

**EVALUATION OF THE GRADE 12 LEARNER SUPPORT
INTERVENTION, PART OF THE LEARNER ATTAINMENT
IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY (LAIS), IN THE EASTERN CAPE
PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

FINAL REPORT

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EC	Eastern Cape (province)
FET	further education and training
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMMDU	Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Unit
HoD	Head of Department
JET	Joint Education Trust
LAIS	learner attainment improvement strategy
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSLA	National Strategy for Learner Attainment
NW	North West (province)
OtP	Office of the Premier
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
Wits	Witwatersrand

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Garth Spencer-Smith conducted the desk-top literature scan, school visits, interviews, and statistical analysis. Nicky Roberts provided conceptual guidance, and an analysis of lessons learnt from the desk-top scan. They shared the writing of this report, with Garth focussing more on the background and write up of the qualitative and quantitative data, and Nicky most of the analytical writing.

Executive summary

Introduction

The objective of this assignment was to evaluate the implementation of the Grade 12 learner support intervention of the Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy (LAIS) in order to identify whether there is progress towards the planned turnaround in the education system of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

Evaluation design

The evaluation was framed in relation to 15 guiding questions for each key focus area with respect to the Eastern Cape LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support. These questions can be grouped under the following headings:

1. The South African context of implementation;
2. The LAIS context of implementation;
3. Reporting on implementation;
4. Evaluating efficacy and value for money; and
5. Recommendations emerging.

This evaluation is an interim evaluation, focusing on the period of implementation of the Grade 12 learner support strategy within the overall LAIS intervention from January 2013 to March 2015. The evaluation design encompasses both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, each of which is described below. The research design involved the following key processes:

1. A desk-top scan of similar South African interventions;
2. A document review of LAIS documents provided by the EC DoE;
3. Visits to four case study schools;
4. Interviews with multiple role players at each case study school, and high- and middle-ranking EC DoE officials; and
5. A statistical analysis of the EC Grade 12 learner attainment data.

Findings

The following is a summary of the findings of the evaluation, provided as answers to each of the 15 evaluation questions.

Evaluation question 1: Based on a brief desktop scan, what other South African interventions are aimed at supporting improved learner attainment at FET level in South Africa?

A total of 23 projects around South Africa that met the four criteria of the study scope were obtained through the above process. The salient characteristics of each of these are summarised in a table in the main report. Two case study projects were also selected to develop in more detail: the Quality Learning Project (QLP) and the Gauteng Secondary Schools Improvement Project (SSIP).

Evaluation question 2: What lessons emerge from the desk-top scan of other similar FET-level interventions in relation to the design of such interventions?

The goal was to ensure that the current LAIS intervention learns from the strengths and weaknesses; successes and failures of previous interventions. These lessons provide a 'best practice' benchmark against which with LAIS intervention can be evaluated.

A synopsis of the key lessons emerging from our scan of FET level interventions in South Africa was drawn from across all of the projects and documents we reviewed and are not limited to the case study interventions.

Provincial level lessons

1. The province is critical for the conceptualisation, coherence, alignment, monitoring, evaluation and accountability of Learner Attainment improvement plans and for high level political commitment to intervention.
2. Interventions need to be comprehensive (in terms of the services and inputs offered) and targeted (in terms of selecting schools and priority subjects appropriately).
3. Staff vacancies, insufficient staffing and lack of permanent positions impact negatively on intervention attempts.
4. Levels of responsibility must be clearly defined.
5. The project intervention progress should be regularly reported on using standardised reports to appropriate management structures. The project progress reports need to be analysed to inform future action and to ensure accountability.
6. For plans to be effectively implemented:
 - the goals need to be realistic and anticipate incremental progress.
 - they require targeted management of resources.
7. A few, well considered, quality interventions in fewer schools is advocated for. Schools require a minimal level of basic functionality for any intervention to have an impact. Differentiated approaches are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality.
8. Lower grades and primary schools should not be neglected.

Monitoring and evaluation lessons

9. A coherent research, monitoring and evaluation component is required.
10. The indicators for success should be negotiated by all role players before the intervention begins.
11. The data/evidence/information collected during an intervention is critical, and should use standardised reporting formats which are then analysed and responded to speedily.

District level lessons

12. Districts play a key role in supporting the school management, getting schools functional, and providing instructional leadership for teachers through curriculum advisors.
13. The school-based mentoring needed to support change in teaching practice requires adequate staffing of curriculum advisors at district level.
14. Prioritise district level accountability, where district roles include school cluster management as well as instructional leadership which supports extended reading and writing in English (over oral English).
15. The key to improved learner performance lies in improved district functionality (with respect to support of higher expectations of schools and school management and the development of a school development plan).

School level lessons

16. The culture and basic functioning of a school are critical to the interventions success. Working in dysfunctional schools is a waste of time and money.

17. This implies working with the school principal and school management teams to attend to time management. The entry point to the schools must be the school management; preferably the principal. Organisation must start from the school, with clearly defined roles.
18. Instructional leadership is required to support curriculum coverage, to ensure higher cognitive demand, and more specialised and less oral work with extended writing and problem solving tasks.
19. There need to be quality learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) in place and in use daily in classrooms. ICT infrastructure and resources can improve access to quality teaching and learning materials.
20. When working with a targeted school there is a need to engage the parents and surrounding community and ensure their support and commitment.

Teacher level lessons

21. The documents all agree that teachers are the centre of any learning attainment improvement intervention. The priority investment should be in ongoing professional development and school-based mentoring for teachers.
22. More recent studies refer to the assessment or testing of teachers in terms of their subject matter knowledge.
23. Teacher training cannot take place through once-off workshops. Teacher involvement in collaborative planning and reflections cycles is valued. Various efforts to motivate and encourage teachers, often through the use of incentives, are critical.

Evaluation question 3: What did the LAIS set out to do (in broad terms, and then specifically in relation to Grade 12 learner support)?

Five primary documents were used to inform our response to this question. These can be divided into two groups of documents: firstly, three strategy or planning documents; and secondly, two implementation documents. In the case of the above three strategy/planning documents, there is some broad coherence around what they envisage LAIS to entail (these are referred to as ‘pillars’). However, the ‘intensive implementation’ plan documents have vastly different content, including nine focus areas for implementation, none of which are the same as the pillars in the strategy documents, and a list of LAIS projects (basically, vacation schools and extra classes; and the provision of resources).

Evaluation question 4: What was the budget allocation and budget breakdown for Grade 12 learner support?

We did not receive a coherent budget allocation for the LAIS project which aligns to either the ‘strategy’ documents or ‘intensive implementation’ plans on what LAIS aims to do. The three primary sources of documentation relating to the budgets for LAIS that we did receive are in different formats, and provide different budget values. Based on the information gathered, the LAIS budget appears to have been allocated almost entirely to the following activities:

- Organising and running winter schools, spring schools, and pre-Matric final revision camps;
- Providing learner support materials;
- Paying for ‘roving teachers’; and
- (only for some districts) Providing school-based funding for weekend extra tuition for grade 12 learners or Ilima camps

According to the school-based stakeholders interviewed, the extra classes offered at the schools (before and after school and on weekends) were initiatives of the school, with teachers doing this on a voluntary basis over and above their existing workloads, without compensation.

Evaluation question 5: What were the planned / documented ways in which the efficacy of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support was to be measured?

The strategy/planning documents each provided a type of logic framework for each of the pillars; with key performance areas, strategic activities, key performance indicators, means of verification, timeframes and responsibilities documented. The ‘intensive implementation’ documents, on the other hand, have no obvious logic model for the LAIS intervention. There are many inputs and activities indicated, though not in a coherent way; and no indication of outputs, outcomes and indicators. In some of the Cluster C district reports provided, ‘LAIS framework’ targets are referred to. However, these differ from district to district.

Evaluation question 6: What were the envisaged impacts (and related unit costs) considered to be evidence of value for money?

We did not receive any financial documentation which reports against the LAIS Action plan, or the implementation plan. The budgets and reports we have received from Cluster B and C refer to specific events such as Spring and Winter schools. Some of the Cluster C reports refer to learning materials. In neither of the key documents referred to above, nor in any others received, is there mention of impacts that are the goal of the LAIS intervention. Similarly, there is no mention of what would be considered evidence of ‘value for money’.

Evaluation question 7: What are the critical features of the Grade 12 learner support intervention within the LAIS, which should be used as a basis for comparison with other Learner Support interventions?

Taking the set of ‘strategy’ documents, these critical features may be considered to be the main foci of Pillar 2:

1. An early start to the academic year;
2. The setting of targets (such as for syllabus coverage and assessments);
3. The establishment of subject committees;
4. The protection of teaching and learning time (ensuring that teachers are in school and teaching);
5. Human resource provisioning (including filling vacant posts);
6. Monitoring, support and evaluation.

On the other hand, taking the ‘intensive implementation’ plan documents, the critical features may be the ‘LAIS projects’

- Autumn schools;
- Winter schools;
- Spring schools;
- Morning classes;
- Afternoon study period; and
- Evening study period

It is these ‘projects’ (activities) that have generally been the focus of the Grade 12 learner support component of LAIS to date.

Evaluation question 8: What financial reporting is available, and what does this reveal about expenditure to date on the LAIS Grade 12 support?

