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The potential and limits of performance management: Improving basic education in the Western Cape

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on the management and governance of education at provincial level – specifically on efforts to introduce performance management into education by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and their impact. Post-1994 the WCED inherited a bureaucracy that was well placed to manage the province's large public education system. Subsequently, irrespective of which political party has been in power, the WCED consistently has sought to implement performance management. This paper explores to what extent determined, top-down efforts, led by the public sector, can improve dismal educational performance.

The paper concludes that the WCED is (and long has been) a relatively well-run public bureaucracy. However, the sustained, determined efforts to strengthen the operation of the WCED's bureaucracy have not translated into systematic improvements in schools in poorer areas. One possible implication is that efforts to strengthen hierarchy might usefully be complemented with additional effort to support more horizontal, peer-to-peer governance at the school level.

Keywords: Education, public administration, performance management, New Public Management, political settlements, bureaucracy, hierarchy, principal-agent, Western Cape education department

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This paper is one of a series which explores the politics and governance of basic education in South Africa at national, provincial (Western Cape and Eastern Cape), district and school levels. (See Annex A for an overview of the overall research design and hypotheses.) In South Africa's democratic constitution, education was designated as a shared responsibility between national and provincial levels – with very broad scope (subject to the framework set nationally) for provinces to determine how to implement it. The focus of this paper is on the management and governance of education at provincial level – specifically on efforts to introduce performance management into education by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and their impact. The paper does not examine the pedagogical component of education; curriculum reform; learning culture; civil society campaigns to prove education; or teacher training. A complementary paper (Hoadley, Levy, Shumane and Wilburn, 2016) focuses on school-level governance in the WCED system.

In the years following the democratic elections of 1994, the new South African government enunciated the intention of adopting 'best practice' approaches to governing. This included a high-profile effort to incorporate into government the principles and practices of results-based 'New Public Management' (NPM) – both across the public sector as a whole, and within the education sector. The dilemma, though, is that the political and institutional conditions for NPM to be effective are stringent. As a landmark review of the experience with NPM in OECD countries put it:

> "To launch, sustain and implement a comprehensive strategy for public management reform requires … a high degree of consensus over what needs to be done, sustained over five-years-plus … informed leadership, both from politicians and top public civil servants… considerable organizational capacity… and a degree of public acceptance. These are seldom all satisfied in the real world of public management reform." (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000: 88–89).

As a companion paper (Cameron and Naidoo, 2016) shows, efforts at the national level to introduce NPM into South Africa's education sector fell foul of the underlying institutional and political realities. The African National Congress governed as an 'alliance'; policies were negotiated among multiple competing factions, with a strong voice for organised labour. In consequence, ambitious-seeming national-level NPM measures ended up being watered down almost to the point of becoming toothless. The majority of provinces mirrored the national level, in the sense that provincial-level institutional and political constraints undercut the potential for effectively introducing NPM.

The Western Cape province emerges as a potential exception. Post-1994, it has seen repeated alternation among competing political parties. At the outset of democracy, it inherited a bureaucracy that was well placed to manage the province's large public education system relatively effectively. Subsequently, irrespective of which political party has been in power, the WCED consistently has sought to

implement performance management. The Western Cape thus offers a good opportunity for exploring to what extent determined, top-down efforts, led by the public sector, can turn around a legacy of dismal educational performance.

Our exploration takes the form of an analytically informed historical narrative, following the methodology laid out in Bates, Greif, Levi, Rosenthal and Weingast (1998). We bring to the research the perspective of scholars in the fields of governance, institutions, politics and public management. (Neither of us is an education sector specialist.) Our analytical point of departure comprises recent comparative cross-country, theorising and reflection on the determinants of public sector performance, as laid out in Levy (2014), and summarised in Annex A. Our historical narrative is based on interviews with a wide range of current and former senior officials and other stakeholders, and an in-depth review of primary and secondary materials. Our findings are paradoxical. On the one hand, we find that the WCED is (and long has been) a relatively well run bureaucracy, not only within the South African context, but also (in our experience as specialists in comparative public management, and with reference to comparative indicators of government effectiveness globally[1]) likely so when compared with educational bureaucracies in other middle-income countries; further, we find that over the past decade the WCED has been intensifying its commitment to performance management. On the other hand, however, we find that notwithstanding the sustained efforts, educational outcomes, especially among lower socio-economic segments of the population, remain at levels similar to those of countries and regimes with per capita incomes (and public resource availability) that are orders of magnitude below the Western Cape.

The paper proceeds as follows. Sections I and II take a long view of the drivers of performance of the WCED. With this history as backdrop, Section III comparatively assesses education sector performance in the Western Cape relative to other provinces within South Africa and some other African countries; and over time. Section IV extends the review and assessment of performance into the period since 2009, when the Democratic Alliance (governing a South African province for the first time) put in place a new generation of performance management tools. Section V reflects more broadly on the paradoxical results, on what might be the possible causes of the paradox – and, based on experience in other countries, on what might be some potential entry points for accelerating progress in achieving better educational outcomes.

I: The 'long route of accountability' in the Western Cape

Table 1 below uses an heuristic device (one that we employ across all of the papers in the ESID South Africa education study) to highlight the contrast between the

[1] For a comparative assessment of governance and inequality in South Africa and four other middle-income countries (Brazil, Mexico, Turkey and Thailand), which draws on governance indicators, see Levy, Hirsch and Woolard (2015).

Table 1: Governance of education – contrasting political settlements

Western Cape education governance		
Hierarchical	15-20%	60-65%
Negotiated	5-10%	5-15%
	Personalised	Impersonal

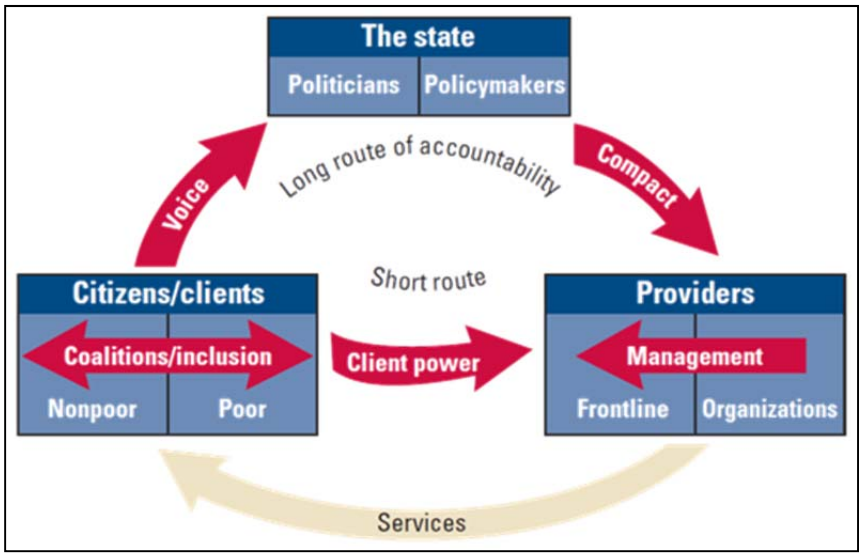
National-level education policymaking		
Hierarchical	20%	25%
Negotiated	20%	35%
	Personalised	Impersonal

institutional arrangements for decision-making in education at the national level and in the Western Cape. (The numbers should be interpreted as indicative of comparative patterns, not precise quantitative estimates.) The table characterises the arrangements across two dimensions: whether governance is hierarchical (principal-agent) or negotiated (multi-principal); and whether decision-making is based among personalised deals among individuals and groups or is based on impersonal rules. As the table summarises (and for reasons detailed in Cameron and Naidoo (2016)) at the national level governance is disproportionately negotiated, with a significant personalised dimension. By contrast, for reasons that this section and the next will detail, in the Western Cape governance largely is based on hierarchical and impersonal decision-making.

The World Bank's 2004 *World Development Report* (World Bank, 2003) provides a useful broad framework for thinking about hierarchical decision-making. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, it distinguishes between two sets of hierarchical accountability relationships, which together add up to a 'long route' of public service provision – a 'voice' relationship, through which citizens hold political leaders accountable for delivering results, and a 'compact' relationship, through which top-level policymakers can hold lower-level bureaucrats accountable. On both scores, the Western Cape's legacy is a (relatively) propitious one. This section focuses on the 'voice' link; the next section on the 'compact'.

In the 'long route', the mechanisms through which citizens exercise voice is through political competition – and political competition has played out differently in the Western Cape than in South Africa's other provinces. A key distinction here is between 'programmatic' and 'patronage' political competition. In programmatic settings, political parties compete around alternative visions of what government should do, with all leading parties equally committed to try and deliver on their promises, should they be elected. In patronage settings, competition is based on the differential abilities of parties to build alliances by offering special, personalised favours to clientelistic networks.

Figure 1: The long route of accountability



Source: World Bank (2003).

In 1994, South Africa ended centuries of political and economic racial discrimination, and established an electoral democracy. This democracy was organised around a quasi-federal system consisting of a national government, and nine provinces, which were granted some authority (often with shared responsibilities involving both central and provincial government). One of these provinces was the Western Cape, which was previously part of a larger Cape Province; prior to 1994, the Cape Province included portions of what is now the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape provinces.

Table 2: Political control of the Western Cape provincial government: 1994-2014

New NP/African National Congress Government of Provincial Unity	1994-1998
New NP	1998-1999
New NP/Democratic Party Coalition	1999-2000
Democratic Alliance	2000 -2001
African National Congress/New NP Coalition	2001-2005
African National Congress	2005-2009
Democratic Alliance	2009-

Across most of South Africa, electoral politics since 1994 has been dominated by the African National Congress (ANC), which enjoyed large electoral majorities – and which governs through a combination of programmatic commitments and personalised promises (the balance between which varies from province to province). By contrast, the Western Cape has been characterised by robust inter-party political competition, centred around alternative programmatic agendas. Indeed, as Table 2 details, in 20 years there have been seven different political parties/coalitions controlling the province.

To many observers' surprise, the National Party (NP, historically the dominant party of white Afrikaners) won control of the Western Cape province in the first democratic elections in 1994. The NP subsequently (unsuccessfully) tried to rebrand itself as the 'New National Party' and then combined with the Democratic Party (DP) to form the Democratic Alliance (DA). In recent years, the Western Cape vote increasingly has shifted to the Democratic Alliance, which in 2009 became the province's majority party, with 51.5 percent of the vote – and was re-elected in 2014 with a larger majority (59.44 percent).

Underlying the Western Cape's distinctive pattern of political competition is the distinctive ethnic distribution of the population. As Table 3 shows, as of 1996 over three-fourths of South Africa's populations were Black/African. But this group comprised only 21 percent of Western Cape residents. The Western Cape majority comprised people of mixed race ('coloureds' in the South African lexicon), for the majority of whom Afrikaans was the home language. Since 1994, country-wide the overwhelming majority of the Black/African vote consistently has gone to the ANC. The 'coloured' vote, by contrast, has been far more contested – not only by competing appeals to ethnic allegiance, but also by programmatic promises to deliver better government.

