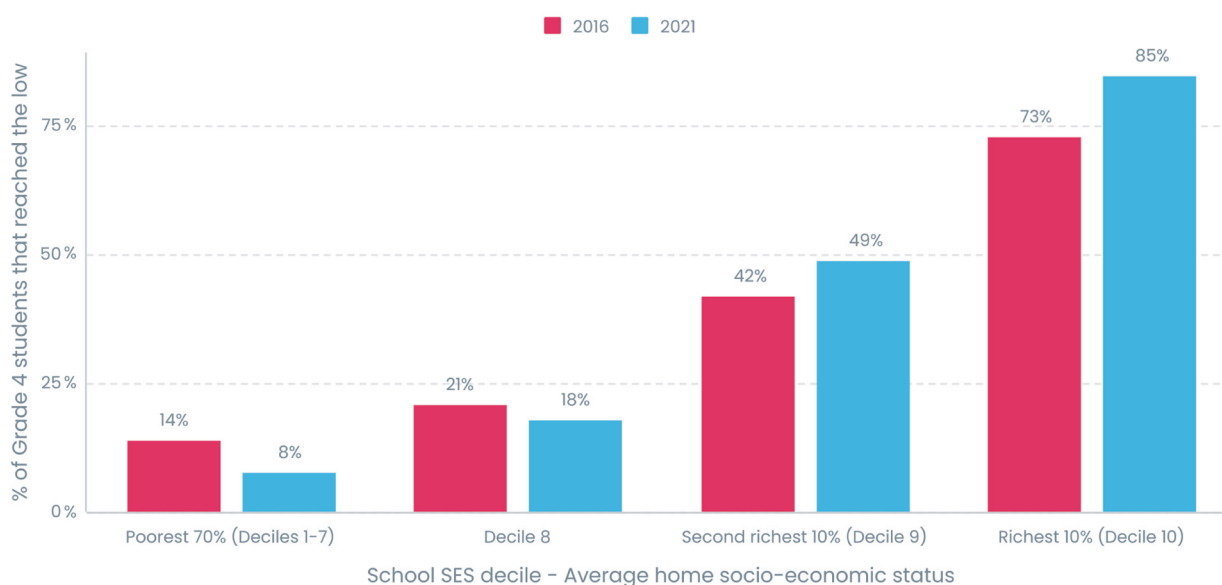

Source: Böhmer and Wills (2023)

Where we expected to be in 2021? As per figure 4 below, pre-COVID trajectories projected an increase in the number of learners able to read for meaning by 5 percentage points between 2016 and 2021. As many commentators have already expressed, there is no reason why we should not return to the national pre-pandemic trajectory, with the COVID shock moving through the system with the impacted learners. Further, the Cohort that will take part in PIRLS 2026 would have started grade R in 2022 and would not have experienced any school-related disruptions to their foundational schooling. Based on current projections, if the system continues to improve at the pre-COVID rate, we expect to see 31% of learners able to read for meaning when PIRLS 2026 is released. However, and more sobering, on pre-pandemic improvement trajectories, it will still take us 80 years for all children to read for meaning.

The impact of COVID-19 indicates that when there is pressure on the system, the poorest learners are those most heavily impacted. Similarly, as the country moves into times of increased austerity, the most impacted learners will be those in Q1-3 schools.

Figure: 4: Percentage of grade 4 learners who cannot read for meaning: past trends and possible trajectories
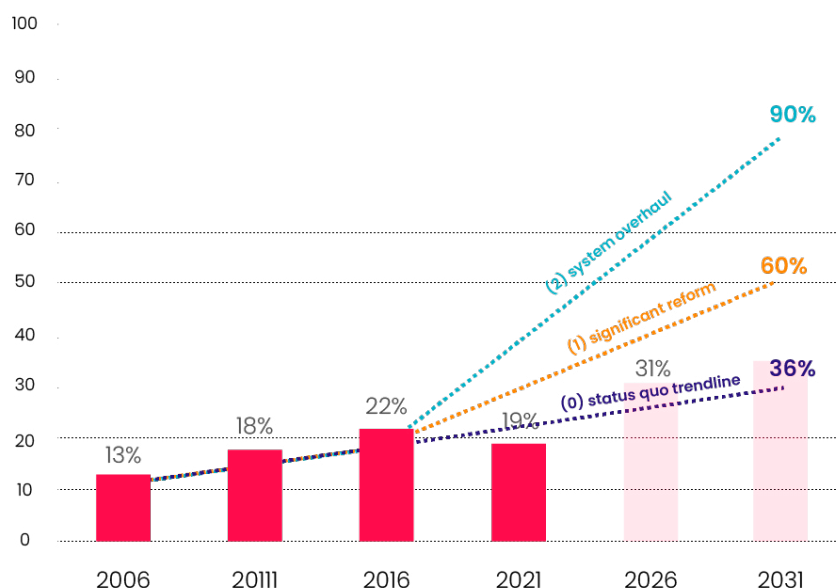
The 2021 PIRLS results do not become any less relevant with learners progressing in the system. The approximately 1-million 2021 grade 4 learners, who would now be in grade 7, remain in the system with no indication of any additional catch-up support at scale (Hoadley, 2023). All indications are that as they move through the system, without intentional support, they only fall further behind (Wills et al, 2022). This is even more concerning given the number of children who did not even possess the most basic literacy skills. Whilst we continue to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on the system, we cannot limit the relevance of these results to a single cohort of learners. It is well known that the Pandemic served only to highlight and exacerbate existing disparities. These differences in performance between learners of different socio-economic statuses have always existed within the education system. The impact of COVID-19 indicates that when there is pressure on the system, the poorest learners are those most heavily impacted. Similarly, as the country moves into times of increased austerity, the most impacted learners will be those in Q1-3 schools. The longer the government takes to prioritise budgets, to instill minimum norms in the system for reading (LTSM, teacher training etc), the longer we leave the poorest learners vulnerable to these shifts. We cannot continue to feign surprise at the results.

3.   Institutional constraints

What is holding the sector back from improving reading outcomes?

The National Reading Barometer illustrates a constrained reading ecosystem with weak institutional frameworks, low access to reading materials and low reading abilities: In 2023, a consortium led by Nali'Bali and the National Library Consortium released the National Reading Barometer which measures the health of the reading ecosystem. The barometer assesses four dimensions (1) reading ability, (2) reading material access (3) effective institutional frameworks and (4) reading motivation and practice. The Barometer, which is endorsed by the DBE, is useful in that it provides an objective measure towards accountability and progress in the sector.