Very limited financial reporting for the LAIS Grade 12 learner support was provided. We were able to obtain information on the total budgets, and how this was broken down per district. The budget breakdown for the year is based on the number of schools and related total number of learners in a district. This way of allocating funding does not allow for differentiated strategies, based on the needs within a district and particular schools. How this budget was then spent at district level was only available from Cluster B and some Cluster C districts. The Cluster B reports related only to spring and winter schools, and none of the other activities that are meant to be part of LAIS.

Evaluation question 9: What are the trends evident from district level reports on the LAIS implementation in relation to LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support?

The only district reports we received from the EC DoE pertained to Cluster B and four districts from Cluster C. The districts within Cluster B were expected to make use of a standardised report to report on Spring School 2014 and Winter School 2014, but did not all do so. The Cluster B district reports did not make use of a standardised template. No Cluster A district reports were received.

Evaluation question 10: What are the perceptions of key stakeholders (gleaned from stakeholder interviews) in relation to the implementation of the LAIS objective of Grade 12 learner support?

The high-level DoE officials' general response was that the implementation is a mixed bag. The circuit managers were more positive, talking about the winter and spring schools going "as planned". Both groups highlighted some logistical issues, like water supply problems to rural schools (tanks running dry); lack of transport; and poor levels of monitoring.

The high-level DoE officials identified numerous challenges around LAIS. The most commonly-identified challenges by these officials are the following:

- The large number of vacant posts in the schools. This means that by the time that the learners get to the vacation schools, in some subjects they are far behind where they should be in the syllabus. Therefore, the tutors have a problem of deciding what and how to teach
- Vacation school tutors not arriving or being of poor quality. It was noted frequently that the better teachers at schools in the province choose not to teach at the vacation schools
- The weak leadership/management in many schools ("no intervention will work in such schools")
- LAIS funds are being top sliced (taken away) by Head Office to pay other things.

The challenges identified by the circuit managers tended to be of a more logistical nature. The most commonly-mentioned challenges here are:

- Funding is low (the budget is insufficient). Sometimes money is withdrawn from LAIS budgets.
- Security for the learners – often the school/site fencing is poor and the learners are attacked on the way to and from the early morning and/or evening classes
- Getting good tutors is a challenge
- Water issue: schools have water tanks, which can run dry during the winter school. The municipality comes with water tankers but they are often slow to respond to the request

Evaluation question 11: Focusing on 4 case study schools, what are the school-level experiences of LAIS implementation for Grade 12 learner support?

One of the questions posed to the principals and teachers at the school visits was: *Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.* Respondents generally mentioned only the extra tuition activities (the afternoon and evening classes, weekend classes, Spring and Winter Schools, exam preparation camps), and extra support materials supplied. Therefore they all referred to the activities identified as ‘LAIS projects’ in the implementation plan.

It was clear from interactions with the school-based stakeholders that morning, afternoon and evening classes were conducted on the initiative of the school, not making use of LAIS budget allocation, and usually not with the direct logistical support of the district. The reported number of additional hours of teaching and support provided by teachers at the case study schools was very high.

The Principals were, on the whole, positive about LAIS and its implementation, speaking of how the learners like to hear the information from new voices and are motivated to learn at the extra teaching sessions provided. The Principals at the four case study schools did, however, identify a number of concerns:

- The planning for these vacation schools is “poor” or “haphazard”
- The revision programmes are not always well structured
- Some of the tutors contracted to teach do not turn up or turn up late.
- Tutors are paid very late for their services
- Classes at some of the vacation schools are unmanageably large.
- The social impact of requiring the learners to live near the school in their Grade 12 year

Their concerns about logistical issues were:

- There is never enough food at the vacation schools and the water runs out at times
- Learners are meant to bring their own bedding, but some are too poor and so do not want to attend as a result
- The sleeping quarters are also not always ideal

The teacher focus groups echoed similar logistical and general concerns as the Principals. However, on the whole, the teachers were nonetheless positive about the vacation schools, and wanted them to continue.

The learners spoken to did not have a lot to add, since they had experienced none of the vacation schools so early in the year. However, they were very positive about the additional classes and vacation schools. They also expressed a number of concerns around the extra classes put on by their own teachers:

- The lack of security around the early morning and evening classes (all groups reported previous Matrics being attacked whilst working in the dark to/from these classes)
- In some schools, the Matrics had to leave their families and live close to the school so as to be able to attend these lessons at very early and/or very late hours, and this was difficult emotionally (they missed their families).
- They were tired from the endless lessons and lack of sleep.

Evaluation question 12: Is there evidence for improvements in Grade 12 performance in the province as a result of the implementation of LAIS in relation to learner support?

The high-level DoE officials' views differed from person to person. Some felt that it had made a difference, whilst others felt that it had not. When asked for evidence to back up their source of confidence, the officials in the former group were only able to offer anecdotal evidence of schools that attended the vacation schools whose results improved. However, a number of other respondents realised that one cannot identify LAIS success or failure on the basis of anecdotal evidence, or even provincial result changes, without controlling for other factors that might have caused the change. A few other officials were quite negative, saying that LAIS "seemingly" does not yield better results, or has had very little effect. Overall, the majority voice was that the LAIS programme was helping. The Principals and teachers were similarly positive about the impact of LAIS, but without any analytical support besides anecdotal evidence.

In order to perform a statistical analysis on the impact of LAIS on Matric results in the districts of Cluster B (the only cluster where sufficiently detailed data was provided), the Grade 12 2012 school pass results were used as a baseline, and the 2014 Matric results as the endpoint. We calculated the change in pass rate from the baseline to endpoint for two groups of schools: those that attended Spring School in 2014 (the experimental group) and those that did not (the control group). [attendance at the Spring School was used as a proxy for a school being classified as a LAIS school].

The following was noticed: overall, the changes in Matric pass rates of schools that *did* participate in the Spring school provided by the district increased on average LESS than those who *did not* receive the attention (viz. +0.9% vs. +2.4%). Both groups show a smaller change than the change in percentage passing for the province (+ 3.8%). Our conclusion is that there is no discernible impact of the Spring school intervention on pass rates at the participating schools for this Cluster.

However, the Matric pass rate is probably too crude a measure to discern impact (though was the only measure available to us). Data on the quality of Matric passes, and on subject level passes (and the quality of these passes), which are mapped to the prioritised subjects in the vacation schools, are necessary.

Evaluation question 13: Is there evidence (or reported evidence) of any other effects of the Grade 12 learner support intervention?

Other effects were seldom mentioned during the interviews, other than comments that the extra attention that the Grade 12 learners received motivated them to perform better. One teacher commented specifically that during weekend classes learners were freer to talk and discuss issues than during the week.

In terms of negative effects, the disruption to family life and the impact on the learners socially of being forced to move and live closer to the school during their matric year (common in the two Libode case study schools) was a concern to learners. The concerns raised by some principals and teachers about teenage pregnancy as a negative effect of learners being away from home is relevant here.

Evaluation question 14: What has been the cost of the intervention to date?

Making use of provincial level reports, the expenditure on the LAIS in the 2014-2015 financial year was approximately R24.47 million. The above was not corroborated with any district level or cluster level reports. This reveals an underspend of over R8 million, approximately one quarter of the budget allocation.

The 'per learner' cost for the 2014-15 financial year was R14.46 (calculated on the total number of learners in schools in each district). However, as all of the reporting (bar the Port Elizabeth district report) relates to Grade 12 interventions, a 'per Grade 12 learner' cost is a more appropriate indicator of the per learner cost. This value is R404 per Grade 12 learner figure. In the absence of learner attendance records at Spring and Winter schools, it is not possible to calculate costs of expenditure per successful Grade 12 learner.

Evaluation question 15a: What recommendations emerge to guide the further implementation of LAIS Grade 12 Learners Support?

The EC DoE officials had numerous suggestions about how the implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support could be improved. In terms of the winter and spring schools – seemingly the mainstay of the LAIS intervention in its enacted state – the following recommendations were provided:

- The support interventions and assistance should be individual school-based.
- Separate out those learners who have had no teaching all year, and those who have had teaching but need their understanding and skills refined.
- There should not be syllabus coverage at vacation schools, as it is ineffective.
- Try to get the best teachers to teach at these vacation schools.
- Standardized prices for items across all districts.
- Keep the vacation schools focused on only a “few things” each year.
- School teachers should be required to attend to get experience and learn from the better teachers.

A very common recommendation was to avoid the current excessive focus on Grade 12 learners, and a number of officials voiced the comment that to intervene in Matric was simply too little, too late. The general feeling was that support for the learners should start in Grade 9 or 10, slowly increasing each year. However, other officials proposed a more radical change: the end to vacation schools.

As mentioned previously, the Principals and teachers were generally very positive about LAIS, and keen (at times very keen) for it to continue, albeit an enhanced version eradicating the logistical and other issues highlighted earlier. Specific recommendations focussed almost entirely on ways of improving the vacation schools. These include:

- Subject advisors should teach at the vacation schools, and/or better Maths and Physical Science tutors should be contracted;
- Start the planning much earlier in the year, and communicate timeously with the schools about what is to happen;
- Make the programme more structured;
- More negotiation/discussion with schools around what to cover in the vacation schools; and
- Include more subjects in the vacation schools.

Other more general recommendations were to begin the support lower down in the school (“Grade 12 is too late”); provide more teacher training; and increase the funds allocated to the intervention.

Conclusion

Evaluation question 15b: What do the evaluators recommend for consideration in the next implementation phase?