Table 3: Population distribution, by ethnic background: 1996 Census

	Western Cape		**National**	
	Numbers	***Percentage***	***Numbers***	***Percentage***
Black/ African	826,691	20.9	31,127,631	76.7%
Mixed race ('coloured')	2,146,109	54.2	3,600,446	8,9%
Indian/Asian	40,376	1,0	1,045,596	2,6%
White	821,551	20,8	4,434,697	10,9%
Unspecified/other	122,148	3,1	375,204	0,9%
Total	**3,956,875**	**100%**	**40,583,574**	100%

Source: Republic of South Africa (RSA) (2006).

These differences in ethnic composition and political allegiance have had a further consequence for governance (specifically in education) in the Western Cape – with significantly less influence on the part of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). As a companion paper (Cameron and Naidoo, 2016) has shown, SADTU had a major influence in shaping the content of performance management systems in basic education at the national level. But SADTU has been less influential in the Western Cape.

In part, this is a consequence of SADTU's close alignment with the ANC, which, as we have seen, has been relatively weaker in the Western Cape. In part, it is a consequence of the different trajectories of the anti-apartheid struggle in the Western Cape and elsewhere. SADTU was in important part a focal point of resistance to

apartheid's 'bantu education'. Given the Western Cape's different demographics, the logic of resistance to apartheid took a different turn in the province than elsewhere. This resulted in different patterns of teacher organisation. Even at its peak in 2004, SADTU members never accounted for more than 67 percent of the Western Cape's teachers. By 2014 SADTU had 54.5 percent membership and the Amalgamated Teachers Union (ATU),[2] 45.5 percent. NAPTOSA, the more conservative union, which focuses primarily on professional issues, is the biggest component of ATU. This can be compared with provinces such as Mpumalanga/ North West where SADTU'S membership is more than 70 percent of unionised teachers (Education Labour Relations Council [ELC], 2005, 2010, 2013).

Labour relations thus played out differently in the Western Cape than elsewhere in the country. For one thing, the relative weakness of SADTU meant that it did not have the de facto veto which it seemingly enjoyed in many other provinces on all management initiatives. For another, the WCED has long had in place a sophisticated Labour Relations Unit with 54 staff, which has tried to manage the unions rather than embarking upon direct confrontation; for example, it has a welldeveloped process to deal with teachers who are aggrieved that they did not get promotion. Some of the senior WCED management are also SADTU members; broadly, formal WCED-SADTU interactions generally proceed along professional lines, with all bringing the concerns of committed educators to the table.

II: The Western Cape's education bureaucracy: From 'good enough' Weberianism to performance management

This section explores the second link in Figure 1's 'long route of accountability chain – the 'compact'. It explores how bureaucratic hierarchy has operated in recent decades within the Western Cape, specifically within the WCED.

Historically, South Africa had a centralised form of governance, but the intergovernmental relations system changed substantially as a result of the 1996 constitution, which stipulated the creation of a quasi-federal system, consisting of national, provincial and local spheres of government. Education has been designated as a 'concurrent' function of both national and provincial government. Service conditions for educators and education policy are set nationally. However, the employers of teachers are the respective provincial heads of the education department (the Superintendents-General). The WCED in turn has deconcentrated education to eight districts, which themselves are divided into 49 circuits.

Provinces have extremely limited own revenue. In 2008-09, own revenue amounted to 3.7 percent of provinces' own revenue. The provinces receive most of their revenue from national government via equitable share and conditional grants. In

[2] ATU consists of a number of independent unions, who combine for the purposes of collective bargaining only.

2008-09, provinces received 80.1 percent of their revenue via the equitable share and 16.2 percent from conditional grants. Provinces have the discretion to spend their equitable share on their functions as they deem fit. This means national government cannot intervene with the allocation of the respective provincial budgets, although they do have to conform with national norms and standards, which for education are set by the national Department of Education (Jansen and Taylor, 2003: 6-7).

As at November 2014, WCED employed 933 public servants at its Cape Town Head Office; 1,274 public servants, along with 680 office-based educators, at eight district and circuit offices, and 29,900 teachers at 1,533 government schools. Circuit staff are mainly office-based educators, although they do have a few public servants (administrative support staff) in their team (WCED Data Base, 2014).[3]

Our exploration of how this system has been governed is organised around four sets of themes (and related sub-periods): the bureaucratic inheritance as of 1994; some national-level efforts to restructure the education sector in the initial years of democracy, and their effects within the Western Cape; efforts between 1999 and 2009 to racially 'transform' the bureaucracy; and the introduction at the provincial level of national initiatives to foster performance management. (Section IV continues the story beyond 2009, when the DA became the majority party in the Western Cape.) As will become evident, throughout the past two decades, the WCED's platform has been relatively strong.

A platform of relative continuity

As of 1994, the structure, organisation, resource availabilities and quality of South Africa's educational system was overwhelmingly the consequence of a centuries-long legacy of inequality, poverty and apartheid. Democratisation was accompanied by public policies that ended the apartheid organisational structures, and radically reshaped the flow of public resources in a more pro-poor direction.[4] But the shadow of the past continues to loom large. This continuity is evident in (notwithstanding the more progressive fiscal allocations) the continuing overall advantageous access[5] to resources of public schools that serve elite populations (a topic that is outside the scope of the present paper). Continuity can also take more subtle forms, for example in the likely persistence over time of divergent organisational cultures within schools and in their proximate bureaucratic sub-systems. Consequently, it is with the

[3] The data are only for teachers employed directly by the WCED. School governing bodies (SGBs) also have the right to employ teachers directly, but the WCED does not keep data on teachers employed by SGBs, given that the employing authority is individual schools.

[4] The share of public education expenditure for primary and secondary schools going to schools serving the poorest 20 percent rose from 19 percent in 1993, to 22 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2005; between 1993 and 2005, the corresponding share going to the richest 20 percent fell from 28 percent to 13 percent. *World Development Indicators,* (multiple years).

[5] For example, via the provision of supplementary resources by affluent parents (including for the recruitment of additional teachers); the more favourable inherited physical infrastructure; and the persistence of better trained and more experienced teachers in elite schools.

organisational legacy at the end of apartheid that our exploration of the evolving operation of the WCED begins.

The state of schools in the Western Cape in the early 1990s just prior to democratisation with respect to performance was as follows:

In terms of historically 'white' (so-called Model-C) schools, there was a wellresourced and performing school system. They were partially funded by the state and had increased autonomy. They were regulated by the education department of the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA). There was little evidence of patronage in the appointment/promotion of teachers.

Historically, 'coloured' schools were under the control of the House of Representatives (HoR), the political structures created by the apartheid authorities for the 'self-government' of South Africa's mixed race population. This was strongly resisted by communities and some teachers (Chisholm, 1999; Soudien, 2002; Kallaway, 2002). The system did, however, enable the schools to extract resources from the HoR, which gave them a better education than African schools. As discussed in detail in Annex B, there was no evidence of capture of the system by apredatory elite during the apartheid era. The majority of schools had a conservative organisational culture (Fiske and Ladd (2004:75-76). In some politically activist schools, there was a strong emphasis on professionalism, which was used as a bulwark against the excesses of apartheid.[6] The HoR did, however, attempt to control the appointment of senior positions, most notably principals.[7]

Black schools were poorly resourced. The Department of Education and Training (DET; the former Department of Bantu Education) which controlled Black education was characterised by authoritarian control, poorly trained teachers, personalised patronage (Chisholm, 1999), and a lack of performance culture. There was also strong resistance to apartheid education in Black schools (Kallaway, 2002; Soudien, 2002). Given the demographics, the DET black school system was disproportionately small in the Western Cape setting.

The new provincial government of the Western Cape, created in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 elections, inherited the education departments that were located within the Western Cape – the CPA, HoR and DeT. Portions of the old CPA hived off and became part of the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape provinces. The Western Cape, unlike many other provinces, did not have any bantustans[8] to incorporate. This contributed to a more seamless amalgamation than most of the

[6] Interview with Crain Soudien, former Professor of Education, University of Cape Town, 27 March, 2014.
[7] *The Argus*, 1987; 1990.
[8] Territories set aside for black inhabitants of South Africa as part of the policy of apartheid, and governed by 'so-called' independent authorities.

other provinces (where amalgamations with bantustans had turned out to be time-consuming, disruptive and costly).

Not only was the Western Cape one of two provinces (of a total of nine) which were controlled by the opposition after the 1994 elections,[9] but it was the only province where there was no change of political power. Fiske and Ladd (2004:75-76) pointed out that during the 1994–95 period, when the power and responsibilities of the provinces were still being established at the national level, the erstwhile CPA bureaucracy that had provided education for white students was still able to exert significant power by providing much of the administrative expertise for the new department. The political forces that had gained control over the education of the 'coloured' students in the 1980s through the HoR continued to be influential and to exert a largely conservative force. In fact a number of ex-HoR politicians had joined the NP and four of the ministers[10] in Hernus Kriel's 1994 cabinet had come from HoR ranks.

However, education officials who had previously been employed in the DET were left in a quandary, not knowing whether they were to report to the DET head office in Pretoria that was being shut down or the new WCED. Despite the uncertainty of the DET, most of the abovementioned factors contributed to the Western Cape department of education being up and functioning quite quickly in comparison with the departments in other provinces.[11]

Table 4 provides striking evidence of continuity in government. The bureaucracy largely was insulated from the rapid turnover of the provincial-cabinet-level appointments of political heads (i.e. the provincial ministers of education. As the table shows, over the past two decades, the WCED has effectively been led by three superintendents general – Brian O'Connell, Ron Swartz, and Penny Vinjevold. This degree of stability in bureaucratic leadership is a major asset in underpinning performance.

Table 4: Superintendent generals: WCED 1994-2014

F. Knoetze (acting, 1994-1995)
Brian O'Connell (1995-2001)
Johan Fourie (acting, 2001)
Ron Swartz (2002-2009)
Brian Schreuder.(acting, 2009)
Penny Vinjevold (2009-)

But continuity also has its costs; old organisational cultures can remain entrenched. Indeed, this is what appears to have happened in the WCED. Interviews with ex-

[9] KwaZulu-Natal was then controlled by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the other opposition-controlled province.
[10] In terms of the Western Cape Constitution, provincial ministers are called ministers. This is the only province which uses this nomenclature.
[11] Interview with senior WCED official, 12 June, 2014.

HoR officials and one former minister for education suggested that 'coloured' ex-HoR officials (and not old CPA officials) dominated the new education department. Unlike the CPA, which ran schools on a provincial basis only, the HoR ran education nationally, and had the most staff. As one interviewee said, 'The HoR in effect incorporated the old CPA and DET'.