Whilst it includes areas outside the scope of the Reading Panel, e.g. reading abilities and motivations of adults, it provides relevant measures for early grade reading based both on learning outcomes and strength of the system to support it. Further, we are encouraged by the collaboration with the DBE, which exhibits a willingness for increased public accountability and measurement through an easily accessible scorecard. As per figure 5, the results of the barometer show a picture of a constrained sector, with a significant amount of work to be done to ensure improved reading ability.

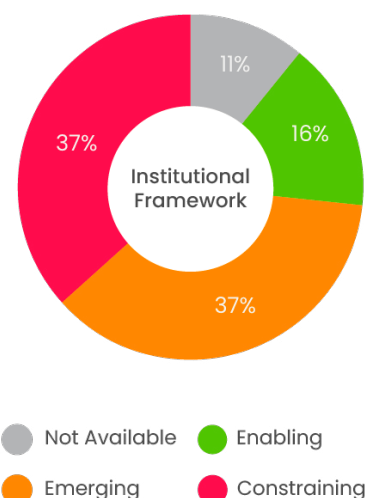***Figure 5 summary of national reading barometer indicators***
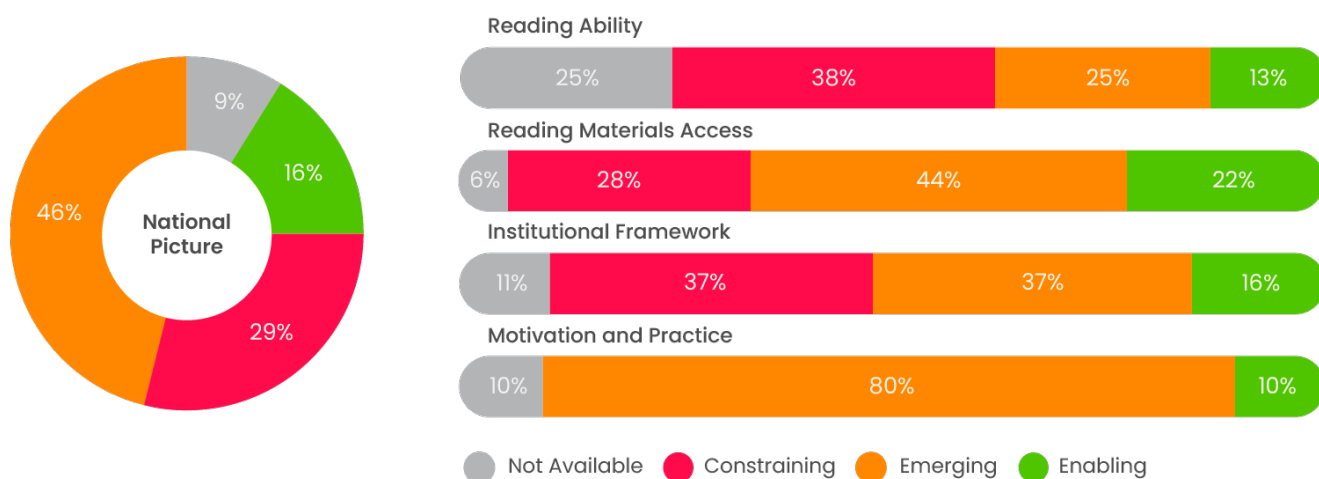
Source: Huston et al (2021), National Reading Barometer summary report

Weak policy frameworks limit SA's ability to plan, budget or utilise effective accountability mechanisms to support reading. In figure 6 below we illustrate the overall picture of the institutional frameworks dimension in the pie chart. In the accompanying table we select key indicators to highlight. Overall, only 14% of indicators are described as enabling, i.e. the required policies or tools exist, are sufficient and effective. Based on the table below, the stark reality is that it is unclear how much national and provinces should, and in fact do, spend on reading and other LTSM. We believe that there can be no effective accountability without clear published policies on reading expenditure and other basic minimums. We also note the inclusion of indicators addressing a lack of quality initial teacher education (ITE) programs and a sufficient number of teachers produced and absorbed by the system to meet demand. There are however, notable improvements in the system's ability to measure reading progress and school readiness through the development of reading fluency benchmarks in South African languages, the early learning national assessment (ELNA), the national systemic assessments, and the thrive by five index. The first three of these initiatives were laudably led by the DBE. We do, however, want to highlight the lack of publicly available reports and technical documentation on the ELNA results and the systemic assessments. These results were to some degree made available through presentations alongside the PIRLS results in May 2023. However, no report has since been published, with little technical detail on how the tests were set, marked or verified, making it difficult to engage with the findings or take seriously the DBE's insistence that the sector rely on "culturally relevant" assessments developed locally when the results are not available for public scrutiny.

Figure 6: Institutional framework dimension and table of select key indicators

| Indicator	Performance	Rating
National DBE has policy framework and capacity to hold provinces accountable for reading literacy policy directives & budget use	Policy framework and capacity insufficient	**Emerging**
Provincial DoEs and Treasuries allocate and use budgets in line with policy directives that prioritise reading literacy	Inconsistent allocation, use and reporting	**Not yet available**
Provincial LTSM budgets are clearly ringfenced and fully utilised	Difficult to isolate LTSM budget/spend	**Not yet available**
LTSM policy is adopted and implemented	Draft done 2018, waiting for passage of BELA	**Constraining**
National Reading Plan is developed, regularly monitored and reported on	MTSF in place, revised plan under development	**Emerging**
Quality of initial teacher education programs for teaching reading in African languages	Insufficient	**Constraining**
Ratio of new teachers to projected teacher demand	69%	**Constraining**

Source: Huston et al (2021), National Reading Barometer summary report

Figure 7 below highlights key indicators in terms of reading ability. It comes as no surprise that 64% of indicators have no data available or are classified as constraining. It's important to note that this data would be significantly worse if we only focused on the reading ability of learners in the foundation phase and not youth, which only include the six measures listed in figure 7, with all but one indicator constraining or without data.