Recommendation 1: Ensure that in future interventions the planning documents and implementation documents are completely aligned

When the planning and implementation documents differ markedly, as they do for LAIS, the chance of confusion among role-players involved in implementation is increased. This increases the likelihood of an intervention having little to no positive impact. To limit the variance between the original planning documents and those guiding implementation, it would be ideal to have the same team of people involved in drawing up both sets of documents.

Recommendation 2: Categorise EC schools on the basis of their functionality

Different schools are at different levels of functionality: some are functional and others, unfortunately, dysfunctional. Schools should be categorised into three or four tiers based on a basket of indicators, and each tier should be supported differently. The district plans should make explicit what support /services schools in each category of school receives. The district budgets should reflect these differences; they should not be based on the number of learners, but rather on the number of learners in targeted categories of schools.

Recommendation 3: Plan different interventions for dysfunctional and functional schools

There is clear research evidence that schools require a minimal level of basic functionality for any intervention to have an impact. Differentiated approaches are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality. We recommend that two tightly defined and targeted interventions should be planned and researched: the first targets district and school-based capacity so as to shift a selection of dysfunctional schools into a functional school category; and the second targets a selection of schools that are functional and focuses on improved learner attainment in priority subject areas.

Recommendation 4: Stop the centralised Grade 12 vacation schools and revision camps

The district-run extra classes offered via Spring, Winter or Autumn schools, and ‘revision camps’ should cease to be run, for the following key reasons:

- We do not find statistical evidence of a positive impact of district-based vacation schools;
- There are problems with the quality of the programme offerings (particularly the tutoring);
- There is a poor level of differentiation relating to which schools are targeted;
- There can be little impact with such short camps/schools;
- This is ‘too little, too late’ for matric learners;
- The large cost of logistical arrangements (transport, food and accommodation; and
- The diversion of funding to learners, away from teacher capacity development.

Recommendation 5: If the centralised vacation schools and camps are to be continued, tighten their monitoring and research their impact

We realise that discontinuing the Grade 12 vacation schools and revision camps is a tough political decision, and they will probably continue in the immediate future. Data on their impact, or lack of

impact, should be collected in 2015 so as to ensure that a decision to continue with them or close them is made with hard data.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the focus and monitoring of school-based additional FET classes

We do not have enough data on the school-based additional classes to be able to discern whether or not they are making an impact, but suggest that these extra classes could be encouraged to continue. However, there are several ways in which we feel this component of LAIS could be improved:

1. The additional teaching time should not be so intensely focused at Grade 12 level. We recommend that such extra classes are provided throughout the FET level;
2. Such classes should only be supported in priority subject areas;
3. Closer (district) monitoring of what is being offered and how this aligns with priority subject areas is required;
4. Some budget should be allocated to supporting the implementation of these extra classes; and
5. It may be appropriate to commission research on the perceptions of value and impact of these extra classes using a few case study schools.

We trust that this report does justice to the many hardworking provincial officials, district officials, principals and teachers in the Eastern Cape who had attempted to implement the LAIS Grade 12 Learning Support initiatives to the best of their ability. We have found numerous hardworking educators who have extended themselves in the best interests of Grade 12 learners in the Eastern Cape. Our overall recommendation is to better harness this energy and related financial investment to impact on improving the system. We would like to see more focus on long-term teacher development and district capacity. We recommend targeted interventions for fewer schools (including Primary and Secondary schools), where differentiated services are combined with the school's own efforts. We would like the impact of these interventions to be researched and their lessons of success to be replicated in other parts of the Eastern Cape Province.

1. Introduction

1.1 *The purpose and audience of the evaluation*

The objective of this assignment was to evaluate the implementation of the Grade 12 learner support intervention of the Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy (LAIS) in order to identify whether there is progress towards the planned turnaround in the education system of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The evaluation focus was on the following areas:

- Determine whether the LAIS is being implemented as specified, with regard to Grade 12 learners' support;
- Determine whether the outcomes are being achieved as planned, and if not, what are the challenges prevalent in the implementation of LAIS with regards to grade 12 learner support intervention;
- Determine (at the level of perceptions of value from stakeholders) if value for money has been derived from the implementation of LAIS with regards to Grade 12 learner support intervention; and
- Make recommendations of remedial actions towards the identified challenges.

The audience of this report includes various government officials in the Eastern Cape: the Eastern Cape Premier; the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier (OtP), and the Eastern Cape Department of Education (DoE). In addition Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) colleagues are interested in this report as part of the Government Support Programme which has the objective that public institutions have improved their service delivery, in cooperation with the private sector and civil society.

1.2 *Background to, and description of, the intervention*

The background to the LAIS for the Eastern Cape province is described in various departmental documents, which we review in some detail later in this report. In this section we summarise the main arguments made as motivation for the intervention from these documents.

The majority of learners that sit for the Grade 12 Examinations fail to become eligible for bachelors programmes at universities. They do not move evenly through the schooling system as over the period 2000 - 2011 only about 22% of learners who entered Grade 1 progressed to Grade 12 within the 12-year period, with only 14% eventually successful in the National Senior Certificate examination.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (EC DoE) therefore held **Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy (LAIS)** summits in 2010 and 2012 to review its efforts to improve learning outcomes in the respective academic years and examine the causes for the low levels of performance in schools. Both summits identified that underperformance of schools in the province could be attributed to the following major factors: school functionality; level of curriculum implementation and the resourcing of education. The 2012 summit came to a resolution that the provinces attempts to improve learner attainment should cover Grade R-12 if the system is to have a sustainable impact. It was against this background that five focus areas ('pillars') for LAIS were resolved; one of which (Pillar 2) was Grade 12 Learner support¹.

¹ As will be elaborated on in a later section (Section 4.3), there is a substantial difference between the intended programme of LAIS, as per these pillars, and the enacted programme.

2. Evaluation framework

The evaluation was structured in relation to the following key focus areas: context of implementation; reporting on implementation; evaluating efficacy and value of money; and recommendations emerging. The evaluation was framed in relation to the following 15 guiding questions for each key focus area with respect to the Eastern Cape LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support:

2.1 South African context of implementation

1. Based on a brief desktop scan, what other South African interventions are aimed at supporting improved attainment for FET learners in South Africa?
2. What lessons emerge from this desk-top scan of other similar FET-level interventions in relation to the design of such interventions?

2.2 LAIS context of implementation

3. What did the LAIS set out to do (in broad terms and then specifically in relation to Grade 12 learner support)?
4. What was the budget allocation and budget breakdown for the Grade 12 Learner Support?
5. What were the planned/documentated ways in which the efficacy of the LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support was to be measured?
6. What were the envisaged impacts (and related unit costs) considered to be evidence of value for money?
7. What are the critical features of the Grade 12 learner support intervention within the LAIS, which should be used as a basis for comparison with other Learner Support interventions?
8. What financial reporting is available, and what does this reveal about expenditure to date on the LAIS Grade 12 support?

2.3 Reporting on implementation

9. What are the trends evident from district level reports on the LAIS implementation in relation to LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support?
10. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders (gleaned from stakeholder interviews) in relation to the implementation of the LAIS objective of Grade 12 learner support, with a particular focus what is working well, what is not working well and the main challenges experienced?
11. Focusing on four case study schools (2 performing above average, and 2 performing below average), what are the school-level experiences of the LAIS implementation of Grade 12 learner support?

2.4 Evaluating efficacy and value for money

12. Is there evidence for improvements in Grade 12 performance in the province as a result of the implementation of LAIS in relation to learner support?
13. Is there evidence (or reported evidence) of any other effects of the Grade 12 learner support intervention?
14. What has been the cost of the intervention to date in terms of total expenditure?; expenditure per Grade 12 learner engaged in the learner support intervention? and expenditure per successful Grade 12 learner? (with success defined in terms of number and quality of passes)

2.5 Recommendations emerging

15. What recommendations emerge to guide the further implementation of LAIS Grade 12 Learners Support:
- What do stakeholders recommend as solutions or areas for overcoming challenges?
 - What do the case study schools recommend for consideration in the next implementation phase?
 - What do the evaluators recommend for consideration in the next implementation phase?

3. Evaluation methodology

3.1 Research design

This evaluation is an interim evaluation, focusing on the period of implementation of the Grade 12 learner support strategy within the overall LAIS intervention from January 2013 to March 2015. We have been guided by the evaluation questions outlined above, with the final research design agreed upon after a face-to-face discussion with GIZ personnel and staff members from the EC OtP at a meeting in East London on 20th January 2015.

The two context sections (South African context and LAIS context) defined as key focus areas for the evaluation, were intended to provide a framework against which the LAIS intervention could be evaluated. It was anticipated that lessons from the scan of other FET level interventions in South African would provide a benchmark of ‘best practice’ while the review of documentation relating to the LAIS plans would allow for the intervention to be measured against its own documented indicators for success.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The evaluation design encompasses both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, each of which is described below. The research design involved the following key processes:

- A desk-top scan of similar South African interventions;
- A document review of LAIS documents provided by the EC DoE;
- Visits to four case study schools;
- Interviews with multiple role players at each case study school, and high- and middle-ranking EC DoE officials; and
- A statistical analysis of the EC Grade 12 learner attainment data.

Each of these is unpacked in more detail in the next few sub-sections.