As noted earlier, and detailed in Annex B, the HoR's department of education brought with it a conservative and rule-bound culture into the WCED. Patronage was pervasive, but it was on the margins of what one might call 'good enough Weberianism'.[12] Interviews suggest that in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 democratic elections, this conservative culture became the dominant strain in the new WCED – 'Good enough Weberianism' became the order of the day.

Absorbing policy shocks from the national level

In the first half dozen years of democracy, the education sector was characterised by far-reaching structural changes that aimed to decisively leave behind the apartheid legacy. As a companion paper (Hoadley et al., 2016) details, these included: a South African Schools Act, which decentralised very substantial authority to school-level governing bodies; a transformation of the curriculum; a radical shift in how teachers were trained; and a restructuring of the budgetary and personnel policies in an effort to eliminate racial inequities in resources.

From the perspective of the WCED, the most difficult policy change of the first Western Cape legislature (1994-99) was undoubtedly the rationalisation of teachers. In historically white and 'coloured' areas, the pupil-teacher ratio had been almost the same, and substantially higher than in black schools. The new rules on teacher recruitment made provision for schools to use their own sources of revenue; this created an opportunity for schools in relatively privileged areas (the so-called 'former Model C white schools) to levy relatively high school fees on parents, and thereby cushion the impact of the cuts of government-funded teaching posts by privately providing positions, viz school governing bodies (SGB) posts. The erstwhile coloured schools did not have wealthy parents on whom they could levy high school fees; as a result, they were the group that were most adversely affected by the teacher rationalisation process in the Western Cape. On average, formerly 'coloured' high schools lost more than 11 teacher positions per school between 1996 and 1999. Conversely, former African high schools gained a teacher (Fiske and Ladd, 2004: 108-122; Chisholm et al., 1999:397-398).

According to Fiske and Ladd (2004: 108-122), about 2,900 teachers opted for Voluntary Severance Packages (VSPs) and almost 2,000 left teaching in 1998 alone.

[12] By 'good enough Weberianism', we mean public administration structures that are organised along classically bureaucratic lines, have some significant shortfalls, but are sufficiently strong to support largely programmatic policies (as opposed to patronage). The term builds on Grindle (2004a)'s concept of 'good enough governance'.

Chisholm et al. (1999: 397-398) pointed out that 25 percent of principals themselves took the packages; furthermore, the teachers who took severance packages and left the school system had higher average qualifications than those who remained. The average teacher in 'coloured' secondary schools in 1996 had nearly four-and-a-half years of tertiary education, but by 1997 the typical teacher had one-third of a year less training. What was particularly problematic was the impact of the loss of mathematics and science teachers, many of whom were quick to accept the VSP because they had marketable skills which could be utilised in business and other sectors of the economy.

Transforming incrementally

As with all departments across South Africa's public sector, following the 1994 elections, the WCED began to transform its racial composition to mirror South Africa's democratic realities. Brian O'Connell (1995-2001), then Vice-Rector of Peninsula Technikon, was brought in as the first superintendent general in the democratic Western Cape as a unifying force. He was in charge of the department from 1995 to 2001. It was felt by the ruling NP that choosing someone from outside the three administrations would be less divisive than selecting a leader from within one of the three pre-existing departments.

Some affirmative action began relatively early. The 2000 restructuring of district-level education management and development centres (EMDCs) by O'Connell led to the 'population of districts with more representative appointments'. When the ANC won full control of the Western Cape in 2005, it accelerated this process of affirmative action in the department of education. In some parts of the administration (e.g. the Office of the Premier) organisational restructuring had, according to some interviewees, led to a rapid acceleration of the ANC's 'cadre deployment'[13] strategies, along the lines it had pursued in other parts of the country. So when ex-SADTU national vice president and then superintendent general of WCED, Ron Swartz, introduced an organisational restructuring of the head office in 2007, this was seen in many quarters as another cadre deployment exercise.

However, interviewees for this research suggested that there was a strong organisational need for this restructuring. The sub-directorate, Branch: Education and Planning, in the WCED was widely viewed as too big and unwieldy; it had curriculum, examinations, specialised education, research, ICT and infrastructure under its control. Ron Swartz split this branch into two. Interviewees suggested that there was logic and sound justification based on this restructuring, which was modelled on earlier reforms in Gauteng province.

[13] In 1997, the ANC introduced its Cadre Policy and Deployment Strategy, which advocated political appointments to senior positions in the public service. It emphasised recruitment from within the party, and potential deployees were made to understand and accept the basic policies and programmes of the ANC. The strategy made no reference to the need for administrative competence (de Jager, 2009).

The 2007 reorganisation thus involved the creation of a new head office organogram with a number of new positions. About 60 new staff were appointed, with hardly any of the existing staff losing their jobs. In this way, the ANC provincial government responded to pressure from ANC provincial party structures to transform the department. But, according to one (politically neutral) interviewee, it also recognised the need for a dedicated professional approach to the management of teachers, so proceeded with restructuring in a way that did not lead to the exodus of existing expertise.

The placement of staff under the Swartz reorganisation was largely completed when the ANC was voted out of power by the DA in 2009. The DA tweaked the organisation structure in 2011, but there was not a significant change to it (two to three persons were made redundant organisationally. A few staff who were perceived by the DA as incompetent (almost all had been appointed under Swartz), were worked out of the department around 2011.

Introduction of performance management

Throughout the two decades of democratic government, the WCED has endeavoured to put in place results-oriented approaches to performance management. In the first 15 years, these efforts took a lead from the systems-building efforts promoted by the national-level department of basic education.

Since the latter 1990s, in an effort to link performance and career pathing via an occupation-specific dispensation, the national-level department of basic education has come up with an ongoing stream of performance management initiatives – from the development appraisal system (DAS), individual performance management, whole school evaluations (WSE), to the 'integrated quality management system' (the IQMS, which encompasses all of these performance management systems (ELC, 2003)). As a companion paper (Cameron and Naidoo, 2016) details, these initiatives have often been intensive in bureaucratic processes, but light on results-based follow through. For all the limitations of these initiatives, the Western Cape bureaucracy has consistently taken performance management seriously – both by putting in place systems in place to implement the national initiatives, and (as we explore later) by taking a series of home-grown initiatives.

First to be introduced (in the late 1990s) were individual performance evaluations. Most interviewees were scathing of the performance management system for individual staff. A former provincial minister for education stated that: 'IQMS is not a proper form of evaluation. It does not add real value. It costs a fortune to administer and is time-consuming'. Other comments ranged from a useless 'form of evaluation', to 'a bit of a joke'. Interviews picked up gaming of performance management.[14] One

[14] The IQMS is made up of four lesson observation performance standards and eight outside the classroom performance standards (see Cameron and Naidoo, 2016). Teachers get

strategically located interviewee indicated that in some schools, there is a disjuncture between the performance of schools and individual performance of teachers. In some cases, teachers in underperforming schools get high individual performance evaluations.

The whole school evaluation (WSE) was promulgated nationally in 2001, and implemented in the Western Cape in 2006, replacing the old provincial inspectorate system. It involves three steps: pre-evaluation documents prepared by the schools; an external evaluation; and post evaluation, whereby schools and districts analyse the WSE report and incorporate the recommendations into school improvement plans (SIPs). In the Western Cape, the WSE is carried out by teams, consisting of permanently appointed officials and part-time WCED supervisors appointed by the WCED this purpose. There is a multi-functional team for high schools, which consists of a team leader and three team members. Each school is evaluated according to the nine focus areas specified in the WSE policy. Lesson observation takes place in languages, mathematics, natural/life sciences and an elective (high schools) or foundation phase (primary schools). The length of the visit is three or five days, depending on the size of the school.

There are a number of critiques of WSE. Firstly, from the union perspective they are described as: 'nice little reports where little is done. WSE is equally useless (in comparison with performance management)'. Another complaint from a couple of interviewees was that, due to SADTU resistance, the external supervisors cannot evaluate teachers in classrooms. However, according to the WCED official in charge of WSE, there are classroom visits but under circumscribed conditions, e.g., the school needs to know in advance. Additional critiques were that WSE is not robust enough, and that it takes too long to implement. The objective is to evaluate high schools once in three years, and primary schools once in five years. There are 1,524 schools in the Western Cape. Since WSE evaluation began, about 757 schools (50 percent) have been evaluated (WCED Data Base, 2014).

But for all of the criticisms, there was also a sense that WSEs add value. SIPs prepared by schools are monitored online by the districts and are also an early warning system; many WCED staff we interviewed reported this to be a relatively effective measure of monitoring. The WCED follows up with a sample of schools which had been evaluated between 2006 and 2010, and checks on what was already done. Ongoing monitoring and support of schools identified as poorly performing is done by the districts. Interviewees reported that WSE evaluations have led to principals being held to account and, on occasion, disciplined. It has contributed to principals being subtly eased out for non-performance. It was argued by interviewees

evaluated over all 12 performance standards. An example of gaming reported by interviewees is a pattern where school staff whose functions primarily are administrative (e.g. the principal), give three to four lessons just before the IQMS evaluation process, which enables them to be averaged out over 12 rather than eight performance standards..

that good plans backed by competent public administration can add value, even if the tools themselves have substantial built-in limitations.

III: Performance of basic education in the Western Cape in comparative perspective

To what extent did the WCED's bureaucratic assets and commitment to performance management contribute to superior school performance? This section benchmarks Western Cape performance using three sets of measures: a comparative measure of management performance; measures which contrast the Western Cape's educational performance with that of South Africa's other provinces; and a comparative measure of Western Cape performance relative to selected other African countries (section IV looks in depth at recent changes over time within the Western Cape).

Comparative managerial performance

Management performance assessment tests (MPATs) have been undertaken across multiple departments across multiple provinces by the department of performance monitoring and evaluation located in the national presidency. The MPAT rates performance according to four levels:

- Level 1 – non-compliance with legal/regulatory requirements
- Level 2 – partial compliance with legal/regulatory requirements
- Level 3 – full compliance with legal/regulatory requirement
- Level 4 – full compliance, and doing this smartly.

The MPATs provide a comparative assessment of the relative quality of the education bureaucracies across South Africa's nine provinces. Annex C describes the MPAT and the results in detail. Table 6 provides an overview of management performance in education departments across all measures and all provinces.

Given the provenance of the MPAT – and the expectation that the national presidency would not be biased towards showing the only province not governed by the ruling ANC in an undeserved good light, the results are striking. As Table 5 shows, the WCED emerges as far and away the best managed of the provincial education departments: as of 2012-13, it was fully in compliance (or better) with 79 percent of the key performance indicators which were assessed. The next best provincial education department (Gauteng) was in compliance (or better) with 65 percent.

Table 5. MPAT assessment of WCED: Overall score of the education department

MPAT 2012-13 final scores % of all KPA scores per education department				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
EC EDU	59	17	17	7
FS EDU	10	31	52	7
GP EDU	14	21	31	34
KZN EDU	17	38	34	10
LP EDU	10	45	31	14
MP EDU	14	34	34	17
NC EDU	28	41	28	3
ND BE	24	24	45	7
NW BE&T	24	45	21	10
WC EDU	0	21	34	45
ALL EDU	24	31	31	15
ALL RSA	29	29	30	12

Source: The Presidency, Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, (2013).