Figure 7: Reading ability dimension and table of select key indicators

Indicator	Performance	Rating
% of children 'on track' for early literacy at age 4/5 who attend an early learning program	55%	**Constraining**
% point gap between Quintile 5 and Quintile 1 and 2 children 'on track' for early literacy at 4/5	17%	**Emerging**
% of Foundation Phase learners meeting DBE reading literacy benchmarks	N/A	**Not yet available**
Degree of inequality in learners meeting DBE reading literacy benchmarks	N/A	**Not yet available**
% of Grade 4 learners who can read for meaning (and average PIRLS score)	19%	**Constraining**
Change in % of Grade 4 learners who can read for meaning (and average PIRLS score)	-3	**Constraining**
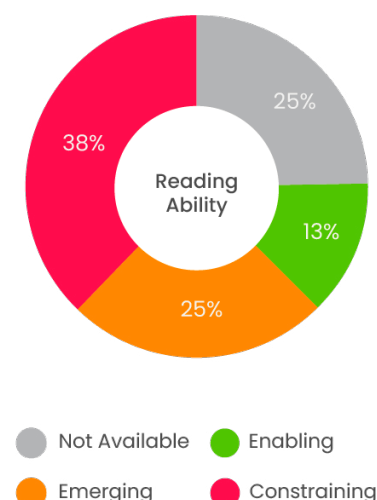
Source: Huston et al, (2021), National Reading Barometer summary report

Real spending per learner enrolled was more than R24 000 in 2020 but will fall to R21 635 by 2025. In February 2023, Treasury presented the 2023 budget review. In basic education, the line items that were subjected to budget cuts in the 2023/24 year included workbooks and LTSM (-8.9%), cash transfers to schools (-0.6%), property payments (-2.4%) and other goods and services (-3.2%). Considering current projections, Sachs et al. (2023) indicate that all the 2023 cuts will be reversed in the medium term[2]. However, in real terms, there is an anticipated decline in the total consolidated budget throughout the period covered by the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF).

Figure 8: Basic education spending growth
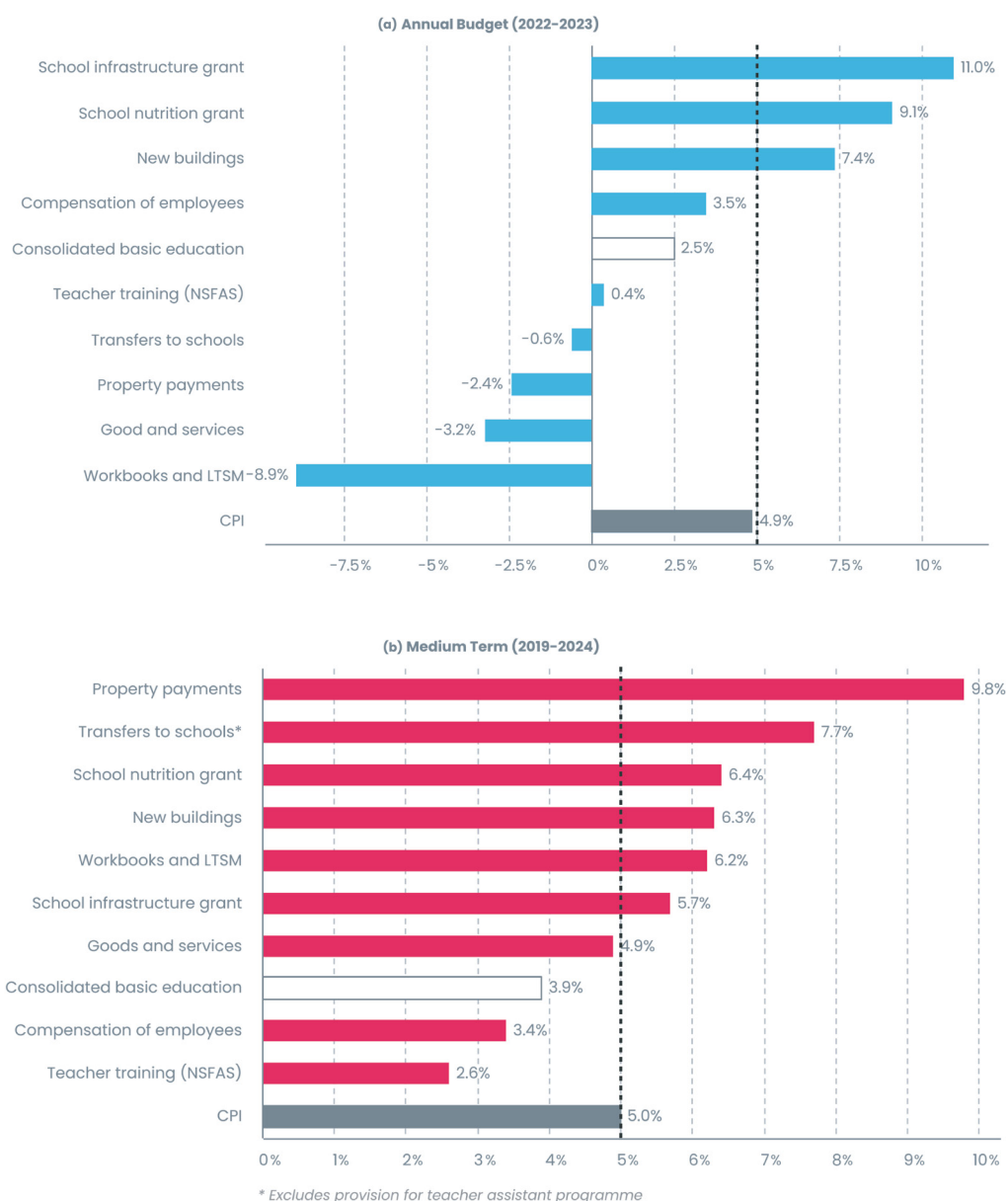
Source: Sachs et al (2023), Austerity without consolidation

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2   In an updated note, attached as advisory note 6 to this report, Sachs states that the 2024 budget tabled in November 2024 envisages even further cuts, but it will not be clear what will be implemented until the 2024 budget is tabled in February 2024 and so no further analysis has been done on it.

The new wage bill translates to a R7bn shortfall in 2023, and R30bn over the medium term. Sachs et al suggest that the most likely outcome to fund the gap in the budget created by the 2023 wage agreement would be a combination of options: reducing teacher headcount, defunding other line items to support compensation spending (e.g. LTSM, infrastructure, school feeding), and increasing the education budget. It is difficult to deem decreased spending on workbooks and other learning materials as a plausible option, given that (1) workbooks have been identified by government as one of the key pillars in the improvements seen in learning outcomes over the years (DBE, 2020); (2) multiple homegrown studies[3] have confirmed the impact of LTSM (including workbooks and anthologies) and their impact on improving learner reading outcomes; and (3) we know that there are insufficient reading materials provided to learners and teachers. Although it is uncertain how the proposed budget cuts have been implemented in practice - potentially amounting to mere savings in areas such as workbook production - such measures do not align with the interventions expected to improve learning outcomes.