3.2.1 Desk-top scan of similar South African interventions

A brief desk-top scan of other South African interventions aimed at supporting FET learners was completed. This was intended to provide a snapshot comparison for the approach adopted by the LAIS in relation to Grade 12 learner support. This landscape review was undertaken as a desk study. The following criteria were used to determine which projects would be considered relevant to the study:

- The project was based within a school² in South Africa, and

² Thus interventions at FET colleges or institutions where learners complete Matric for a second time were excluded

- The project had a substantial FET (Grade 10-12) component, and
- The project was over-and-above the ‘normal’ running of a school, and
- The project impacted at least 100 learners or 25 teachers in a calendar year.

Data was collected from human networks and online searches (including relevant academic journals). The review of published research and the project websites resulted in a little over a dozen articles or reports of relevance for the topics. All too commonly there was no published or online research on the projects.

A list of 23 projects which met the criteria was generated. These were the projects which were identified by the evaluation team within the time allocated for the brief desk top scan. This was not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather indicative of the kinds of projects of this kind in South Africa. From this list, case study projects were selected, based on available data and the scale of the projects. Two large-scale projects with sufficient documentation were selected and written up as short case studies.

Thereafter, using all the documents obtained for the literature scan, as well as the case study projects, a set of generic lessons from the experiences of FET interventions in South Africa was obtained. This was developed as a presentation and presented to the reference group on 20th February 2015.

3.2.2 Review of LAIS documents

The planned methodology was to review the LAIS logic model; LAIS provincial and district plans and implementation reports. Unfortunately, much of this documentation was not provided to the evaluation team, and as such the review of documents was able to be conducted only on the documentation received.

3.2.3 School visits

To substantiate the document reviews, non-probability sampling of a few districts and schools in the province - according to criteria established in consultation with the EC OtP - was completed. Eight schools’ names (four from each of two districts) were provided by the EC DoE. From this list, the researchers chose four schools to visit³ using stratified, random sampling processes. The case study sample thus consisted finally of 2 geographically-separated districts (Libode and Grahamstown) with 2 schools each – one performing above average and one below average. The school visits were then written up as case studies, providing valuable qualitative data for the study. Each school visit comprised the following:

- Photo documentation of school environment;
- Interview with school principal;
- Interview with Head of SGB (if he/she was available)
- Focus group with Grade 12 teachers;
- Focus group with a selection of current Grade 12 learners

³ The reason for taking a sample from the list provided was so that the EC DoE ultimately was not aware of exactly which schools were being visited. This anonymity, it is felt, facilitated an increase in openness and honesty from those interviewed at these schools.

In order to take into account ethical considerations, each person at each school that was interviewed (either individually or in the focus groups), was informed of the purposes of the interview/focus group and to what ends their feedback would be used. They were assured of their anonymity, and signed forms agreeing to the whole process. The letter to schools ensuring their informed consent to participate in the evaluation study is included in Appendix 4.

3.2.4 Interviews

To collect district and provincial level information, interviews with key informants were conducted (face-to-face as far as was possible, and via telephone/Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) discussion in some cases). The list of provincial level interviewees was provided by the EC OtP, and included provincial officials, and a trade union official. District level officials (circuit managers) were also interviewed, but during the period of school visits rather than on the separate visit to the province at which the high-level officials were interviewed. The interviews were thereafter summarised and written up to provide qualitative data.

As in the case of the school visit interviews, each official was interviewed individually and was informed of the purposes of the interview and to what ends their feedback would be used. They were assured of their anonymity, and signed forms agreeing to their informed consent to participate in the study.

The interview and focus group schedules (questions) for the provincial DoE officials and school visits followed the key areas of focus defined for the evaluation. These schedules were circulated to the EC OtP and GIZ partners for approval prior to their use during the school visits, and an example of one of them can be found in Appendix 3.

3.2.5 Statistical analysis of learner attainment data

In order to conduct statistical analysis on learner attainment data the Eastern Cape Matric results from 2011 – 2014 of all schools, with overall and individual subject pass rates, and percentage of each type of pass; disaggregated to separate LAIS from non-LAIS schools, was requested. Unfortunately, much of this data was not provided to the evaluation team. Only school (and provincial and district) level attainments in terms of overall Grade 12 pass rates for 2008-2014, and provincial-level subject attainments, were provided. No school level attainment data by subject, or by type of pass, was forthcoming.

We therefore worked with what we have been given, and performed a quantitative analysis of changes in the Matric pass rates of schools who attended the 2014 Spring School⁴, and those who didn't, for Cluster B. Cluster B was chosen as the focus since that was the only cluster for which we had sufficient information. Since this evaluation was meant to focus on the period from 2013 to date, the 2012 Matric results were used as the baseline metric, and the most recent Matric results (from 2014) as the midline metric.

3.3 Report writing

Two reports have been written during this evaluation:

⁴ This was used as a proxy for a school receiving additional support, under LAIS, during the period January 2013 – December 2014.

Firstly, the information uncovered in the literature review (brief desk-top scan) was summarised in an *inception report*, and provided to all stakeholders on 25th February 2015. The information included therein has subsequently been incorporated into this final report.

Secondly, this *final report* summarises and comments on all the data collected and analysed. In addition, it includes a review of the initial logical framework and theory of change as it relates to Pillar 2 of the LAIS; a discussion of the lessons and emerging findings of the evaluation (what has worked and what hasn't worked); and recommendations on how the intervention can be revised and strengthened. The final report has gone through a draft stage, where all key stakeholders from the EC OtP, EC DoE and GIZ were able to provide comment (suggestions for edits), both in writing and at a face-to-face meeting. After the meeting, all accepted changes and requests were incorporated into this final report.

3.4 Evaluation limitations

The evaluation was undertaken over the period from mid-January 2015 to end-March 2015. The limited time available to complete the evaluation made it difficult to collect and analyse all the data needed to make an in-depth evaluation of this intervention.

The methodology had two major limitations. Firstly, the short period available for the research (not much over two months) meant that the time to follow up on missing documentation was sorely limited. This has meant that the analysis has, at times, had to be undertaken on partial data. Secondly, this evaluation was conceptualised after the original LAIS planning process. As such, documentation had to be requested from the EC DoE and, in many cases, reports required for monitoring and evaluation purposes were not able to be provided. Monitoring and evaluation data collection was not designed into the original LAIS implementation plan, thus data by which the indicators for success could be measured was often not able to be provided.

These limitations relate to two of the lessons identified from the successful FET learner attainment improvement interventions in South African, which are discussed in detail below:

- *To observe the implementation of plans, a coherent research, monitoring and evaluation component is required; developed from the outset (research informs the plan) and continued right through the intervention; and*
- *The data/evidence/information collected during an intervention is critical, and should use standardised reporting formats which are then analysed and responded to speedily. Reports used for this critical feedback cycle include adherence to common work schedules, reports from mentors, learner assessment results (analysed question by question, based on the assessment items), employment contracts with related performance indicators, teacher lesson planning documents and teacher tests on subject knowledge.*

Neither of these aspects seemed to be present for the Eastern Cape LAIS, and this impacted on what was possible in relation to the design of this interim evaluation.

4. Findings

In this section we report on the findings of the evaluation against the areas defined in the evaluation framework. We seek to answer the evaluation research questions as posed in the terms of reference, and to indicate where lack of documentation meant that a question could not be answered.

4.1 South African context of LAIS intervention

In this section we provide a contextual framework in which we situate the Eastern Cape LAIS intervention. This section responds to *Evaluation question 1: Based on a brief desktop scan, what other South African interventions are aimed at supporting improved learner attainment at FET level in South Africa?*

We draw on a scan of the other FET-level interventions in South African schools, in order to extract lessons of successful programme that impact on learner attainment targets. We then use these lessons in our evaluative reflection on the Eastern Cape LAIS intervention.

4.1.1 Summary of other FET-level interventions

We conducted a scan of reports and documents detailing experiences and lessons from FET-level interventions in South Africa. Please consult Appendix 2 for the full reference list. A total of 23 projects around South Africa that met the four criteria of the study scope outlined in the methodology section were obtained through the above process. The details of these projects are provided in a table format in Appendix 5⁵, and the lessons drawn from these projects and related reports and documents detailed in the reference sources are summarised after we present the two case studies.

4.1.2 Case study interventions

In addition to developing the summary table, two case study projects were selected to develop in more detail: The quality learning project (QLP) and the Gauteng Secondary Schools Improvement Project (SSIP). Both cases were selected on the basis of there being sufficient information to compile a case study. Attempts were made to include a case from more rural provinces (with direct attempts at accessing reports and information from the North West and Free State Provincial education departments). However, this information was not forthcoming within the time frames of the scan, and no public documentation was found. The QLP project was a national project which included districts in rural provinces (including the Eastern Cape). The SSIP initiative is in Gauteng, which differs significantly from the Eastern Cape context; however, the improvements evident and approach used in this urban context was considered to include possible lessons for the Eastern Cape.

Case study 1: Quality Learning Project

<p>Title of the project: Quality Learning Project (QLP)</p> <p>Implementing agency: ten service providers, mostly NGOs (with JET as managing agent), assisted and supported by the South African Department of Education (DoE)</p> <p>Funders and partners/stakeholders: public-private partnership between the Business Trust and the Department of Education</p> <p>Region: all of South Africa (though only certain districts)</p> <p>Target group(s): multi-level (learners; teachers; education department officials)</p>

⁵ Free, online resources suitable for South African FET-learners are also summarised in table form, in Appendix 6

Project launch and end date: 2000 to 2004 (5 years)

Number of schools, learners, teachers served by the project:

525 high schools in 17 different districts (at least one in each province of South Africa). The mathematics intervention alone covered a total of over 290 000 Grade 10-12 learners, and nearly 120 000 Grade 8-9 learners.