Comparative educational outcomes

Necessarily, an assessment of the quality of an education system must benchmark the educational outcomes achieved of that system – over time, and relative to other systems. We do so in this subsection and, again, later in the paper.

Comparative benchmarking is challenging. For one thing, as is well known, educational outcomes depend in important part on the socio-economic profile of a system's learners. Consequently, if one is to rigorously benchmark the quality of an education system's management, using outcome-based indicators, it is necessary to control for demographic variations in the student population. In a South African context, the Western Cape's relatively favourable socio-economic profile is likely to produce relatively strong educational outcomes even if (contra Table 5) education in the Western Cape was no better managed than elsewhere in the country. A further complication is that, perhaps even more than elsewhere in South Africa, the Western Cape is extraordinarily dualistic – so average outcomes disguise huge within-system variation, making it difficult to make judgements as to quality at different points along the socio-economic spectrum. Finally, throughout the past quarter century, the Western Cape has experienced rapid in-migration, much of it from poverty-stricken parts of South Africa – making it difficult to assess trends in the quality of the system over time.

A further challenge for comparative benchmarking has to do with the measurement of outcomes. Tests of learning outcomes are often unreliable, with very large standard error of estimates, even for the same test. Further, changes in test design can

undermine year-on-year comparability, even if the intention had been to make seemingly modest tweaks. Finally, in order to show positive outcomes, education systems have come up with many ways to 'game' tests – from 'teaching to the test', to constraining who actually gets to write the test. The type of careful statistical work needed to make robust comparisons is beyond the scope of the paper. So we will do what we can with comparative descriptive statistics – endeavouring to be careful to signal along the way the limitations of what we report.

Given the pervasiveness in the public consciousness of 'matric' results (the end-of-high-school National Senior Certificate examination), we begin with these – though their limitations as a basis for benchmarking are many. Table 6 reports these results by province for 2008[15] and 2014, and shows the Western Cape to be among the better (but not systematically top) performing provinces. However, for the reasons noted above, the accuracy of South Africa's matric results as a basis for comparison is confounded by variations across provinces (and over time within provinces) in their socio-economic profiles, in their approaches to grading, and in their policies vis-à-vis holding back candidates who are unlikely to pass from taking the exam. A new country-wide Annual National Assessment (ANA), introduced in 2011 to assess literacy and numeracy for grades 3, 6 and 9, also does not yet appear adequate to serve as a basis for comparison across provinces (Spaull, 2013).[16]

of 50 percent or better in at least four subjects, and a passing grade for the remaining subjects.

As our primary basis for comparison across provinces and across countries we use the results of standardised tests administered in 2007 to a large sample of sixth graders in 15 countries by the independent Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). (The South African SACMEQ sample comprised 9,083 students drawn from 392 schools; sample size per province ranged from 900 to 1,500 observations.)

[15] 2008 is selected because it is the first year when a new NSC examination is introduced, and hence comparable with subsequent years; as close as feasible to the SACMEQ results; and an indicator of WCED performance as of the latter period of ANC governance of the province.

[16] Published ANA results have raised eyebrows in the academic community, due to the differences between self-reported school performance and independently moderated school performance. For example, for the Eastern Cape, in 2013 the percentage of grade 3 students with a score of 50 percent or more was self-reported for numeracy as 54.9 percent, but adjusted downwards after external verification to 42.2 percent; for literacy, the self-reported score was 50.2 percent, and the adjusted score 27.0 percent.

Table 6: National Senior Certificate results, by province

	2008		2014	
	% pass	***% Bachelors***	***% pass***	***% Bachelors***
Western Cape	78.4%	33.0%	82.2%	38.8%
Gauteng	76.4	30.5	84.7	37.0
North West	68.0	19.4	84.6	32.6
Free State	71.8	21.0	82.8	30.2
Mpumalanga	51.8	13.1	79.0	24.9
Northern Cape	72.7	20.1	76.4	24.7
Limpopo	54.3	12.6	72.9	22.4
Kwazulu Natal	57.6	18.2	69.7	25.6
Eastern Cape	50.6	14.4	65.4	20.1
National	62.6	20.1	75.8	28.3

Sources: RSA DBE (2014); and RSA, DBE (2010).

Note: A 'pass' requires a grade of at least 40 percent in three subjects; and of 30 percent in an additional three subjects. A 'bachelors pass' (university eligibility) requires a grade

Table 7 reports the SACMEQ scores. A complementary paper (Wills, Shepherd and Kotze, 2016), commissioned as part of this project, benchmarks the results for the Western Cape using sophisticated econometric techniques that control for other, non-management-related determinants of educational outcomes.[17] Looking first at the raw scores, as Table 7 shows, the Western Cape emerges as the best-performing of South Africa's nine provinces, with Gauteng a close second – and the remaining seven lagging significantly behind. The relative ranking of provinces is broadly similar whether one takes the median score, the score for learners at the 75th percentile of socio-economic distribution, or the score for learners at the lower, 25th percentile, socio-economic tier.

Table 7: SACMEQ benchmark I: Western Cape relative to other South African provinces[1]

	50th percentile (median)	25th percentile	75th percentile
Western Cape	560	496	636
Gauteng	548	483	610
Northwest/Northern Cape	483	439	548
Free State	483	439	535
Kwazulu-Natal	469	424	535
Mpumalanga	469	425	522
Eastern Cape	454	408	509
Limpopo	439	408	483

[1] Achievement in grade 6 mathematics and home language by province, 2007.

Source: SACMEQ data files (2007). RSA, DBE (2010).

[17] The principal control variables are: the home background of test-takers; their socio-economic status; the scores of teachers on the SACMEQ tests; teacher age, qualification and experience; and classroom factors (teaching time, homework, assessment, and textbook availability).

The econometric analysis confirms that, viewed in the South African context, the Western Cape is relatively well-managed. Controlling for socio-economic status (SES) teacher, and classroom characteristics, the Western Cape turns out to achieve significantly better results than any other province among the lower SES categories. At the higher end, controlling for other relevant variables, its results are similar to other relatively well-performing provinces (notably Gauteng).

However, the comparison of the Western Cape's results with those of some other African countries (also using the 2007 SACMEQ data) gives reason to pause. Table 8 reports the SACMEQ scores. The Western Cape's median sixth grader scored below the equivalent learner in Mauritius, and similarly to learners in Kenya and the Tanzanian mainland. At the 25th percentile (i.e., the lower SES tier), the Western Cape scored below all the comparator countries, other than Botswana. Wills, Shepherd and Kotze (2016) confirm that, controlling for other exogenous variables, the Western Cape's performance is significantly weaker than that of Kenya and Mauritius across the range of the SES distribution.[18]

Table 8: SACMEQ benchmark II: Western Cape relative to other African countries

	50th percentile (median)	25th percentile	75th percentile
Western Cape	560	496	636
South Africa (overall)	495	446	579
Mauritius	623	554	719
Kenya	557	541	596
Tanzania (mainland)	553	540	579
Botswana	521	479	553

Source: SACMEQ data files, 2007.

It is plausible that these relatively low scores reflect the Western Cape's many centuries of traumatic history (including servitude, racial oppression and social dislocation, on farms and elsewhere) that are not adequately captured in the econometric SES measures.. But set against this is the reality that the per learner expenditure in the Western Cape is five-fold (to cite one comparator country) that of Kenya.[19] Evidently, there is no room for complacency. Given the goal of using

[18] The econometric results also show that, controlling for the other variables, the Western Cape's performance indeed is stronger than that of Botswana. The results for Tanzania are indeterminate, in part because of the difficulties of comparing across vastly different SES profiles, with limited overlap.

[19] Wills, Shepherd and Kotze (2016) include descriptive statistics of the teacher and classroom characteristics. Differences between the Western Cape and the comparator countries in these characteristics likely can be accounted for, in part, by the greater fiscal resources available in the Western Cape. But the differences seem too small to fully control for the vast disparity in available resources.

education to foster social and economic inclusion, the search for ways to do better is a vital one.

IV: Pragmatic managerialism – the DA-governed WCED

This section brings our review of WCED performance and its bureaucratic underpinnings forward to the present – focusing on how the WCED has been managed in the five years since the DA took power. When the DA took the reins of provincial power in the Western Cape in 2009, it did not lack ambition:

> 'For us, success means becoming the best-run regional government in the world, so that we can realise our vision of an open opportunity society for all in the Western Cape' (provincial government of the Western Cape, 2010).

Basic education is a core function of the provincial government – and also a function where better performance is central to the 'vision of an open opportunity society for all'. To what extent has the DA administration made gains vis-à-vis its far-reaching ambitions? Insofar as it has made gains, what have been the key reforms?

Recent trends in performance

As was evident from our earlier discussion, when the DA came to power in the Western Cape in 2009, the inherited performance in basic education already generally was better than elsewhere in South Africa. Subsequent to 2009, as Tables 9 and 10 will show, the DA may indeed appear to have 'bent the curve' somewhat – there is some partial evidence of gains in performance.[20] But, as we have seen, for all of the incremental gains, the results remain below what has been achieved in Kenya and Mauritius, despite the fact that Kenya, for one, had far fewer resources at their disposal than the Western Cape.

Table 9 details trends in the Western Cape's matric results over the most recent decade. Between 2004 and 2009, matric pass rates declined year after year – from an 85 percent rate in 2004 to 76 percent in 2009. But since 2009, pass rates have risen steadily – back to 85 percent in 2013, though subsequently declining somewhat in 2014.

In similar fashion, both the number and the percentage of exam takers who attained superior performance (as measured by their reaching the score needed to enter

[20] A further relevant set of evidence comprises the results for 2002 and 2011 of the international mathematics and science (TIMSS) tests, analysed for South Africa by Reddy, Prinsloo, Arends and Visser (2012). Among South Africa's provinces, the Western Cape scored highest in both years. However, between 2002 and 2011 its scores declined modestly (from 414 to 404). All other provinces saw an increase, with the overall South African score rising from 285 to 348.

university) increased subsequent to 2010, having declined over the 2004-2007/9 period. (Note that the NSC examinations changed quite radically between 2007 and 2008, complicating any assessment of longer-term trends.) Arguably, these trends reflect some improvement in system performance during the period of DA rule. But it must also be noted that the scores closely track trends in overall national performance, suggesting that the explanation may lie elsewhere.[21]

Table 9: Western Cape: Matric pass rates (2004 – 2013)

Year	Wrote	Passed	% Pass rate	Endorsement	Merit	Political control
2004 (SC)	38, 896	33, 065	85.00%	10, 524	6, 760	ANC/NP
2005 (SC)	38, 586	32, 573	84.40%	10, 394	6, 595	ANC
2006 (SC)	39, 824	33, 316	83.70%	10, 589	6, 594	ANC
2007 (SC)	41, 922	33 787	80.60%	10, 300	6, 442	ANC
Year	**Wrote**	**Passed**	**% Pass rate**	**Access to B. Deg**	**% Access to B. Deg**	
2008 (NSC)	43, 953	34, 577	78.67%	14, 522	33.04%	ANC
2009 (NSC)	44, 931	34, 017	75.71%	14, 324	31.88%	Until April: ANC From April: DA
2010 (NSC)	45, 783	35, 143	76.76%	14, 416	31.48%	DA
2011 (NSC)	39, 988	33, 146	82.89%	15, 215	38.07%	DA
2012 (NSC)	44, 700	36, 992	82.80%	16, 319	36.50%	DA
2013 (NSC)	47, 636	40, 558	85.10%	19, 477	40.90%	DA
2014 (NSC)	47,709	39,237	82.2%	18,524	38.8%	DA

Sources: RSA, DBE (2014); and RSA, DBE (2010).