A fact which is conceded to by National Treasury:

"Although additional funding has been provided to implement the 2023 public-service wage agreement, provincial education departments are constrained in hiring additional teachers. This could lead to larger class sizes and higher learner-teacher ratios, possibly resulting in weaker education outcomes"

(Treasury, 2023a)

Furthermore, these cuts would contradict the DBE's updated national reading strategy (in development), which advocates for a minimum set of LTSM and broader access to "culturally relevant materials". This leads us to question the extent to which budget cut decisions are strategic, or more reactionary, cutting items perceived to be the most fungible items on the budget. The constrained budget will require provinces, and eventually schools, to make difficult choices, and will derail any chances of attaining improved reading outcomes. In some ways we might already be seeing the first signs of this. In September 2023, the ECDoE sent out circulars to schools detailing that whilst the Norms and Standards allocation had been declared at R1 627 per learner in Q1-3 schools in 2024, they could only afford, and hence would be funding an amount of R1 231 - a cut of 26%. Additionally, the department will retain 33,75% of every school's funding allocation which will go towards the "provincial national norms and standards for school funding budget", which as reported by the department will go towards "provision for the resourcing of curriculum and other teaching and learning related needs for all schools" (ECDoE, 2023). This leaves schools uncertain as to the exact nature of the provincial National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF), what will be provided to each learner, and with 60% less funding available in 2024.

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3   See 2022 and 2023 Reading Panel reports for a summary. https://www.readingpanel.co.za/resources

Closing the current budget gaps will not close the gaps in learner knowledge. The medium-term budget statement (MTBS) tabled in November 2023 contains a note stating that additional funds would be added to the budget in 2024 to account for the increase in the wage bill. However, it is not clear how the entire gap will be funded in the medium term. Further, the current gap in the budget only accounts for existing teachers and does not take into account the new teachers that will be produced by universities and need to be absorbed by provinces. Based on provinces' hiring practices under current budgetary conditions, where just 51% of the teachers produced in 2021 were employed (Gustafsson, 2022), it is unlikely that filling the budget gap will solve this issue. In the same vein, consistent increases in the LTSM budget at the same rate, without some commensurate change in strategy (either a reallocation or an effective policy driven increase in budget) will not lead to improvements in learner outcomes.

A need for improved institutional thinking on spending "better". To address the institutional challenges we face, the solution does not lie in new budgets alone. A critical aspect is the system's approach to allocating existing funds and resources. Between 2018 and 2019 the ECDoE top sliced a portion of the total allocation of teacher posts to provide an additional 1800 teachers to learners in the foundation phase (Vinjevold and Mbina-Mthembu, 2023). The main criteria for schools to receive an additional teacher was classes greater than 35. This approach is not unique to the Eastern Cape; a similar policy was also implemented in the Western Cape in 2006. In their paper analysing the association between class sizes and learner education (LE) ratios, Wills (2023) finds significant differences between provinces. Therefore, the impact of using LE ratios to manage class sizes will differ depending on the province. One of the reasons for this mis-match is ineffective teacher utilisation and timetabling. Wills suggests that in a fiscally constrained environment, provinces and schools will need to better manage teacher utilisation within schools alongside policies to increase teacher allocation and address LE ratios.

In preparation for the 7th democratic administration, the national planning commission is in the process of reviewing chapter 9 (Education) of the NDP, to develop a diagnostic report and eventually a strategy for the years 2024-2029 to accelerate progress towards reaching the education NDP goals. In presentations by Prof. Mary Metcalfe, current Commissioner of Education, early grade reading and mathematics have been identified as key focus areas for basic education. Key areas Prof Metcalfe identifies for inclusion in both provincial and national reading and numeracy plans include: effective panning; resource alignment; monitoring, utilisation and responsiveness to monitoring data; development of indicators to track progress; improved institutional capacity to support teachers (curriculum, teacher development, department heads); and a focus on initial teacher education (Metcalfe, 2023). Whilst there are various arguments to be made on the impact of the NDP since its launch, with questions around the extent to which its targets are realistic or reasonable, and the wanting operationalisation of plans to realise them, we do welcome this review. The review of chapter 9 of the NDP provides an opportunity to strengthen the institutional weaknesses noted in the national reading barometer and begin developing rigorous plans to address reading. Placing reading as central to reaching other NDP goals also provides renewed impetus for departments who might be part of the reading ecosystem, but do not prioritise it in their planning e.g. the department of higher education and training.

4.   Proactive Provinces

Are there any provinces implementing well thought through, province-wide interventions to improve reading?

In the 2023 report, we highlighted two provinces implementing comprehensive reading interventions. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) partnered with WordWorks to implement a Grade R program in all schools offering Grade R in 2022-2024. The intervention includes in-person training for teachers and subject advisors, teacher guides and other classroom resources. The total budget is R107-million, with 80% funded by a consortium of donors (GEDT, Zenex, USAID). Similarly, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has partnered with Funda Wande to implement a Reading for Meaning program in all Afrikaans and isiXhosa schools in the province. The program includes in-person training for teachers and subject advisors, teacher guides, learner workbooks and graded readers. The 3-year budget is R111-million and is fully funded by the WCED. Below we highlight two additional provinces, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape, whose education departments recently developed their province-wide reading interventions. These efforts collectively represent a significant stride towards improving literacy rates and ensuring that reading interventions are both widespread and tailored to the specific needs of each province.

The ECDoE will again roll out 485 000 graded readers to all learners in the foundation phase. In 2022, the Eastern Cape launched their revised reading strategy (2022-2030) and ring fenced R24 million for its implementation. Initially, the strategy had six pillars, however, with the development of the DBE's national reading strategy, it has been revised to cover the same four pillars: an enabling literacy policy environment, the provision of age appropriate LTSM, skilled and agile teachers, and involved and engaged parents and communities. Given limited funding, the department prioritised the printing and distribution of anthologies of graded readers to all foundation phase learners and teacher training. All materials were printed and distributed at a cost of R8 Million, approximately R17 per learner. A significant cost saver was the ECDoE's strategy to deliver the anthologies alongside the DBE rainbow workbooks, negotiating with printers to ensure no additional costs were incurred for their delivery. A total of 1 573 teachers have been trained to date on teaching reading, with the ECDOE prioritising HODs in 2024.