Goals of the intervention:

The project was a five year multi-level, multi-site education intervention with the specific aim of improving learner performance in low performing schools across all nine provinces in South Africa. Its focus was on mathematics, and language reading and writing skills.

The five key outcomes to be achieved at the end of the project were:

- (a) Improved learning outcomes in the languages of instruction and mathematics in Grades 8-12 as measured by
- an increase in the absolute number of learners passing;
 - an increase in the numbers of learners passing with matric exemption; and with Maths (HG); and
 - an increase in the Matric pass rate⁶
- (b) Improved teaching of languages and mathematics;
- (c) Improved governance and management;
- (d) Improved management of district offices; and
- (e) Improved support to schools by district offices

How the intervention operated (i.e. what did the project do?)

The project operated five main programmes: Programme 1 focussed on district development; Programme 2 on school development; Programme 3 on learning outcomes and assessment practices; Programme 4 on teacher development; and Programme 5 on monitoring and evaluation.

Looking at Programmes 3 and 4 in more detail, there was an annual systemic assessment of learner achievement in Grades 9 and 11 in the subjects of English and Maths. Diagnostic tests for classroom use at these grade levels and for those two subjects were also supplied.

Monitoring and evaluation methodology

Monitoring and evaluation was incorporated into the QLP from the outset, and an independent external agency, the Human Sciences Research Council, was appointed to carry out the evaluation. The evaluation design and methodology included a baseline survey (2000) before the project interventions were implemented, a mid-term evaluation (2002) to review progress of the project, and a summative evaluation (2004) to determine whether the identified project aims and objectives were achieved.

Findings on impact (what changes the intervention has brought about in terms of academic attainment)

Percentage points by which the increase in QLP schools is greater than control schools:

- Number of learners passing Matric: 16.8%
- Number of learners passing English 2nd language (HG): 36.0%

⁶ These indicators replaced the old indicators after the midterm evaluation

- Number of learners passing with exemption: 61.8%
- Overall school matric pass rate: 8.2%

The indicators used to measure improvement in language and Maths teaching and classrooms “produced mixed and inconsistent results” (Prew and Shah, 2013, p. 218). The indicators in which the project schools performed substantially better than the control schools did, however, include the critical areas of teacher competence and learner classwork; and overall school functioning.

In the case of Mathematics, during the period of the QLP there was a 25% increase in the percentage of HG passes compared with a decrease of 4% in the national average (over the same period). There were also increases in the pass rates in most of the districts, and (in the case of SG) the percentage of passes also improved more than those of the national average.

In addition, causal modelling of the effects of the QLP intervention showed:

- The Grade 11 Maths performance of the learners benefitted much from the district interventions
- Language teacher interventions had a measurable effect on overall matric pass rates, and
- Improvements in overall school functionality

Budget/costs

R140 million over the five year period (to be replicated from 2013, the estimated cost would be just under R7 billion).

Sources of information

Kanjee, A., & Bhola, H. (2014). Evaluating a Large-Scale School Intervention Project in South Africa: Lessons and Challenges. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(23), 792 - 803.

Kanjee, A., & Prinsloo, C. H. (2005). *Improving Learning in South African Schools: The Quality Learning Project (QLP). Summative Evaluation (2000 to 2004)*. Pretoria: HSRC Press

Prew, M. & Shar, S. (2013). The Quality Learning Project: An Integrated Theory-Driven Intervention. In Y. Sayed, A. Kanjee, & Nkomo, M (eds.). *The search for quality education in post-apartheid South Africa: Interventions to improve learning and teaching*. (pp 210-229). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Taylor, N., & Prinsloo, C. (2005). *The Quality Learning Project: Lessons for high school Improvement in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust.

Case Study 2: Secondary School Improvement Programme

Title of the project: Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP)

Implementing agency: Sci-Bono Discovery Centre (In cooperation with the Gauteng Department of Education [GDE])

Funders and partners/stakeholders: Gauteng Department of Education

Region: Gauteng Province

Target group(s): Grade 10 to 12 learners and teachers

Project launch and end date: 2010 – present

Number of schools, learners, teachers served by the project:

All 15 districts in Gauteng Province. 62 000 Grade 12 learners enrolled in the programme (2014 figures); about 5 000 teachers were supported

Goals of the intervention:

- An improvement in the overall provincial Grade 12 pass rate to achieve provincial targets;
- A Gr. 12 pass rate in underperforming schools of 85% or higher;
- A provincial Gr.12 Maths & Science pass rate of above 70%; 60% of Maths & Science passes to be above 40%;
- An average level of learner attendance rate at SSIP of 80% or more; and
- An effective & well attended teacher training programme.

How the intervention operated (i.e. what did the project do?)

SSIP is a supplementary tuition programme offering extra tuition to Grade 12 learners every weekend during the school term and during school holidays, and during 2 week-long exam preparation camps before the final Matric exams. Ten subjects are supported: Maths, Maths Literacy, Physical Science, Life Science, Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, Geography, History and English (1st Additional Lang.). Only selected topics are covered in each subject [those with a 'high risk' (i.e. where the learners achieve poorly) and 'high yield' (i.e. a large number of marks in the final exams)]

These lessons are offered at 155 sites around Gauteng; mostly by quality public school teachers using resources developed by subject experts. Learners from 431 high schools with a learner body mainly from poor communities are transported to the central venues, and provided with food.

Extra tuition is also provided to Grade 10 and 11 learners from the same schools during the school holidays

In addition, the project offers training to teachers in all priority schools, so as to improve the quality of teaching at those schools. The focus was especially on the topic areas that Matric learners generally performed most poorly, and take place during the school holidays and on Saturdays during the term.

Monitoring and evaluation methodology

School management teams, district officials, Sci-Bono staff, and GDE quality assurance teams carry

out monitoring visits at SSIP sites. Detailed learner feedback forms collect data from students on a continuous basis. This tracks learners' levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching, the learning materials and logistics such as time tabling and quality of the food provided. Monitoring also provides feedback to districts about which schools may need support, based on which groups of learners seem to be struggling with specific topics.

There has been no external evaluation.

Findings on impact (changes the intervention has brought about in academic attainment)

There has been a substantial improvement in the levels of Matric achievement in maths, science and other subjects in Gauteng since the Strategy was introduced. The trend in the Matric pass rates in the priority disadvantaged schools participating in SSIP has been upward: rising from 65.4% in 2010 to 78.8% in 2014.

The pass rate in Maths in SSIP schools increased from 40% in 2011 to 61% in 2013. The pass rate in Physical Science increased from 41% to 65% over the same period.

Other benefits of SSIP include:

- a reduction in the 'achievement gap' between priority schools in disadvantaged communities and schools in more affluent communities
- a drop in the number of under-performing schools in the province (from 188 in 2009 to 19 in 2013. The number rose to 30 in 2014)
- a change in the profile of top performing learners in Gauteng to include an increasing number of top performers from township schools
- an increase in the percentage of bachelor passes obtained

Budget/costs

Annual operating budget (2014): R120 million

Sources of information

Sci-Bono Discovery Centre. (2015). *The Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP)*. Johannesburg: Sci-Bono Centre

Ngobeni, B. (2014). *Secondary School Improvement Programme: A case of the Gauteng Department of Education*. [PowerPoint presentation]

Center for Education Innovations. (2013). *Secondary School Improvement Programme*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/secondary-school-improvement-programme-SSIP> [Accessed 3rd February 2015].

4.1.3 Lessons learned from other similar interventions

The final aspect of the literature review was to collate all the 'lessons learned' about what worked and what didn't work in previous interventions. This section responds to *evaluation question 2: What lessons emerge from the desk-top scan of other similar FET-level interventions in relation to the design of such interventions?* The motivation for addressing this question was to ensure that the current LAIS intervention learns from

the strengths and weaknesses; successes and failures of previous interventions. These lessons provide a 'best practice' benchmark against which with LAIS intervention can be evaluated.

In this section we provide a synopsis of the key lessons learnt emerging from our scan of FET level interventions in South Africa that support learners and teachers. These lessons are drawn from across all of the projects and documents we reviewed and are not limited to the case study interventions.

We consider the provincial education system to operate at several interconnected levels:

- Provincial Department of Education;
- District officials and school-based mentors;
- Schools;
- Teachers;
- Learners;
- Surrounding community.

For effective intervention, planning is needed for communication and alignment of purpose at each of these levels. However, we note that the teacher in their classroom is at the centre of this system. Any programme to improve attainment must therefore place the teacher as a central role player.

Provincial level lessons

This level of the system is critical for the **conceptualisation, coherence, alignment, monitoring, evaluation and accountability** of Learner Attainment improvement plans. The documents we reviewed commonly referred to the need for collaboration, clarity and coherence in the planning of interventions; the related communication required between stakeholders; and the related evidence/reporting required to make further plans and address areas of need.

There is a clear need for **high level political commitment** to intervention.

Interventions need to be **comprehensive** (in terms of the services and inputs offered) **and targeted** (in terms of selecting schools and priority subjects appropriately).

Levels of responsibility must be clearly defined. This is done by taking time to **plan the intervention**, as well as **how its impact will be measured**.

The project intervention progress should be regularly reported on using **standardised reports**. The reports (from schools, districts, and other role players) should be made to appropriate **management structures**.