Table 10 reports on trends in the results of the WCED's systemic tests. The WCED assessment policy, gazetted in December 1998, provided for the conducting of systemic evaluation at the key transitional stages, viz. grades 3, 6 and 9. While Annual National Assessments (ANA) tests were only introduced nationally in 2011, systemic testing was introduced in the Western Cape in 2002 (by a short-lived DA administration). As noted earlier, year-on-year comparisons of test results generally

[21] Overall national NSC pass rates over the period are: 62.6 percent in 2008; 60.6 percent in 2009; 67.8 percent in 2010; 70.2 percent in 2011; 73.9 percent in 2012; 78.2 percent in 2013 and 75.8 percent in 2014. The similarity with Western Cape trends raises the possibility that the Western Cape trends are an artifact of changes in the measuring instrument (the NSC exam and its assessment), rather than in the performance of the WCED.

are fraught with difficulties. In the case of the Western Cape's systemic tests, comparable test results are available only since 2010. Even so, Table 10 points to some recent trend improvement. .

Yet, for all that Tables 9 and 10 suggest that there plausibly have been some gains since 2009, a stark reality remains. As of 2013, fewer than 30 percent of grade 6s – and fewer than 15 percent of Grade 9s – met a minimum passing standard for numeracy. Given these overall pass rates, the results at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum almost surely continue to be startlingly low.[22]

Table 10: Grade 3, 6 and 9 systemic tests – numeracy pass rates (pass set at 50%)

	Grade 3		Grade 6		Grade 9	
Year	**Pass rate**	**Tested**	**Pass rate**	**Tested**	**Pass rate**	**Tested**
2006	31%	82,879				
2007			14%	71,874		
2008	35%	74,119				
2009			17.40%	83, 921		
2010	48.30%	78, 495	24.40%	81, 402	10.40%	83, 605
2011	47.60%	79, 109	23.40%	78, 288	10.90%	81, 936
2012	51.50%	83, 030	26.40%	79, 301	13.90%	89, 674
2013	55%	97, 375	28.30%	78, 723	14.30%	85, 320
2014	54%	85,623	30,4%	72, 214	14,9%	71,345

Source: Western Cape Education Department (2013, 2014, 2015).

What accounts for the trends since 2009? When we began this study, we expected to find a post-2008 'doubling-down' on the part of the DA administration in NPM-style performance-driven management practices. What we actually found was something more complex – an intriguing combination of heightened attention to performance monitoring, combined with a shift to a more pragmatic managerialism, responding to challenges as they arose with ad hoc, and sometimes discretionary, solutions. Throughout, the WCED has largely remained committed to a top-down, hierarchical approach to governing the sector, with only a very nascent exploration of more facilitative, horizontal approaches to education sector governance. .

Fine-tuning performance monitoring

In general, the New Public Management (NPM) doctrine combines two seemingly disparate, but potentially complementary, departures from classic bureaucratic Weberianism – an intensified focus on the monitoring of performance, combined with greater flexibility (and accountability for results) for front-line service provision units.

[22] In 2004, only 0.1 percent (to underscore: one-tenth of 1 percent!!) of grade 6 learners in schools that were formerly under control of the Department of Bantu Education met the passing level (50 percent) proficiency standard for numeracy.

This subsection focuses on the first of these two areas (performance monitoring) – one where the WCED has progressively strengthened its tools, with the gains continuing into the DA administration.

As of 2015, the centrepiece of the performance monitoring effort is the directorate of business, strategy and stakeholder management which is located in the office of the head of the WCED, the superintendent general. Established in 2007 (i.e. predating DA rule), its formal functions initially comprised 'providing a secretarial and administrative support service to the office of Head of Education'. Since then its powers have expanded. The directorate originally faced resistance from existing directorates, who thought it was an attempt to bypass them. It took three years of effort and sustained support from the highest levels of the WCED to put its performance-monitoring systems in place.

The directorate benefits from a sophisticated online tracking system, which includes the following:

- An 'individual learner tracking system' – which tracks the progress and performance of individual learners throughout their time within the WCED.[23]
- Online SIPs for each of the 1,500 schools in the systems. The SIPs incorporate in an integrated, streamlined fashion, that is accessible to each school:
    - Aggregated school-level summaries of the result of the individual learner tracking exercises;
    - the results of whole school evaluations (which, as noted earlier, have been completed for about half the WCED's schools, with 120 additional schools evaluated each year);
    - the school-level results of systemic tests;
    - academic performance plans, completed for each school;
    - A rolling, three-year planning cycle, incorporated into each SIP, progress in the implementation of which can be monitored systematically.
- School-level budget and staffing planning and execution tools – capable of monitoring for each school across the system whether and how budgets are being spent, and including tools for ordering supplies (notably including textbooks, where problems of availability have bedevilled schools throughout South Africa) online, and tracking whether orders have been placed in a timely manner;[24]
- School improvement monitoring – undertaken quarterly, with a specific focus on underperforming schools; and

[23] The directorate uses data that are derived from the central education management information system (CEMIS) that are managed by the directorate of knowledge management.
[24] This is also run by the WCED directorate for knowledge management/centre for e-innovation (Department of the Premier) on behalf of the WCED directorate: resources

- District improvement plans, which track trends in performance at higher levels of system aggregation than the schools themselves.

The superintendent general is thus supported by a strategically located planning and monitoring unit which appears to be the hub of performance in the WCED. This ensures that there is an 'early warning' system, whereby problems of school performance are brought directly to the attention of the head of department.

According to WCED interviewees, the online tracking system has been highly effective. It has led to a reduction in time for the filling of teachers and principal posts. It can monitor how schools have spent their budgets – and, indeed, whether they have spent their budgets. In recent years, the tool has been used to track teacher absenteeism. Leave forms have been used to calculate the total number of absent days as a percentage of the total number of days people could have been present. Teacher absenteeism has fallen from 19 days annually down to six and then four days per annum. The WCED had anticipated a 4 percent absenteeism figure, but in practice it has averaged out at a consistent 3 percent from 2011 to 2013.

In sum, top-down planning and monitoring systems have helped ensure that the vast majority of schools in the WCED are relatively well-managed, at least from a logistical perspective. Teacher posts are filled relatively rapidly, and teachers show up to work; school infrastructure is adequately maintained; supplies, including textbooks, are available; the system adapts reasonably effectively to changes in the numbers of learners within schools, and to the ongoing increase (as a result of migration) in the number of learners in the system as a whole.

A turn to pragmatic managerialism

For all that our research found the WCED to be a well-managed and relatively well-resourced hierarchy with robust tools of top-down performance management, as the test scores detailed earlier signal, this has not been sufficient to achieve major gains in educational outcomes. What might be the gap? At the outset of our study we expected that part of the answer lay in the rigid ways in which the top-down systems were implemented. But, intriguingly and unexpectedly, we found that subsequent to 2009, the WCED leadership appears to have become increasingly pragmatic in its application of performance management.

In 2002, seemingly consistent with the two-fold logic of performance management – stronger performance monitoring plus greater facility-level autonomy – the WCED moved towards a formally more decentralised structure, via the re-organisation of much of the department into eight district-level offices. In 2007, it deepened this seeming decentralisation by creating 68 'circuit' management units within the districts, each responsible for approximately 20-30 schools. In practice, as numerous interviewees confirmed, between 2002 and 2009 the decentralisation was largely on paper. Interviewees repeatedly used the same phrase to describe the formalistic

(IQMS, WSE etc., etc.) way in which the WCED operated during that period – "management by circular".

But the new DA team adopted a different (though still largely hierarchical) approach. In 2009, the DA appointed Penny Vinjevold as superintendent general.[25] (She continued in that role until mid-2016.) From the start of her tenure, Vinjevold identified the districts as the nodes of service delivery that would drive performance, with district directors to be given more autonomy to run their areas of jurisdiction. Districts (and the circuit management teams within each district) are the front-line of promoting performance, the 'eyes and ears' of the WCED. Their functions include ensuring that all teaching posts are filled; that teachers are teaching; that governing bodies are working properly; that schools receive adequate support; that relevant training is provided; and that performance information is used to inform efforts to improve school performance (although a continuing constraint is that many front-line staff lack the statistical skills to use this information effectively).

Along with improving the district-level structures, Vinjevold identified (in an interview for this study) the following as her top four priorities post-2009:

- As her 'biggest priority' (articulated from 2010 onwards), assuring that all 1,500 schools had a 'good principal'. (Given natural attrition and the age profile of the principal cadre, the opportunity exists to replace almost the entire principal cadre over an eight-year period. Indeed, between 2009 and 2013, 509 out of 1,542 principals have been replaced.)
- Assuring that every child had a textbook for every subject – something where the Western Cape, though better than many other provinces, had fallen short in the transition to a new curriculum;
- Managing the budget to ensure that teacher salaries did not exceed 75 percent of total available budgetary resources, thereby assuring budgetary flexibility for the system as a whole to function; and
- Explicitly challenging employees throughout the WCED (including the many administrative positions) with the question: 'how does your job help learning improve? '

Vinjovold's identification of principal quality as her biggest priority is consistent with a central finding of a large body of empirical research that the quality of school-level leadership is an important proximate explanation of school performance (Bush, 2007; Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi, 2011; Prew, 2007; Wills, 2016). Consistent with that finding, our companion school-level study (Hoadley et al., 2016) also found that the

[25] Vinjevold had a long career in education prior to becoming the WCED's superintendent general in 2009. She worked as an educator for many years; returned to complete an MA in Education at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1994; worked as an education researcher from 1994 to 2001; was appointed as a chief director in the WCED by the then ANC government in 2001; and from 2005 to 2009 served as deputy director general in the national department of education.

performance over time of its four sample schools was strongly associated with the quality of school-level leadership. We thus use the changing approach of the WCED in recent years to the selection of school principals to illustrate how the WCED's post-2009 turn to 'pragmatic managerialism' has played out in practice.