The Northern Cape department of education (NCDoE) will roll out a new iteration of the EGRS to all foundation phase learners between 2024-2027. The NCDoE has partnered with the DBE, Zanex and UNICEF to leverage the lessons from the Early Grade Reading Study. The intervention will include the provision of structured lesson plans, integrated reading materials and the coaching of foundation phase teachers. The intervention will be implemented in two phases between 2024-2027. Phase 1 (2024-2025) will include all Gr 1-3 teachers in Setswana home language schools and English as a first additional language. Phase 2 (2026-2027) will focus on remaining schools in the province who have Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa as a home language. In 2024, the program will include 125 schools and 894 teachers. The total budget for the intervention is R26 million in 2024 and is currently fully funded by the funding partners.

The Northern Cape and Eastern Cape education departments have practiced strategic prioritisation. Notably, both the ECDoE and the NCDoE have prioritised interventions that have already seen success at improving learning outcomes. The EGRS remains one of the three early grade reading interventions in South Africa that have been rigorously evaluated. Its materials-only arm saw increases of 30% of a year of learning and the intervention employing both materials and coaching yielded an increase of 60% of a year of learning (Cilliers et al, 2020). The Funda Wande intervention saw increases of 60% of a year of learning after its second and third years, and similar increases in their intervention employing both coaching and materials (Ardington, 2023). The Eastern Cape's decisions, whilst also based on evidence, have additionally been driven by working within budgetary constraints. A reading of their prioritisation, points to cost effective interventions that also build on previous investments in reading. Since 2019 the Eastern Cape has undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen support provided to foundation phase teachers by the department. This includes the training of subject advisors on the use of anthologies and enrolling a cohort of subject advisors and HODs in the Rhodes advanced certificate in foundation phase literacy teaching. In terms of evidence, when anthologies were rolled out to all foundation phase learners in the province between 2018-2019, learner reading scores increased by 20% (Ardington & Spaull 2022). As provinces will increasingly be faced with difficult decisions, they will need to consider (1) which interventions are proven to have impact; (2) what is sustainable and will reach the highest proportion of learners; and (3) how to better utilise existing resources to improve learning outcomes.

Strategic partnerships as catalysts for change: A common thread in all provinces currently implementing reading interventions (Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape) at scale is strategic partnerships. In the Eastern Cape, for example, the Nelson Mandela Institute and Funda Wande have come in as expert NGO training partners to provide teacher training. Further, the provinces worked closely with Molteno to ensure that the readers were fit for purpose. Additionally, a key enabler for the systematic implementation of the strategy was the addition of a technical assistant. Similarly, training and materials development partners have been key in the rollout of Grade R in Gauteng and the Western Cape intervention. A coalition of funding partners has also been key in unlocking the Gauteng and Northern Cape's interventions.

Table 1: High level summary of the implementation of the Eastern Cape Reading strategy

		2023/2024
Statistics	Grade	Gr 1-3
	# Learners	485 000
	# Teachers	3 825
	# Schools	4363
	# Subject Advisers	22
	Budget (Eastern Cape)	R24 million

Training	
Subject advisers	All foundation phase subject advisors will attend 2 days of training focused on phonics and 5 days of training focused on teaching reading in African languages.
Grade 1-3 teachers	Each teacher receives at least 5 days of training focused on the teaching of reading, phonics and handwriting

Materials	
Learner-level resources	Each learner received a Vula Bula anthology which they are able to take home and each classroom receives a set of Zenex readers (Ulwazi Lwethu) or DBE readers depending on the language.

Table 2: High level summary of the Northern Cape intervention

		2024
Statistics	Grade	1-3
	# Learners	32 317
	# Teachers	894
	# Schools	125
	# Subject Advisers	8
	# Educator Assistants	62
	Budget (Northern Cape)	TBC
	Budget (Donors)	R26 million

| Training	
Subject advisers	Subject Advisors will form part of the support structure that enables strengthening of teacher and coach training. They will attend, monitor, and provide feedback during training sessions
Grade 1-3 teachers	Teachers will receive (on time) training at the beginning of each term which is equivalent to four times a year. In addition to that, teachers will also be provided with LTSM packages for the respective term of teaching. The training will have a core focus is on various methodologies that can be used to improve Early Grade Reading in Setswana Home Language(HL) and English First Additional Language (EFAL). This is will be covered through an array of topics including methodologies, LTSM usage, routines and assessment. Furthermore, teachers will also receive individual, onsite coaching support from external coaches, who will assist in strengthening teacher's pedagogical practices in the literacy classroom. These coaches will visit teachers to offer them support on a weekly or biweekly basis throughout the year.
Materials	
Teacher-level resources	• Termly scripted lesson plans • Termly Teacher guides- graded for Setswana (Home Language) and English Additional Language (EFAL).
Learner-level resources	These will differentiated by grades. However, the LTSM package will be inclusive of: • Alphabet Friezes • Phonic and conversation posters • Flashcards (phonics, sight words and theme vocabulary words) • Big books • Anthologies

5. Promising Programs

Is there evidence of small-scale programs significantly improving reading outcomes in SA?

Based on current projections, the number of learners unable to read for meaning in 2026 will be around 69%. This forecast is based on the plausible assumption that the effects of COVID-19 will not continue to influence learners' progress in the foundation phase and assumes that current educational practices remain unchanged. The question however, is whether this is reasonable? Whilst South Africa experienced significant gains in PIRLS until 2016 compared to other countries, it is unclear whether we have reached the maximum potential for improvements, at scale. The medium-term strategic framework includes interventions such as the "Rolling out of best practices such as lesson plans, graded reading books, individualised coaching of teachers learnt from Early Grade Reading Study for teaching reading and other innovations" to ensure all learners read for meaning. The corresponding target for PIRLS 2021 of average learner performance at 355 points is curious. The 355 points target aligns closely with expected outcomes from existing trajectories, essentially reflecting a business-as-usual approach, without focused large-scale change, system overhaul or focused implementation of lessons from the EGRS. We contend that at our current rate of change and lack of implementation of evidence-based lessons at scale, the progress, whilst commendable, tends to feel like marking time – marching in relatively the same spot without moving forward. Below we discuss two new additional pieces of homegrown research on what works to improve learner reading outcomes and their lessons for the system.