The project progress reports need to be **analysed** to inform future action and, where necessary, adapting the plan. Management action is required to ensure **accountability and adherence** to the overall implementation plan.

Staff vacancies, insufficient staffing and lack of permanent positions were seen to impact negatively on intervention attempts. This was particularly acute in the more rural provinces (such as Eastern Cape, and Limpopo).

For plans to be effectively implemented the **goals need to be realistic and anticipate incremental progress**.

For plans to be effectively implemented they required **targeted management of resources**. It is simply not possible to reach all schools – appropriately targeting which schools receive the resources for a project intervention is therefore critical

School selection requires the establishment of fair selection criteria. A few well considered quality interventions in **fewer schools** is advocated for. There is clear evidence that schools require **a minimal level of basic functionality** for any intervention to have an impact. **Differentiated approaches** are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality.

Lower grades and primary schools should not be neglected. Prinsloo (2013) has this to say: “the primary focus of the QLP on secondary schooling was a mistake, analogous to that of continuing to dry puddles under leaking taps, instead of fixing the taps straight away.” (p. 231).

Monitoring and evaluation lessons

To observe the implementation of plans, a coherent **research, monitoring and evaluation** component is required; developed from the outset (research informs the plan) and continue right through the intervention.

The **indicators** for success should be negotiated by all role players before the intervention begins.

This M&E component impacts on several selections at the planning stages:

- **Selection of which schools** to target;
- **Selection of which subject areas and grades**, and the related **content areas/topics** within them to target;
- Selection of the **teachers** (who should be at the centre of the improvement drive).
- Selection of **learners** (who is being targeted and why)

The **data/evidence/information collected** during an intervention is critical, and should use **standardised reporting formats** which are then **analysed and responded** to speedily. Reports used for this **critical feedback cycle** include adherence to common work schedules, reports from mentors, learner assessment results (analysed question by question, based on the assessment items), employment contracts with related performance indicators, teacher lesson planning documents and teacher tests on subject knowledge.

District level lessons

Districts play a **key role** in supporting the school management, getting schools functional, and providing instructional leadership for teachers through curriculum advisors.

The district is the **key for sustaining improvement** in schools beyond the end of the intervention.

The **school-based mentoring** needed to support change in teaching practice requires adequate staffing of **curriculum advisors** at district level. This is impacted on negatively by vacant posts.

District level accountability, where district roles include school cluster management as well as instructional leadership is prioritised.

Emphasis on **instructional leadership** which supports extended reading and writing in English (over oral English) is a priority.

The key to improved learner performance lies in improved district functionality (with respect to support of higher expectations of schools and school management and the development of a **school development plan**).

School level lessons

The **culture and basic functioning of a school** are critical to the interventions success. Working in dysfunctional schools is waste of time and money.

This implies working with the **school principal** and **school management teams** to attend to **time management** (starting school on the first day, using every day and teachers being in class teaching every day, reducing teacher absenteeism).

The **entry point to the schools** much be the school management; preferably the principal.

Instructional leadership is required to support curriculum coverage, to ensure **higher cognitive demand**, and more specialised and **less oral work** with extended writing and problem solving tasks.

There need to be quality learning and teaching materials (**LTSMs**) in place and in use **daily** in classrooms.

These should include not only textbooks but study guides in Grades 11 and 12. Working with school management teams includes the management and control of **school infrastructure** and **LTSMs** and **equipment**.

There are several interventions where **ICT infrastructure** was/is used as part of improving access to quality teaching and learning materials. In particular there is growing interest in the **use of mobile devices**.

When working with a **targeted school** there is a need to engage **the parents and surrounding community** and ensure their support and commitment. This relates both to **their investment in learner attainment improvements**, as well as the **psycho-social needs** related to communities in poverty.

Principals and district officials can be involved in arranging and supporting **study groups**.

Organisation must start from the school, with clearly defined roles.

Teacher level lessons

The documents all agree that **teachers are the centre of any learning attainment improvement intervention**.

The priority investment should be in ongoing professional development and school-based mentoring for teachers. This involves ensuring improvements in subject matter knowledge, pedagogic practices, and professionalism (being at school, on time, in class, with the right materials and planned lessons, continuously learning and reflecting).

More recent studies refer to the assessment or **testing of teachers in terms of their subject matter knowledge**. This is done for diagnostic purposes and content weaknesses are then targeted by means of training.

There seems to be unanimous agreement that **teacher training cannot take place through once off workshops**. The contact dosage is considered important and long term engagement is seen as critical. Increasingly a school-based mentoring component is included and teachers are expected to engage in independent study tasks between contact sessions or visits.

Teacher involvement in collaborative planning and reflections cycles (i.e. planning lessons, and then reflecting on their plan, teaching the lesson and then reflecting on it with peers and mentors) seems to be successful.

Various efforts to **motivate and encourage teachers**, often through the use of incentives, are critical. These can include supporting teachers existing workloads (such as receiving pre-defined lesson plans), greater access to mentoring and support, and ensuring that courses are accredited. Caution is raised about the use of financial rewards.

The **timing of contact time with teachers** has been raised as a challenge. Afternoons are difficult to bring teachers from different schools together, due to the fact that many use public transport and/or live far from the schools at which they teach. Saturday and holiday training are seen as possible alternatives.

4.2 LAIS context of implementation

The findings in this and the following two sections have been outlined as responses to the evaluation questions posed for this key focus area.

4.2.1 LAIS concept

In this section we discuss the answer to *Evaluation question 3: What did the LAIS set out to do (in broad terms, and then specifically in relation to Grade 12 learner support)?* There are five primary documents which we have used to inform our response to this question:

- Province of the Eastern Cape (28 March 2013) *Learner attainment improvement strategy LAIS 2013 – 2015: A three year strategy to stabilise quality teaching and learning*. We refer to this as ‘EC LAIS Strategy 2013-2015’.
- Province of the Eastern Cape (no date) *Action Plan for LAIS Implementation (2013 – 2015)*. We refer to this as ‘EC LAIS Action plan 2013 – 2015’
- Province of the Eastern Cape (28 March 2014) *Learner attainment improvement strategy LAIS 2014 implementation plan: Part of a three year strategy to stabilise quality teaching and learning*. We refer to this as ‘EC LAIS Strategy 2014’.
- Province of the Eastern Cape (8 March 2014) *Intensive implementation of learner attainment improvement strategy (LAIS) for the academic year 2014: Guidance to school principals, school governing bodies, education stakeholders, communities, officials of the department of education and government officials from other state department*. We refer to this as ‘EC Intensive implementation of LAIS 2014’.

- Province of the Eastern Cape (no date) *Intensive implementation of learner attainment improvement strategy (LAIS) for the academic year 2015: Guidance to school principals, school governing bodies, education stakeholders, communities, officials of the department of education and government officials from other state department.* We refer to this as ‘EC Intensive implementation of LAIS 2015’.

EC LAIS strategy 2013 – 2015

The EC LAIS strategy 2013-2015 provides the following as “key enablers that should be at the centre of any strategy to improve learning outcomes and school performance:

- Post Provisioning Norms.
- Skills Development.
- Resource Provisioning.
- Strengthening management and leadership capacity.
- Mathematics, Science and Language Strategy.
- Stakeholder mobilization.
- Strengthening Inclusive Education”. (p. 6)

Five pillars are identified in this strategy:

- Pillar 1: Literacy and numeracy
- Pillar 2: Grade 12 learner support
- Pillar 3: Dealing with GET and FET underperforming schools
- Pillar 4: School functionality
- Pillar 5: Making special schools functional

This evaluation focused on Pillar 2: Grade 12 learner support. This document includes the following relating to the problem statement for Pillar 2:

“In this regard the problem statement indicates that the majority of learners that sit the Grade 12 Examinations fail to become eligible for a Bachelors Programme at a University. The various intervention programmes that have been implemented have not been successful in promoting better Grade 12 results.

The incapacity of the intervention programmes to turn around learner performance means that the real problem has not been dealt with. The long-term solutions lie partly with the strategies proposed under Pillar 6.1. This pillar deals specifically with the Grade 12 class of a given academic year. It presupposes application of a one-year focused programme to support the Grade 12 class.

Amongst others, the following teaching and monitoring strategies should be part of the annual support programme to the Grade 12 class.” (p. 9)

The following are set as focal targets to Pillar 2:

- An early start to the academic year;
- The setting of targets (such as for syllabus coverage and assessments);
- The establishment of subject committees;
- The protection of teaching and learning time (ensuring that teachers are in school and teaching);
- Human resource provisioning (including filling vacant posts);
- Monitoring, support and evaluation. (p. 9-11)

EC LAIS Action plan 2013 – 2015

This LAIS strategy 2013 – 2015 has been developed into a hard copy booklet which is referred to as the “Action Plan for LAIS Implementation (2013 – 2015)” (EC DoE, n.d.). According to this document, there are six main educational deliverables that are at the heart of LAIS:

1. Improving educational leadership, management and administration
2. Improving resource allocation, provisioning and utilization (including accountability)
3. Implementing programs to increase productivity and work performance
4. Mobilizing communities to support education delivery (through the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QTLC))
5. Stabilizing the education system
6. Improving achievement of learning outputs

In order to ensure that the above deliverables are achieved, five main pillars (areas of focus) were identified and focal targets referred to. These are the same as for the Strategy 2013-2015 document.