As the school-level study explored in depth, the formal responsibility for selecting a principal rests largely with SGBs, with the WCED hierarchy (primarily via the district offices) playing a bureaucratic support role. Where SGBs are committed to the achievement of strong educational outcomes, these arrangements can work well. But where, as was evident in three of the four schools examined in our companion case study of four Western Cape schools (Hoadley et al., 2016), they are prone to manipulation, the result can be a 'low-level equilibrium of mediocrity'.

Post 2009, the WCED has used a variety of managerial tools in an effort to influence principal selection in ways that could shake loose these low-level equilibria. These have included:

- A de facto policy that when vacancies for principal arose in poorly performing schools, the winning candidate should not be a deputy principal from the same school. (The school-level study showed vividly how the prospect of in-house promotion could undermine the competitiveness of the principal selection process.)
- The use of early retirement options and other inducements (e.g. lateral transfers) to encourage principals in poorly performing school to vacate their positions.
- The introduction of written psychometric competency assessment tests for candidates for principal, with the costs of testing borne by the WCED. While, given the rules governing labour relations, these could not formally be required, since these tests (and their financing) have been made available, all SGBs have made use of them.
- A review of the selection process in poorly-performing schools – and interventions (including from the highest levels of the WCED) where questions arose as to the likely performance of the selected candidate.

The newly empowered districts are central to these efforts to improve the quality of the principal selection process. Circuit managers sit on selection panels of principals and deputy principals as observers. District directors are expected to form their own views of the candidate for principal, and forward them up the hierarchy – and then be accountable for the quality of principal appointments in their districts. It is too soon to assess systematically to what extent these policies have resulted in a strengthening of school-level leadership. But, in our view, using managerial tools along the lines described above to improve principal selection has the potential to yield significant gains in educational outcomes.

More broadly, looking beyond principal selection, since 2009 the WCED has systematically sought to alter the profile of its bureaucracy. A 2009 staffing scan revealed that fewer than 30 percent of circuit team managers (circuit teams comprise the direct interface between schools and the WCED bureaucracy) had previously served as school principals; post-2009, in filling line positions in the bureaucracy, preference was given to employees with prior experience at schoollevel, especially as principals. Further, district and circuit offices began to be given greater flexibility in how they went about their business.

But the predominant focus remained hierarchical. Teacher training remained strongly supply-driven. No systematic mentoring arrangements were in place for newly-appointed principals and other new senior staff working to turn around hitherto dysfunctional schools (beyond the hierarchical quasi-inspection functions of circuit offices). Until very recently,[26] elected SGBs were viewed more as an obstacle than as a potential asset for school-level governance. Further, the increased focus on direct contribution to learning resulted in a de facto reduction of opportunities for engagement on the part of many non-governmental organisations who had been working with schools.

V: Is more performance management the answer?

Two conclusions emerge from the detailed analytic narrative presented in this paper (and its school-level companion). First, the WCED is (and long has been) a relatively well-run public bureaucracy – not only within the South African context, but also likely so when compared with educational bureaucracies in other middle-income countries; further, the WCED's performance-orientation appears to have increased over time. Second, given all the effort, educational outcomes in the Western Cape are disappointing – below those of Kenya's, and with only modest gains in recent years. Sustained, determined efforts to strengthen the operation of the Western Cape's education bureaucracy have not translated into the large, hoped-for gains. Why?

There are multiple possible explanations for the disappointing outcomes. These include:

- The hugely difficult socio-economic setting faced by many children that come into the WCED (broken families; gang-ridden communities; drug addiction and endemic foetal alcohol syndrome; recently established informal settlements as waves of new migrants come into the Western Cape).
- Continuing fallout from the disruptive educational policy shocks from the national level during South Africa's first decade of democracy – the large-scale rationalisation of teachers; the introduction (and subsequent retreat from) a poorly thought-through 'outcomes-based education'.

[26] SGB elections are held on a three-year cycle, In 2014, funding was provided in 2014 to two non-governmental organisations to help train new SGBs on their roles, immediately following the 2015 round of SGB elections.

- Weaknesses in teacher skills, not (yet) offset by sustained and effective efforts to strengthen in-house teacher training.
- The fact that only since 2009 has 'management by circular' been superseded by effective performance management, so gains which might become visible in the future are not yet evident.

Though we certainly do not rule out any of the above, based on our observations of the Western Cape, our comparative experience of public sector governance, and experience of education systems elsewhere, we believe it is helpful to highlight a further possible explanation – namely, that the efforts to strengthen the educational hierarchy might usefully be complemented (more than has been the case) with additional effort to support more horizontal, peer-to-peer governance.

As this paper has shown, over the past two decades the WCED has focused largely on improving its hierarchical management systems. In this, it has been successful. Getting textbooks delivered; ensuring that teaching posts are filled with teachers who meet a minimum set of criteria; tracking how schools use resources (including trends in performance); getting funding to the right places at the right times; pro-actively trying to fill leadership positions with the right people for the job – in contrast to many other departments of education in South Africa and elsewhere, the WCED does all of these things relatively well. These are important strengths.

But is hierarchy sufficient? As Annex A summarises, the literature on public management distinguishes between relatively homogenous 'production' activities and more heterogenous 'craft' activities. While hierarchy can effectively govern the former, numerous scholars (e.g. Israel, 1987; Wilson; 1989; Lipsky 2010) have argued that 'craft' activities require more flexible and localised governance arrangements.

To avoid unnecessary controversy, it is important to be precise about our focus. We are not seeking to revisit broad – and highly contentious among education reformers – questions of centralisation versus decentralisation in the intergovernmental assignment of responsibilities and fiscal resources. Nor do we have any interest in addressing another set of contentious issues in education-sector governance – namely, the role of market-like mechanisms (vouchers, charter schools, private provision and the like) in the provision of education.[27] Our interest is squarely in the governance of a public education system – and on the potential, within that broader

[27] Grindle (2004b) provides a detailed analysis of the politics of education sector change in Latin America. Pritchett (2013) argues that vertical arrangements have been effective the world over in expanding schooling rapidly – but have proven ineffective in improving quality and thus educational outcomes. Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos (2011) review carefully the micro-level evidence as to the impact of informational and participatory reforms. Ravitch (2010, 2013), an early, but disappointed, champion of market-like reforms, details the unintended negative consequences of the American reform efforts.

set of institutional arrangements, for leveraging more effectively the school-level horizontal governance arrangements (centred around school governing bodies [SGBs[) that were formally incorporated in the 1996 South African Schools Act.

Evidence from school-level case studies conducted as part of this ESID research programme underscores the centrality of school-level governance dynamics in explaining school performance – for ill as well as good. Our in-depth longitudinal study of four Western Cape schools (Hoadley et al., 2016) explored in detail the hyper-local governance dynamics associated with the ways principals governed and the ways principals were selected. The results suggest that these hyper-local dynamics accounted for much of the observed, very substantial variations in performance -- both across schools and within the same schools over time. In three of the four schools, predatory local influences undercut hierarchical efforts to improve educational outcomes. Predation was also evident in three of the four Eastern Cape schools. But (consistent with H5 in Annex A), as Shumane and Levy (2016) detail, there was also evidence that supportive bottom-up governance enabled some schools (some of the time) to sustain a commitment to learning, even in the face of a non-performing provincial education department. Ongoing ESID school-level research in Bangladesh and Ghana uncovers a similar pattern of constructive bottom-up governance compensating for the limits of the educational hierarchy.

Considered together, the public management research, the comparative global experience with educational reform, and the school-level case studies – plus the Western Cape's continuing disappointing educational outcomes – point to the possibility that the WCED's impressive hierarchical efforts might usefully be complemented with a more 'horizontal' perspective at the school level. Such a perspective would view each school as a distinctive community of students, teachers and parents – underpinned by governance structures which involve the members of the community in a variety of different ways (and which, formally, are already in place). Possible initiatives might include:

- Providing sustained capacity building support for SGBs to provide them with the skills to more effectively play a developmental role;
- Strengthening peer-to-peer networks among SGBs, and between SGBs and supportive non-governmental organisations – not only to facilitate mutual learning, but also as a way of strengthening coalitions of support for developmentally-oriented champions within SGBs in their inevitable conflicts with more predatory influences
- Strengthening peer-to-peer networks among school principals, including mentoring relationships for new principals; and

Crucially:

- Strengthening the information-base through which SGBs, school-level communities and peer-to-peer networks can learn about the performance of their schools relative to others with similar socio-economic characteristics --

– and providing support to enable these communities to use that information to adapt what they actually do.

Some of these have recently been initiated within the WCED. Considered as a whole, our research and the global evidence suggest that they could usefully be given intensified attention.

In concluding, we feel it important to underscore that we are not advocating for radical, rapid change in the WCED's management of education. For all of the magnitude of the continuing challenges, having a system in place that can deliver on the 'basics' is a valuable asset. Rather, what we propose is complementing the current approaches with greater support for enhancing the effectiveness of those more horizontal initiatives for which formal institutional arrangements already are in place, but (except for schools in higher-income areas) have so far received at best limited support for playing their formally designated roles more effectively – combined with opportunities for learning about which initiatives work (and which do not), and for adaptation in response to the emerging lessons, at the level of school-related communities and networks themselves.

In the short run the gains from these more bottom-up initiatives might seem localised, and thus modest. But, given that the requisite SGB enabling environment is already in place, the risks also are low; the benefits may or may not turn out to be large. (When network effects take hold, their cumulative consequences can be profound.) Based on our broader experience (outside the education sector) of the drivers of success among public organisations, we believe that the case is strong for the WCED to deepen its exploration, via learning-by-doing, of what might be achieved through finally working to bring to life, across the socio-economic spectrum, the arrangements for more horizontal governance, which, for almost two decades, have been part of the formal landscape of school-level governance.

Annex A: Framework and hypotheses

This annex describes the common conceptual framework used in this and other research papers in the series on the politics and governance of basic education in South Africa. [The series currently comprises: Cameron and Naidoo (2016, forthcoming); Hoadley, Levy, Shumane and Wilburn (2016); Shumane and Levy (2016, forthcoming); Kota, Naidoo, Matambo and Hendricks (2016, forthcoming).] The conceptual framework is based on a broader 'political settlements' framework, which is being used to guide the overall Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) research programme, implemented under the leadership of the University of Manchester, of which the South African education series is a part. Among the core conceptual inputs into the ESID framework are contributions by Khan (2010), Levy (2014; 2015), North et al (2009), and World Bank (2003).