In 2023, Funda Wande implemented the final year of their three-year intervention in Limpopo. The intervention included three arms (1) LTSM only, which mainly consisted of a teacher guide and workbook, (2) Teaching assistants and LTSM, and (3) a control group. Figure 9 below shows the performance of grade 3 learners[4] in all three groups. **Thirty-two percent of grade 3 learners in LTSM plus TA schools were reaching the grade level benchmark, with 25% in LTSM-only schools and 15% in control schools**. Learners in Funda Wande TA plus LTSM schools were 125% of a year of learning ahead of learners in control schools, with learners in LTSM-only schools 60% ahead. It should also be noted that the study includes 10 schools that received no treatment in 2023, which means learners in these schools were able to maintain their gains.

Figure 9: Performance of learners in the Funda Wande intervention relative to Sepedi Benchmarks

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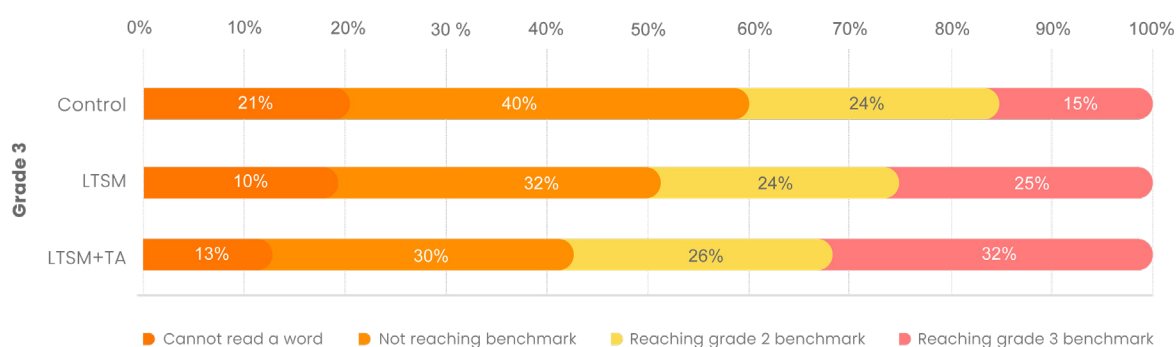
4   Grade 3 learners would have been in the intervention since they were in grade 1 in 2021.

A small pilot study named Zazi iZandi used existing government educator assistants to test the efficacy of a 6-week program in 2023 focused on ensuring all learners know their letters by the end of grade 1. Letter sound knowledge is a fundamental skill in ensuring increased fluency and eventually comprehension. It is well documented that children who do not know their letters of the alphabet in grade 1 are perpetually behind and never catch up (Wills et al, 2022). The pilot was developed and implemented by the Binding Constraints Lab, the Learning Trust, Masinyusane and Funda Wande. It focused on 25 schools in two districts, Capricorn North in Limpopo and Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape. The schools in Limpopo were Sepedi Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) schools and in the Eastern Cape, isiXhosa LOLT. The focus of the pilot was to investigate whether educator assistants already part of the BEEI could support foundation phase learners to learn their letter sounds. The EAs were trained for two days and each TA was provided with a guide, a learner progress and attendance tracker, Vula Bula alphabet frieze, small letter cards for card games and a board game. **After 6-8 weeks (which included interruptions from school holidays) learners in both grades and provinces had improved by 6-7 letters, representing about a 27% improvement for Grade 1s and ˜130% for grade Rs**. As per table 4 below, the number of children performing at the grade 1 benchmark of 40 letters or more increased from 29% at baseline to 42% at endline.

Table 4: Percentage of Zazi iZandi learners with zero or at or above 40 on baseline and endline for Grade 1

	Baseline			Endline		
	#	Total	%	#	Total	%
Zero Score	11	122	8.9%	8	122	6.6%
Below 40	87	122	71%	71	122	58%
40 and above	35	122	29%	51	122	42%

Using materials and TAs to accelerate gains in learner outcomes. Evidently, there are significant changes that need to be made in the education system if we want to ensure that all learners can read for meaning. These include, for example, improved preparation of new teachers, upskilling the current cohort of teachers, addressing accountability, and ensuring the language policy aligns with best practice to support learning in African languages. However, each year, new South African research is produced on existing early grade reading interventions that show potential for change. Broadly, those with the largest effect sizes fall into three categories: (1) LTSM, including workbooks with aligned quality teacher guides, graded readers and training, (2) the effective use of teaching assistants and (3) teacher coaching. The first two, LTSM and teaching assistants, are politically appealing and, given the announcement of the extension of the presidential employment stimulus when the MTBS was tabled in November 2023, financially plausible at scale. **The DBE Rainbow Workbooks have been universally available since 2011, with the DBE spending over R1-billion per annum to print more than 60 million workbooks (National Treasury, 2023b). These Workbooks have gone a long way in ensuring a minimum floor when it comes to the equitable provision of LTSM and to some degree teaching**. However, further consideration is needed to enhance their quality and to ensure consistent support for teachers through improved lesson plans or teacher guides. The provision of graded readers has proven to improve reading outcomes, however, there is no minimum standard set of graded readers and supplementary reading

materials that is required in all foundation phase classrooms. In 2019-2020, the Eastern Cape distributed anthologies of graded readers at a cost of R15 per learner, and in 2024, will do so again at a cost of R17 per learner. It would cost just over R50 million to make these available to all South African learners in grades 1-3[5]. Zazi iZandi also provides a new way to think about supplementary materials alongside TAs - at a small group level. The Zazi iZandi team estimates the cost per EA to provide the set of supplementary materials at between R70 and R90 per TA. Whilst we support the need for in-depth planning to implement some of these lessons, a balance must be struck between long-term planning and the cost of effectively ignoring the evidence and implementation lessons in the short to medium term. The Funda Wande team estimates that 81% of the cost of delivering their rigorous program can be borne by leveraging public employment programs like the PYEI, with the costs of LTSM reducing by up to 40% at scale. Already, four phases of the PYEI, at a cost of R25 billion have passed, with very little targeted support and training for TAs, with the result that they are underutilized for supporting the delivery of learning outcomes. In phase 2 of the PES, a total of R6 billion was allocated to the PYEI, of which 8% (R460 million) was allocated to training and operations (DBE, undated). However, only 31% of this amount was reported as spent (R140 million) (PMG, 2022). Leaving R320 million available to provide rigorous training and materials to TAs. Whilst operational costs include additional staff that provinces may employ to manage the program, in practice the proportion allocated to training or other operations is at the discretion of the province. By phase 4 the training allocation had been reduced to around 2% (~R150 million). We suspect that this was due to conflicting interests between ensuring a large number of youth opportunities whilst extending employment times and in response to the underspend on training (which in some part would have been caused by onerous procurement processes). Regardless, the PYEI remains a significant underutilized opportunity to support learning outcomes.