EC LAIS Strategy 2014

This document follows the format and style of the EC LAIS Strategy 2013-2015 but is updated to refer to 2014 activities. The same five pillars are defined, with slightly more detail:

- Pillar 1: Improved implementation of the Numeracy and Literacy strategy in Grades R - 9 to obtain maximum achievement in Languages and Mathematics
- Pillar 2: Improve the quality of learning outcomes in the FET band (Grades 10 – 12): achieving quality national senior certificate qualification.
- Pillar 3: Improved learning outcomes in Mathematics, Science & Technology; Grades R – 12.
- Pillar 4: Improved functionality of public schools: making our schools work
- Pillar 5: Assessment as a lever to drive improved learner outcomes: infusing inclusivity, managing retention and awarding excellence

In this document the problem statement for Pillar 2 is defined as follows:

“Although the Province remains the lowest in the country, the 2013 Grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate rose to 64.9 %, a welcome improvement to the upward trajectory of the last two years. Targeted intervention strategies specifically focusing on underperforming schools are planned to rollout in order to achieve the national targets set for 2014. Proposed strategies are targeted at improving the quality (number of Bachelor’s Passes) and quantity (% pass rate) of Grade 12 learners receiving a National Senior Certificate (NSC). The achievement of 70% overall NSC pass rate and 25% Bachelor passes require concerted and sustainable efforts.” (p. 10)

In the case of the above three planning documents, there is some broad coherence around the LAIS pillars.

EC Intensive implementation of LAIS 2014 and 2015

However, the above documents relating to strategy do not align with the implementation plan titled “Intensive implementation of LAIS 2015” (and its earlier rendition “Intensive implementation of LAIS 2014”).

The ‘strategy’ documents and the ‘intensive implementation’ plan documents have vastly different content. In the ‘intensive implementation document’ for 2015, running to 137 pages, one finds a collection of 2014 Matric examination results; focus areas for implementation; and the full 2015

National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA)⁷. There are nine focus areas for implementation, none of which are the same as the pillars in the strategy documents. The focus areas that appear to be relevant to Grade 12 learner support (the focus of this evaluation) are:

- Focus area 1: Tracking learner outcome targets;
- Focus area 2: Extra tuition for curriculum coverage;
- Focus area 3: Matric countdown rollout programme and preparation for NSC exams;
- Focus area 7: Back-to-basics functionality and management;
- Focus area 8: Learner support and motivation programmes; and
- Focus area 9: Effective utilization of telematic centres.

Following on from these focus areas, but seemingly unrelated to any of them, are a list of LAIS projects “that must therefore be implemented by all schools for maximum impact” (p. 36):

- Autumn schools;
- Winter schools;
- Spring schools;
- Evening studies;
- Morning classes;
- Afternoon study period; and
- Evening study period

A few pages further on in the ‘intensive implementation’ document, the authors provide a “summary of key LAIS programmes for 2015” (pp. 41 – 42), which provides yet another set of focus headings. Prominent in this list are some of the activities mentioned previously (such as the autumn, winter and spring schools), but also some new ones. The new focus areas include various resources to be provided by schools, such as newspaper supplements; mindset materials; study guides; telematics live programmes; exemplar question papers and DBE i-cloud programmes. These ‘LAIS projects’ and the ‘summary of key LAIS programmes for 2015’ align to the key performance indicator of ‘provide learner support and enrichment programs’ specified in the EC LAIS strategy 2014 document. However, all of the other key performance indicators referred to in the strategy are missing.

It is encouraging to see that this document includes an indication of a possible classification of districts (which could also be applied to schools) which suggests that there has been some consideration to differentiated services (which could then be reflected in budgets). The ‘EC LAIS intensive implementation plan 2014’ document includes the following classification of EC districts (p. 15):

Table 1: Classification of EC districts

Category	Districts	Basket of services	Motivation
80% target 30-40% Bachelor pass <u>Champion:</u> <u>Team:</u>	5 Cradock, Cofimvaba, East London, Maluti, Port Elizabeth	Learner Support <u>and</u> <u>Development</u> <u>Professional</u> <u>Support</u> <u>Monitoring</u> <u>T</u> <u>&I</u> <u>Institutional</u>	History of performing at 70% in the last 3 years Teacher Learner ratio is favourable Medium sized schools, save PE Strategy is to push harder the poor performing schools

⁷ The NSLA is a DBE-created strategy for improving learner performance in SA schools, which has been customised within the EC as LAIS

		<u>Support</u>	
75% target 20-29% Bachelor pass <u>Champion:</u> <u>Team:</u>	8 Mtata, Uitenhage, Ngcobo, Queenstown, Mt Fletcher, Lady Frere, Graaff-Reinet, KWT	Learner Support <u>and</u> <u>Development</u> <u>Professional</u> <u>Support</u> <u>Monitoring T</u> <u>&L</u> <u>Institutional</u> <u>Support</u>	History of performing above 60% TL ratio at national average Big numbers Districts save 3
70% target 15-25% Bachelor pass <u>Champion:</u> <u>Team:</u>	10 Grahamstown, Fort Beaufort, Sterkspruit, Qumbu, Mt Frere, Butterworth, Dutywa, Mbizana, Libode, Lusikisiki	Learner Support <u>and</u> <u>Development</u> <u>Professional</u> <u>Support</u> <u>Monitoring T</u> <u>&L</u> <u>Institutional</u> <u>Support</u>	Pull all stops Districts History of underperformance

It is not clear exactly what data was used to make this classification and whether both Grade 12 performance and ANA performance was considered. However, this at least appears to suggest that some kind of differentiation has been made in relation to the targets set for particular districts. Also, the different targets do not seem to map to differentiated services as the 'basket of services' for every category of district are the same. While differentiated targets (expected outputs) for districts (and for schools) is appropriate (and was found to be a lesson emerging from the lessons emerging from the scan of other FET interventions), this would require differences in inputs. The input differences should be seen in the basket of services as well as the related budgets for these districts.

4.2.2 District level reports

We have received some district level reporting on LAIS Grade 12 learner support interventions. However these reports are patchy (we don't have reports for several districts in Cluster B and Cluster C), and absent for Cluster A. From the review of these reports it is clear that districts are reporting primarily on district-run winter schools and spring schools and school-run Saturday classes (Ilima camps). This aligns with the intensive implementation plan and refers only to the enrichment programmes of the strategy documents.

The Cluster C reports refer to Winter and Spring schools as well as 'Ilima camps' which are described as 'schools get their learners together on weekends to drill them on the content' (Uitenhage district report). From these Cluster C district reports it is evident that there are different inputs which are considered to be part of LAIS Pillar 2. By way of example, the Port Elizabeth district reports against the following headings:

- Teacher intervention programme
- Learner support programmes

- GET programme
- FET Winter programme
- FET Saturday classes

The Port Elizabeth district is the only report we have found where reference is made to Teacher development. We report on this in full, as one of the lessons emerging from the scan of FET interventions is that teachers are central to improvement processes:

“A support programme for teachers in the FET band in underperforming schools was presented every fortnight in the following subjects: Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Accounting, Business studies, Economics and Geography. A support programme for teachers in the GET band was offered in the following subjects: Mathematics, Natural Science, Economic and Management Science, Technology and Social Science (Geography). Experienced teachers were appointed to act as peer tutors. Teachers were upgraded in content and improved teaching methodologies in the above programme. Although attendance started fairly well this waned towards the end of the programme. Some schools regarded this as embarrassing to their teachers as they feel that the learners alone are responsible for their poor performance. “

The Port Elizabeth district is also the only district we found that reported on GET level interventions, reporting on the GET teacher support programme (above) and a GET programme for learners where

“The district embarked upon a programme to present tutoring classes to learners in Grade 9 in the following subjects: mathematics, natural science and technology. We targeted 300 learners from technical schools”

Budget allocation and budget breakdown for the Grade 12 Learner Support

In this section we discuss the answer to *Evaluation question 4: What was the budget allocation and budget breakdown for Grade 12 learner support?*

We have not received a coherent budget allocation for the LAIS project which aligns to either the ‘strategy’ documents or ‘intensive implementation’ plans on what LAIS aims to do. Financial reports we did receive are in various formats, including presentation slides, and excel spreadsheets. The LAIS budgets provided to us are termed ‘NSC funds’ and make no reference to the LAIS pillars of the ‘strategy’ documents or the focus areas of the ‘intensive implementation plans’.

We received three primary sources of documentation relating to the budgets for LAIS:

- A provincial level excel spreadsheet titled ‘NSC funds 2014-2015’; which provided a breakdown of the number of schools and number of learners per district within each cluster;
- Two provincial level power-point presentations titled ‘Financial status report as at 28 February 2015’; which provided a breakdown of district level budgets against actual expenditure for Clusters A and B, and then a separate file for Cluster C; and
- District level financial reports for Cluster C.

Provincial level NSC funds 2014-2015

The NSC funds spreadsheet revealed a R30 000 000 annual allocation for LAIS activities to the clusters. R2 000 000 of this was allocated for ‘DDG: IOM’. The remaining R28 000 000 was disbursed based on the total number of learners in all schools in the cluster. This resulted in a per learner calculation of R14.46⁸. The following table provides the pertinent information for this budget breakdown per cluster.