The framework

Table A1 below illustrates the framework. It characterises governance arrangements across two dimensions:

- whether they are hierarchical (that is, organised around vertical relationships between 'principals' and 'agents'), or whether they are negotiated (that is, organised around horizontal 'principal-principal'/peer-to-peer arrangements); and
- whether they are based on impersonal rules of the game which are applied impartially to all who have standing, or whether they are organised among personalised 'deals' among influential actors.
-

Each of the four cells in Table A1 comprises a distinctive 'ideal type' governance platform, involving distinctive incentives, distinctive constraints and risks, and distinctive frontier challenges – both generally and (as in this study) in how education is governed. In practice any specific governance arrangement is likely to be a hybrid combination of the four ideal types defined by the cells, with the relative weight varying from setting to setting. One useful heuristic (used in all the papers in the South African series) is to characterise any specific governance arrangement by allocating 100 points across the four cells.

Table A1: A governance typology

Hierarchical	(i)	(ii)
Negotiated	(iii)	(iv)
	Personalised	Impersonal

The Table A1 typology can be used to characterise governance at multiple levels – nationally, at the provincial level, at local levels, and at the level of front-line service provision units. There is no one-to-one relationship between the categories in the framework and a familiar (and sometimes contentious) distinction between centralised and decentralised systems – and it is important not to conflate these very

different discourses. (For example, negotiated agreements among stakeholders can be systematically incorporated into centralised systems. Conversely, decentralised systems can be organised hierarchically at subnational levels.)

The South African education study includes one paper at the national level, two at provincial levels (using the cases of the Western Cape and Eastern Cape provinces); two at district levels; and two at the level of individual schools. As each paper details, the specific interpretation of the cells varies from level to level. Further, within each level (and using the 100 points allocation) the relative weights across cells vary according to the specific case being studied.

Hypotheses on how institutional and political context matters

Levy and Walton (2013) suggest specific, researchable hypotheses that follow from the framework and can be used for a multi-level analysis of the governance and politics of service provision. 'Good fit', they hypothesise, can be framed in terms of the alignment between the governance arrangements which prevail at a higher level, and the arrangements which prevail at levels beneath that:

- *H1A*: where the higher- and lower-level institutional arrangements are aligned, we can say we have a 'good fit' – and thus potentially the best feasible outcome.
- *H1B*: where they are misaligned, we can say we have a 'poor fit' – there exists the possibility of improving the development outcome by realigning the lower-level institutional arrangements to align better with the higher-level institutions/political settlement.

For the South African national- and provincial-level education studies, H1A and B translate into the following:

- *H2*: At South Africa's national level, there has been a misalignment between the (higher-level) background political arrangements (which predominantly fit into the 'negotiated' cells of Figure A1) and the predominantly impersonal-hierarchical logic used as the basis for national-level education sector policymaking. The result has been 'poor fit', and ineffective governance arrangements. See Cameron and Naidoo (2016).
- *H3*: There are vast differences in the provincial-level political settlements in the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape:
    - The Western Cape political settlement provides a relatively strong basis for 'impersonal-hierarchical' governance of the province's basic education bureaucracy. See Cameron and Levy (2016). By contrast:
    - In the Eastern Cape, the political settlement is disproportionately personalised and negotiated, so 'impersonal-hierarchical' governance arrangements are unlikely to be effective. See Kota, Naidoo, Hendricks and Matambo (2016).

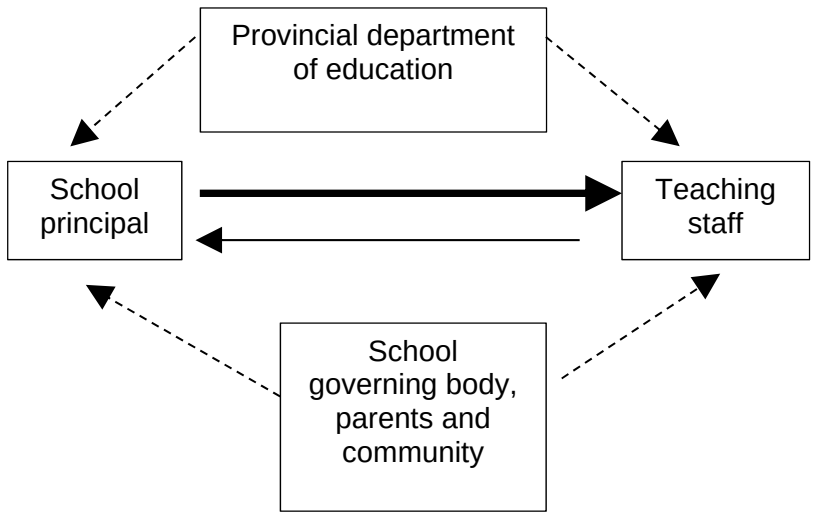
Of course, the goal of the South African education research project is not an assessment of 'goodness-of-fit' per se, but an analysis of the ways in which diverse governance arrangements influence educational outcomes. This brings us to the analysis of school-level governance – both the 'goodness-of-fit' of school-level arrangements with those that prevail at higher levels, and the implications for performance in individual schools.

Figure A1 summarises school-level governance for South Africa's public schools in terms of the interaction between four sets of actors: top-down hierarchical governance via the public bureaucracy; leadership by the school principal; the teacher cadre; and 'horizontal' participatory governance by SGBs and other community, union and political actors. Applying the general formulations of H1A and B to the school-level yields the following hypotheses:

- *H4*: Where public bureaucracies perform relatively well (e.g. the Western Cape), substantial improvements in educational outcomes can be obtained by using top-down performance management systems.
- *H5a:* Horizontal governance arrangements can serve as partial institutional substitutes – providing accountability from peer-to-peer networks when top-down, hierarchical accountability is weak.
- *H5b:* A necessary condition for delegated, horizontal accountability to be effective is that there exists a coalition of 'developmentally-oriented' stakeholders engaged at/near the service provision front-line with sufficient influence to be able to 'trump' predatory actors seeking to capture school-level resources (teaching and administrative positions; contracts; other discretionary resources) for private or political purposes.

These hypotheses are explored in depth at school level for the Western Cape and Eastern Cape in Hoadley et al. (2015) and Shumane and Levy (2016).

Figure A1: School-level governance interactions



Hypotheses on how sectoral context matters

Along with exploring how political and institutional context can affect school-level performance, the school-level research also provides the opportunity to explore a further, complementary set of hypotheses – namely, how sectoral context affects the 'good fit' alignment between governance arrangements and sectoral performance. The 2004 *World Development Report* (World Bank, 2003), following Wilson (1989) and Israel (1987), distinguished among sectors according to the heterogeneity and monitorability of their production activities. Top-down hierarchical governance, they argue, is most effective where production can be standardised, and where the monitorability of outputs and/or outcomes is straightforward. By contrast, where what is produced is more heterogeneous, and outputs/outcomes are less readily monitorable, more flexibility needs to be accorded to front-line production units, with a correspondingly greater role for horizontal ('principal-principal'/peer-to-peer) governance arrangements. Wilson captures this contrast in terms of a distinction between 'production' and 'craft'organisations.

There is substantial controversy among education sector professionals as to what should be the appropriate balance between hierarchical and horizontal governance systems. For over a quarter century, educational reformers the world over have pressed for decentralising control over resources and decision-making closer to the school level. Grindle (2004) provides a detailed analysis of the politics of education sector change in Latin America. Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos (2011) review carefully the micro-level evidence as to the impact of informational and participatory reforms. Pritchett (2013) argues forcefully that, while vertical arrangements continue to be ubiquitous (and on occasion can be effective), all too often they lead education systems down dead ends – expanding 'schooling' rapidly, but with almost no concomitant gains in 'learning'. Put differently, this controversy can be framed by contrasting H4 above with:

- *H6:* Education is a 'craft' activity, so successful outcomes require a 'zone of autonomy' for front-line practitioners, peer-to-peer learning, and horizontal governance arrangements which delegate responsibility and oversight to participants close to the front-line of service provision.

In the Western Cape (as per H3) impersonal-hierarchical bureaucratic arrangements are hypothesised to function relatively well. Thus the Western Cape provincial and school-level studies provide a good platform for assessing how (even given a broadly supportive political and institutional environment) sectoral context matters – and thus the relative merits of H4 and H6.

Annex B: How the House of Representatives governed education

Patronage in the House of Representatives

In the early 1980s, the government established separate ethnic administrations (known as the tricameral system) within the public service for whites, 'coloureds', and 'Asians', called the House of Assembly (HoA), House of Representatives (HoR) and House of Delegates (HoD), respectively.

The HoR operated on the margins of a Weberian framework. Formally it operated within a merit-based system, but one which incorporated strong elements of patronage. The Labour Party (LP) had become the dominant party in the HoR elections which had been characterised by voters' boycott and low polls. This meant the HOR had a crisis of legitimacy from day one, which the LP set out to rectify by increasing its support.

The HoR was accused of 'jobs for pals' by the Department of Education and Culture, appointing LP supporters to principals' positions ahead of better qualified appointments. Franklin Sonn, then president of the Cape Teachers Professional Association (CTPA), accused the LP of interfering in professional matters. He went on to say that since the introduction of the tricameral system, the LP was clearly seeking patronage by making party political selections for promotion posts (The South, 1987). There were accusations that the minister in charge of the Department of Education and Culture, Carter Ebrahim, failed to produce professional reasons for turning down suitably qualified candidates, despite recommendations from school and selection committees (The Argus, 1987). This was corroborated by interviews with researchers and activists of the 1980s, although these interviewees did suggest that the HoR was more focused on controlling the appointments of promotion posts, most notably principals; they had less interest in influencing entry-level appointments. One interviewee argued that: 'collaborators were appointed to be principals by the government'. In fact, many teachers opposed to the system refused to accept promotion.

In summary, the HoR appears to have adopted a milder form of patronage model, where there was very little personalised rents. Patronage was on the margins within what can be termed 'good enough Weberianism'.

Organisation culture in 'coloured' schools

There have been a number of studies of the organisational culture of the white public service which suggested that the South African public service was steeped in traditional public administration, albeit with an apartheid bent. This home grown version of traditional public administration contributed to a bureaucratic, hierarchical and unresponsive public service, aimed at controlling rather than developing the citizens of the country (Schwella, 2000, McLennan and Fitzgerald, 2002

The HoR and its predecessor, the Department of Coloured Affairs, adopted this rule-bound compliance culture of the white public service. The HoR was part of the public service; some senior managers in the Department of Education and Culture (of both white and mixed race ethnic background) had transferred from the mainstream public service. There was also a common language (Afrikaans) and culture among white and 'coloured' staff.

Chisholm (1999) argued that control over teachers' work in black and 'coloured' schools was bureaucratic, hierarchical and authoritarian. The strict control of school boards over teachers' work created a bureaucratic system which was monitored through the use of school inspectors. This included all aspects of school governance, administration and the curriculum of 'coloured' schools. Crain Soudien (2002: 217) argued that "from oral history testimony of educators at the time, it was inspectors who played a central role in subduing teachers and holding them to account". This was not to suggest that there were watertight mechanisms of surveillance – in fact there is much evidence of 'alternative education' being offered within and around the official confines of the curriculum (Wieder, 2001: 48).