It is only logical that if the PYEI is to continue, we need to make the Rand stretch further and deliberately to address both youth unemployment and foundation phase literacy and numeracy.

In phase 2, a total of R6 billion was allocated to the PYEI, of which 8% (460 million) was allocated to training and operations.

Only 31% of this amount was reported as spent (R140 million). Leaving R320 million available to provide rigorous training and materials to TAs.

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5   Calculations based on School Realities 2021.

6. Teacher retirements

What more do we know about teacher retirements?

Limpopo (58%) will be the worst affected province by teacher retirements, followed by the Eastern Cape (51%) and Mpumalanga (50%). All three of these provinces can be classified as rural or somewhat rural, which impacts their ability to attract and recruit the correct number of teachers with the appropriate skillsets.

A large portion of retiring teachers are senior educators which includes HODs, principals and other members of the senior management teams. In five provinces, the proportion of teachers that will retire is greater than 70%, most notably in Limpopo, with 81%. Whilst there is some evidence that younger teachers may have more content knowledge than older teachers (SACMEQ, 2013), experienced teachers are key in the running of schools and the management of learners, and this raises concerns regarding school stability and succession planning within senior management teams. Principal and deputy principal positions are recruited at the provincial level and there are often delays in finalising appointments.

*Table 5: Percentage of educators aged 50+ in 2021*

Province	All educators	Senior educators (HOD, Dep.Principals, Principals & Other)	Primary School
EC	51%	71%	58%
FS	43%	65%	49%
GP	41%	65%	42%
KN	39%	65%	44%
LP	58%	81%	63%
MP	50%	73%	55%
NC	43%	69%	44%
NW	47%	70	52%
WC	42%	73%	40%

Source: Böhmer and Gustafsson, 2023

The provinces with the highest teacher retirements also have some of the largest class sizes. According to policy, the ideal maximum class size in the foundation phase is 35 learners in grades R-4 (DBE, 2022b). However almost "70% of grade 3 learners are in class sizes greater than 35, 49% are in class sizes greater than 40, 17% are in class sizes greater than 50 and 6% are in class sizes exceeding 60 learners" (Wills, 2023a). As per figure 10 below, in KZN, Mpumalanga, the Free State, Limpopo and the North West, more than 50% of learners in grade 3 are in classes larger than 40. Very large class sizes are also prevalent in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, with 35% of learners in classes larger than 50, and 20% in classes larger than 60 in Limpopo, and 18% in classes larger than 50 and 11% in classes larger than 60 in the Eastern Cape (Wills, 2023). Teacher retirements will only serve to exacerbate this problem. Optimistically, we should assume that all retiring teachers will be replaced, however, we also know that some delays in hiring are deliberate in order to balance the budget. Whilst hiring freezes are not always widely reported, Spaull and Ntaka (2022) use PERSAL[6] data between 2011 and 2021 and find that between 2019 and 2021 there was a decline of 2,071 HOD's and 763 Deputy Principals, indicating hiring freezes in senior management positions.

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6   PERSAL is the government's payroll system.

Figure 10: Percentage of learners in schools with grade 3 class sizes over 40, over 50 and over 60 by province 2017/18
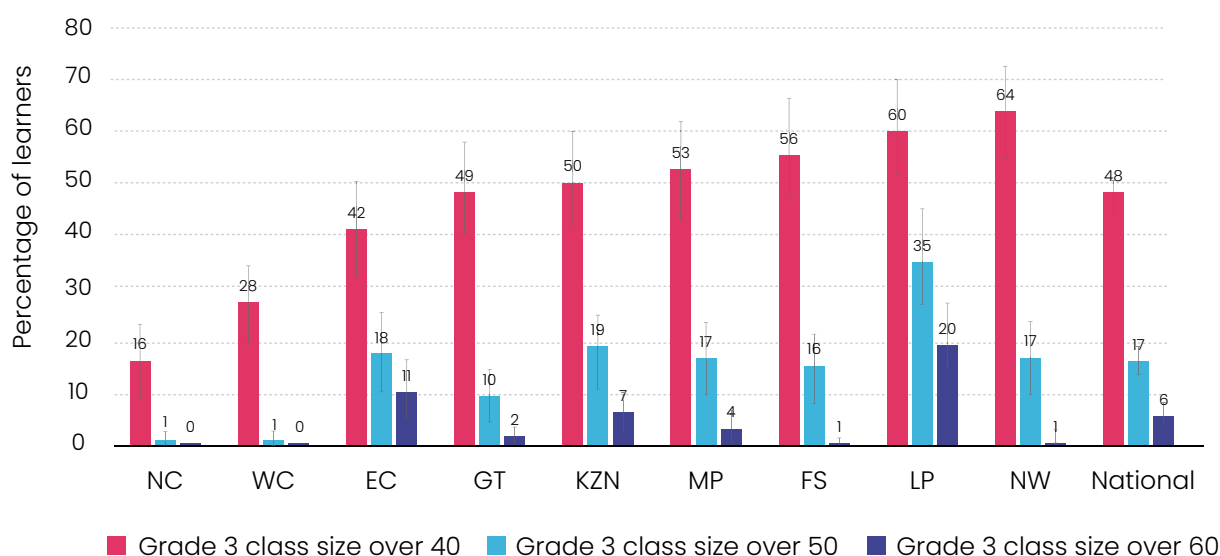
Source: Wills (2023) South African teacher shortages as revealed through class sizes and learner-educator ratios

7. The current and future administrations

Is there a new dawn ahead for reading?

Following the release of PIRLS 2021, the DBE announced that through a process of broad consultation it would embark on the development of a new Reading Strategy. The strategy is yet to be published, but here is what we know:

1. **There seems to have been some quality reflection on the reasons the previous strategy did not work** including implementing initiatives that showed no impact, poor access to effective resources, no tracking of progress, and weaknesses in initial teacher education and continued professional development.
2. **They will focus on developing an enabling policy environment that prioritizes African home language materials and teacher training.**
3. There is an acknowledgement for the need for **a core set of LTSM** including 40 age-appropriate titles per learner in home language and an additional language, and graded readers in home languages.
4. The need to **improve initial teacher education programs focused on teaching reading in African languages**, with particular mention of the adoption of the PrimTEd Standards.