There was, however, a more complex relationship than simply state control. Chisholm (1991: 15-25) details the marriage of academic excellence and political awareness in Teachers League South Africa (TLSA) schools through 1976. Schools that were considered TLSA strongholds (e.g. Harold Cressy, Livingstone, Trafalgar, and South Peninsula) were known for high standards and political teachings. An interview with seasoned educationalist, Crain Soudien, confirmed that the 'coloured' Department of Education, and subsequently the HoR, were not merely tools of state control; they included committed educational professionals. Further, inspectors were not just there to check on teachers: they were sometimes ambivalent towards activist anti-apartheid teachers. Also school committees (consisting of parents) were appointed by the state as instruments of control; they sometimes consisted of articulate activists who were able to push back state control.

Chisholm (1999:114) points out that older, more conservative teacher organisations, which had participated in racially divided departments of education, described themselves as 'professionals'. Soudien argues that in the Western Cape strong professionalism was a driving force of both the system-orientated Cape Teachers Professional Association (CTPA), and the more radical TLSA (Teachers League of South Africa). This in turn was also a safeguard against the worst excesses of patronage.

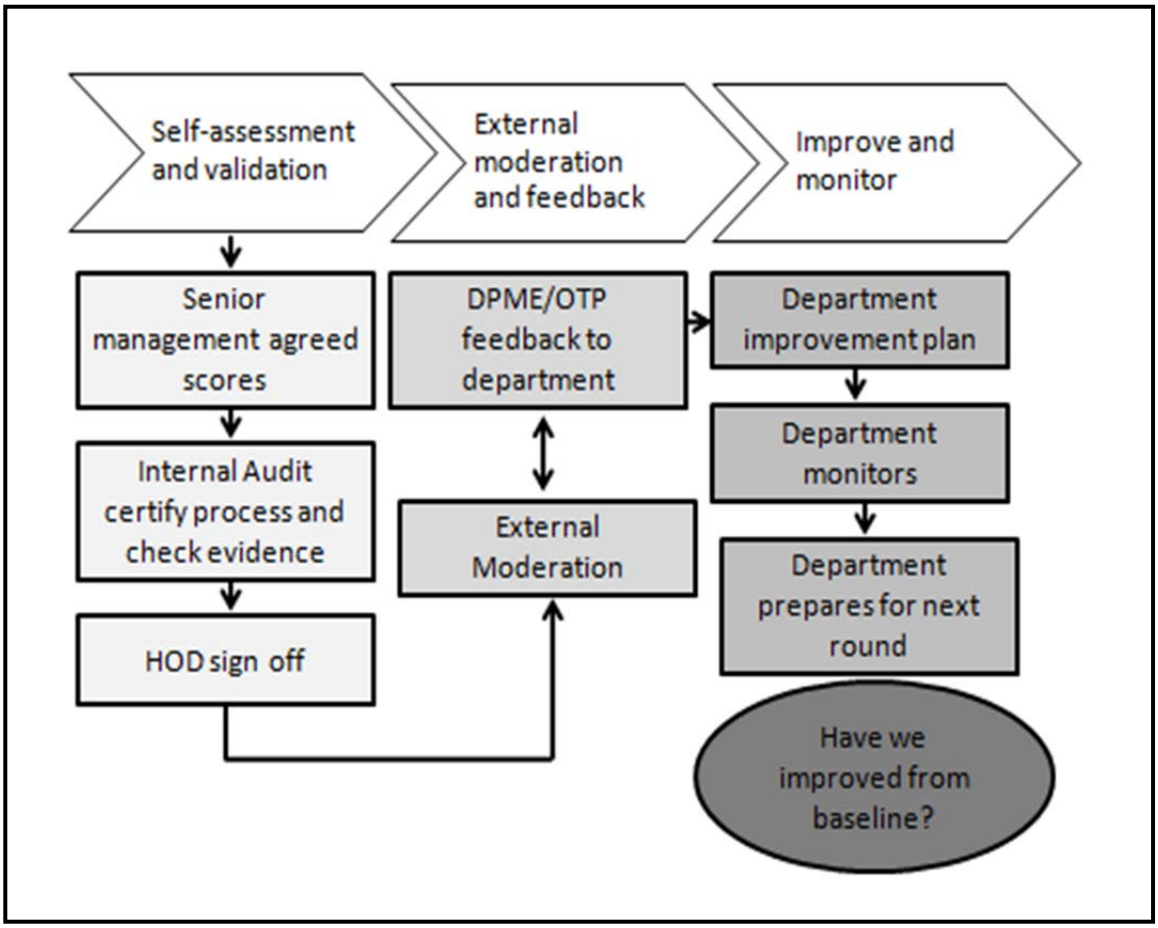
Annex C: Management Performance Assessment Tests

The Management Performance Assessment Tests (MPAT) are a national assessment for public servants (although not for teachers). They are conducted by the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) which is located in the Presidency. The DPME released a report discussing the combined results of the 103 national and provincial departments that submitted self-assessments to DPME (The Presidency, 2013). Here we focus specifically on the results of MPATs of education departments.

The 2013 Assessment was based against 31 management standards, in 17 management areas (developed collaboratively with the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and National Treasury (NT). Standards were developed collaboratively (with NT, DPSA and Office of the Public Service Commission [PSC], Office of the Auditor General and Offices of the Premier) (RSA, 2013)).

The assessment process is as follows:

Diagram C1: MPAT assessment process



Source:The Presidency, 2013:4.

As per the text, a four-level scale was used to assess each department across each of four dimensions. The results are reported in Tables C1-C5.

Table C1. MPAT assessment of education: strategic management

MPAT 2012/13 final scores % of education department scores for strategic management				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
EC EDU			67	33
FS EDU		33	33	33
GP EDU				100
KZN EDU			67	33
LP EDU		67	33	
MP EDU			67	33
NC EDU			67	33
ND BE			67	33
NW BE&T			67	33
WC EDU				100
ALL EDU	3	12	45	40
ALL RSA	33	44	13	11

Source: The Presidency; 2013.

Table C2. MPAT assessment of education: governance and accountability

MPAT 2012/13 final scores % of education department scores for governance and accountability				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
EC EDU	67	11	11	11
FS EDU		33	67	
GP EDU	11	22	33	33
KZN EDU	22	67	11	
LP EDU	11	22	22	44
MP EDU		22	33	44
NC EDU	56	22	33	
ND BE	44	22	33	
NW BE&T	44	11	22	22
WC EDU		22	22	56
ALL EDU	30	25	25	20
ALL RSA	38	23	24	15

Source: The Presidency, 2013.

Table C3: .MPAT assessment of WCED: human resources management

MPAT 2012/13 final scores % of education department scores for human resource management				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
EC EDU	70	10	20	
FS EDU	20	30	40	10
GP EDU	10	40	30	20
KZN EDU	30	40	30	
LP EDU	10	50	40	
MP EDU	20	50	30	
NC EDU	30	50	20	
ND BE	20	40	30	10
NW BE&T	20	70	10	
WC EDU		40	40	20
ALL EDU	25	41	29	5
ALL RSA	32	41	21	6

Source: The Presidency, 2013.

Table C4.MPAT assessment of WCED: financial management

MPAT 2012/13 final scores % of education department scores for financial management				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
EC EDU	57	43		
FS EDU	14	29	57	
GP EDU	29		43	29
KZN EDU		14	57	29
LP EDU	14	57	29	
MP EDU	29	43	29	
NC EDU		71	29	
ND BE	14	14	71	
NW BE&T	14	71	14	
WC EDU			57	43
ALL EDU	18	38	35	9
ALL RSA	19	27	45	9

Source: The Presidency, 2013.

Table C5.MPAT assessment of WCED: overall score of the Education Department

MPAT 2012/13 final scores % of all KPA scores per education department				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
EC EDU	59	17	17	7
FS EDU	10	31	52	7
GP EDU	14	21	31	34
KZN EDU	17	38	34	10
LP EDU	10	45	31	14
MP EDU	14	34	34	17
NC EDU	28	41	28	3
ND BE	24	24	45	7
NW BE&T	24	45	21	10
WC EDU		21	34	45
ALL EDU	24	31	31	15
ALL RSA	29	29	30	12

Source: The Presidency, 2013.

It can be seen that the WCED scored 100 percent at Level 4 for strategic management; 56 percent at Level 4, 22 percent at Level 3 and 22 percent at Level 2 for governance and accountability; 20 percent at Level 4, 40 percent at Level 3 and 40 percent at Level 2 for human resources management and 43 percent at Level 4 and 57 percent Level 3 for financial management. If these scores are averaged out, Western Cape received 45 percent at Level 4, 34 percent at Level 3 and 21 percent at Level 2.

The DPME concluded that the overall performance of education departments varied greatly, mainly due to varying performance on governance and accountability, as well as financial management. It stated that within the education sector, the departments that performed best were the Western Cape, whose performance was underlined by generally good provincial support and co-ordination, along with the Gauteng and Free State (The Presidency, 2013).

There have been concerns raised about the MPAT approach. The first critique is that the methodology is subjective in that it relies on self-assessment. This is acknowledged by the DPME itself (The Presidency, 2012, 2013), which states that the findings were limited by the availability of evidence to substantiate self-assessment scores from all departments.

The WCED countered this by arguing that they did use external moderation in a systematic way. An examination of the Western Cape raw data (WCED, 2013) suggests, at least at face value, that the external moderation criteria are quite

thorough and linked to performance in many ways. For example, if one looks at strategic management, where the WCED received 100 percent, there were a number of robust criteria that the department had to conform,with to achieve this high rating. External moderators had to verify *inter alia:* that the annual performance plans (APPs) are logically and explicitly linked to delivery agreements and/or programmes of action, as well as the departmental strategic objectives contained in the strategic plan; that the relevance, reliability and verifiability of the information contained in the situational analysis of the APP is according to the framework for managing programme performance information; and whether the APP contains evidence of reconsideration of the situational analysis in the strategic plan, irrespective of whether it resulted in confirming the continued validity of the situational analysis or the amendment of the APP.

Furthermore, the external moderators must check whether targets in the APP are listed over budget year and MTEF period for each budget programme identified; whether annual targets are broken down in quarterly targets; whether the expression/quantification of strategic objectives and annual and quarterly targets in terms of 'SMART' principle in the APP; whether there is a logical and explicit link between the strategic objectives and targets in the APP and the departmental strategic objectives, as contained in the strategic plan, delivery agreements and/or programmes of action, and whether there is a logical and explicit link between the strategic objectives and targets to budget programmes contained in the APP.

Finally, moderators had to check whether minutes of management meetings reflect use of quarterly performance assessments to inform improvements and whether indicators in annual report and APP are the same and reflect actual annual performance.

The second criticism of the MPAT is that it focuses on compliance rather than performance. DPME (The Presidency, 2013) state in their presentation that the review of compliance does create an awareness of performance. This may be the case, but an awareness of performance does not necessarily translate into performance improvement.

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