"We are prioritising appropriate African Home language materials including graded readers, decodable texts and alphabet freezes. These would be systematically incorporated into LTSM provisioning"

(DBE, 2023)

Although the DBE has yet to complete and publish the strategy, in a presentation provided in November 2023, they indicated that 2024 will be a year focused on advocacy and the development of materials, with implementation beginning in 2025 on two aspects - mother tongue-based instruction (MTBI) to be extended to grade 6 (grade 4 2025) and curriculum redesign. We could not locate timelines for the other aspects, e.g. the delivery of a minimum set of LTSM for all learners. Whilst we are encouraged by this development, as we largely support all current focus areas, at the time of writing this report (January 2024), there was no official reading strategy available, with limited information provided in presentations. Further, the two interventions prioritised, on the face of it, do not immediately address challenges faced by learners currently in the foundation phase. Curriculum change is a medium-term project which may not reap desired results in the short term, and the extension of MTBI, whilst in line with new research (Mohohlwane, 2023), must be viewed against the other systemic constraints - teacher preparation, continued professional development and weak pedagogical knowledge. It kicks down the line interventions that are almost immediately realisable e.g. the provision of a minimum set of materials. Such delays are even more concerning given delays in publishing the strategy and the upcoming elections which will be a cause for distraction.

Are political parties prioritising reading?

As we head into an election year, we thought it prudent to review the manifestos of the top 5 political parties ANC, the DA, EFF, IFP, ACTIONSA, which are projected to hold 77% of all votes in the upcoming election (IPSOS, 2023). The analysis of manifestos is tricky as they do not include fully developed policies. , and two parties already govern (the ANC and the DA) so where there are gaps in their manifestos, these may be addressed where they govern. Nonetheless, the Manifestos reflect the priorities of the political parties, and promises made to voters and the broader population. At the time of writing this report, only one of these political parties, ActionSA, had released their 2024 Manifesto. However, a review of the 2019 Manifestos shows that none of these parties make any mention of Reading[7]. This is curious as reading was already a crisis in South Africa as evidenced by the PIRLS results in 2006, 2011 and 2016. It is concerning that a change in political party or coalition government may yield little by way of change. The EFF for example makes reference to basic education, but misses the mark on reading, which is worrying given that IPSOS projected the EFF at 15% of votes. As a potential "kingmaker" in the upcoming election, their policy positions may be a key enabler for change or stagnation. Even new political parties like RISE Mzansi have developed a lengthy list of broad areas to be improved in basic education in their 2024 manifesto, yet, reading is not one of them. These manifestos are increasingly important given that we may be moving closer to coalition governments at provincial and perhaps national levels. Ensuring that reading appears at the top of each party's agenda, with tangible commitments will be key in ensuring that it is not left to party politics.

The reading panel will develop a separate supplementary note once all manifestos have become available.

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7   ActionSA was only launched in 2020

8. Recommendations for government

All the previous recommendations of the reading panel reports 2022-2023 remain unchanged. However, given the increasing number of provinces taking the lead in developing reading strategies, we have now separated some of the targets, where relevant, between national and provincial government. Through this separation, we then note progress made on the recommendations, and commend in particular the provinces that continue to develop rigorous responses to reading, and partnering to implement evidence-based interventions at scale. We do however continue to stress that without strong policy frameworks at a national level, and a plan to systematically address reading for all learners, we do not believe these interventions can be sustained in the long term and benefit all learners. Further, given the austerity climate, it is even more important to advocate for reading to be a priority, with guaranteed minimum norms provided to learners.

Recommendation from 2022/3:	Status	Comment:
Measuring what matters: implementing a universal standardized assessment of reading at the primary school level	Minor progress	The only national assessment is the Systemic Evaluation that was meant to be the replacement to the Annual National Assessment which was abolished in 2014. The results were presented in May 2023. However, no report has yet been published (due in 2023). The Systemics are only implemented in sample of schools, every 3-4 years. It does not fulfill the function of ensuring all primary schools focus on improving and measuring reading. We do recognise however the efforts made in implementing the systemic evaluation and the ELNAs.
National: Moving from slogans to budgets: allocating meaningful budgets to reading resources and reading interventions not only talking about them	No progress	Reviewing the 2023 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) and the February 2023 budget shows that there are no new national budgets for reading programs or reading resources.
Provincial: Moving from slogans to budgets: allocating meaningful budgets to reading resources and reading interventions not only talking about them	Notable Progress	Four provinces are now implementing some level of reading intervention at scale. The WCED has allocated R111-million (2023-2025) for a Foundation Phase 'Reading for Meaning' program. The GDE has allocated R20-million to a Grade R program (2022-2024), with an additional R80-million donor funding. The ECDoE has allocated R24-million (2023/4) to support the implementation of their reading strategy and the NCDoE is receiving R26 million in donor funding in 2024. This indicator will move to green once the proportion of foundation phase served reaches 75%, given the size of the provinces currently implementing interventions, it is closer to 29%[8].

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8   Calculation based on 2021 School realities

National: Providing a standard minimum set of reading resources to all Foundation Phase classrooms (Grade R-3) as a matter of urgency.	No progress	There is still no national program to provide all schools with a minimum set of reading resources, other than the DBE Workbook program which has been in place since 2011. Additional resources are needed to teach reading (graded readers, Big Books, Teacher Guides, alphabet friezes etc.). Once the Reading plan is published and implemented, it will be possible to record progress on this target.
Provincial: Providing a standard minimum set of reading resources to all Foundation Phase classrooms (Grade R-3) as a matter of urgency.	Progress	The Western Cape (grade 1-3) and Gauteng (Grade R), have rolled out programs reaching all Grade R (GDE) and all Grade 1 (WCED) teachers. The Eastern Cape has delivered graded readers to all Gr1-3 learners and the Northern Cape will roll out a program (2024-2027) to provide teachers with lesson plans
University audit of pre-service teacher education programs.	Progress	We understand that the Council on Higher Education is in the initial stages of conducting a review of initial teacher education programs. Full details of the review are not currently available and it is unclear when this process will be completed.

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