⁸ But, as mentioned previously, this is per learner across all grades (not, for example, per Grade 12 learner)

Table 2: NSC funds per cluster 2014/2015

CLUSTER A	SCHOOLS	LEARNERS	Per learner R 15.39
Libode	424	175 678	
Lusikisiki	230	159 495	
Maluti	229	71 195	
Mbizana	217	116 243	
Mt Fletcher	187	45 081	
Mt Frere	378	69 647	
Qumbu	253	66 998	
TOTAL	1 918	704 337	R 10,838,472.00
CLUSTER B			
Butterworth	397	84 706	
Cofimvaba	279	56 953	
Dutywa	349	95 745	
Lady Frere	161	38 256	
Mthatha	365	154 242	
Ngcobo	222	67 678	
Queenstown	181	60 253	
Sterkspruit	167	59 859	
TOTAL	2 121	617 692	R 8,931,092.47
CLUSTER C			
Cradock	83	24 501	
East London	317	131 751	
Fort Beaufort	253	38 344	
Graaf-Reinet	82	26 211	
Grahamstown	83	30 841	
KWT	436	98 580	
Port Elizabeth	261	177 525	
Uitenhage	168	86 768	
TOTAL	1 683	614 521	R 8,885,251.65
TOTAL ALL		1936876	R28,000,000

It is, however, notable that in the same document the following figures are reported (in the summary document cluster reports)⁹:

Table 3: NSC funds per cluster 2014/2015 (collated from individual cluster reports)

Clusters	Individual cluster report
Cluster A	R10,183,655.88
Cluster B	R 9,505,162.07
Cluster C	R 9,456,366.11
Total	R 29,800,000.18

The discrepancies between these two amounts – in the same document – is of concern. This compounds the concerns we raise relating to different budget amounts in various documents, and the lack of clarity in financial reporting between ‘LAIS budgets’ which are centralised, and ‘NCS budgets

⁹ This discrepancy was raised in the evaluation meeting held on 8th April 2015. DoE officials confirmed that R2,000,000 had been top-sliced off this budget.

for LAIS' which are distributed to districts. There appears to be a lack of adequate financial reporting on both budgets and expenditure against budgets.

Provincial level NSC Financial status (February 2015)

The following table provides an outline of the district-level budgets for LAIS in the 2014-2015, as provided in the February 2015 PowerPoint on the 'NSC financial status':

Table 4: District level budgets for LAIS (2014-2015)

DISTRICTS	Cluster	NCS budget (2014-15)
Cluster A		8,556,571
Libode	A	R 1,377,325
Lusikisiki	A	R 1,305,527
Maluti	A	R 948,193
Mbizana	A	R 1,367,558
Mt Fletcher	A	R 976,002
Mt Frere	A	R 1,486,232
Qumbu	A	R 1,095,734
Cluster B		7,457,147
Butterworth	B	R 968,763
Cofimvaba	B	R 816,232
Dutywa	B	R 1,014,175
Lady Frere	B	R 542,940
Mthatha	B	R 1,551,976
Ngcobo	B	R 867,575
Queenstown	B	R 845,539
Sterkspruit	B	R 849,947
Cluster C		17,112,263
Cradock	C	R 1,189,210
East London	C	R 3,581,955
Fort Beaufort	C	R 2,657,680
Graaff-Reinet	C	R 1,105,488
Grahamstown	C	R 1,105,448
King Williams Town	C	R 3,297,911
Lady Frere	C	R 542,940
Port Elizabeth	C	R 1,947,208
Uitenhage	C	R 1,684,423
Total		R 33,125,981 33,125,981

Notice that there is a R3,125,981 difference in the total budgets provided in the two sources. Reasons for this are not known.

Based on the information gathered, this budget appears to have been allocated almost entirely to the following activities:

- Organising and running winter schools, spring schools, and pre-Matric final revision camps;

- Providing learner support materials;
- Paying for ‘roving teachers’ to go to schools that do not have teachers of a particular subject, to provide lessons to those learners¹⁰; and
- (only for some districts) Providing school-based funding for weekend extra tuition for grade 12 learners or Ilima camps

The high-level officials claimed that the classes offered before school, after school, in the evenings, and on weekends, were part of district initiatives and supported through the LAIS budget process. However the school-based stakeholders disagreed with this, reporting that the extra classes (before and after school and on weekends) were initiatives of the school, with teachers doing this on a voluntary basis over and above their existing workloads.

We found evidence of district budget allocations for some weekend classes (for example in Cofimvaba and Uitenhage), but mostly only financial reports from districts related to Spring and Winter schools. Some of the Cluster C district reports referred to text book or learner support material costs. We have not been provided with any financial reporting relating to Autumn schools or the paying of ‘roving teachers’.

Measuring efficacy of the LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support

In this section we discuss the answer to *Evaluation question 5: What were the planned / documented ways in which the efficacy of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support was to be measured?*

The ‘EC LAIS Strategy 2014’ (EC DoE, 2014) provides a table in which each of the foci within Pillar 2 (Grade 12 learner support) is unpacked in some detail. For each focus, a number of activities (between three and six for each focus) are provided; and for each activity the person/department responsible and the timeframe (frequency and/or month within the year) are provided. A type of logic framework is established for each of the pillars with key performance areas, strategic activities, key performance indicators, means of verification, timeframes and responsibilities documented.

Table 5: Key performance indicators for Pillar 2: FET learner support, EC LAIS Strategy 2014

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR ¹¹	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Setting of subject targets to be achieved in 2014 in line with NDP, Schooling 2025, MTSF-2019, Action Plan 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All underperforming schools have approved Subject Improvement Plans with Subject targets that are being implemented, monitored and regularly reviewed at all levels • Mandatory Remedial Plans being implemented in non-compliant schools. 	10% improvement in critical subjects based on the last available NSC results
Improve subject teaching across the public schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All underperforming schools have SIPs that are responsive to subject needs • All Grade 12 teachers receive subject In-service Training once a term. 	5% improvement in overall NSC pass rate 6% improvement in the average Bachelor pass rates

¹⁰ These ‘roving teachers’ were mentioned frequently by the high-level officials, but few of the case study schools reported that they had not received any ‘roving teachers’ (and those that had, only seldom)

¹¹ This is the title given in the plan. However, it seems likely that this is an error, and it should read “Key Performance Area”

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR ¹¹	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Provide learner support and enrichment programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All underperforming schools participate in Saturday Classes All underperforming schools offering Math participate in the Telematics program All underperforming schools attend Winter and Spring Schools Reports of Curriculum Coverage in line with ATP are tabled quarterly in accountability sessions per Cluster 	100% attendance of enrichment programs by teachers and learners 20% average improvement in subject pass in the NSC All FET schools receive Mind the Gap series
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All FET schools have records of receiving additional support material such as Examination Packs, Examination Guidelines, Newspaper Supplements to Grade 11 and 12 schools and mainly under-performing schools. 	80% utilisation rate of support material in FET schools
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools receive career guidance and subject combinations guidelines that support relevant career pathing of learners 	80% of FET learners are aware of career opportunities related to their subject choices and pass on correct subject combinations. 40% of schools have rationalized and streamlined un-informed subject streams in offering within their districts and schools
Mobilise primary stakeholders to support Quality Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools hold Open Days for Parents to inform them about their role in supporting learners to improve performance. All Districts hold regular Circuit meetings with SGBs, SMTs and Senior teachers to update the progress of educational matters. 	10% decline in Dropout rates in Y1 5% improvement in the throughput rate of grades 8-10 20% improvement teacher attendance rates to the baseline
Expand Technical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 technical and vocational education teachers are recruited and trained from the pool of Fundza Lushaka bursars and teachers additional to the establishment to support the expansion of technical education 5 Partnerships with the Industry and SETAs are concluded to provide highly skilled teachers that will assist with the teaching of practical aspects in Technical subjects 	10% increase in the current cohort of schools offering Technical Education

The most important key performance indicator with respect to this evaluation is “provide learner support and enrichment programmes” (which is presumed to include Spring and Winter school events), in which case the intended ‘means of verification are ‘100% attendance of enrichment programmes by teachers and learners’ and ‘a 20% average improvement in NSC subject passes’.

The ‘EC LAIS Action plan 2013 – 2015’ is a concise (28 A5 pages), clear plan for generally improving learner performance in the Eastern Cape. However, what is lacking in this document are the outputs, outcomes and indicators which would allow for a coherent evaluation of whether LAIS has been implemented effectively or not.

The ‘Intensive implementation of LAIS 2015’ document has no discernible logic model for the LAIS intervention. There are many inputs and activities indicated, though not in a coherent way; and no

indication of outputs, outcomes and indicators. Time frames for implementation, and indications of who should check what is being done, are occasionally provided but in a haphazard fashion.

Some of the Cluster C district reports refer to 'LAIS framework' targets. However these differ from district to district. By way of example, the Port Elizabeth district report lists the following targets under LAIS framework:

1. To reduce the number of schools performing below 60%
 2. To increase the district performance by 5%
 3. To increase the number of bachelor passes to above 20%
 4. To reduce the number of performances below level 3 across all subjects
 5. To provide support to teachers in the areas of content knowledge, lesson preparation and teaching techniques
 6. To provide common tasks, tests and examinations in June
 7. To provide extra tuition to learners over weekends leading to Trial examinations and the Spring break during September
 8. To provide teachers with additional teaching material
- (Cluster C, Port Elizabeth district report, p. 2)

The Uitenhage report includes a list of desired LAIS outcomes:

- SBA Cluster moderation
- On-site support visits
- Subject meetings
- Extra classes
- Saturday classes
- Winter and spring schools
- Ilima project
- Partnership with other stakeholders
- Common tasks

In contrast the Cradock district report refers only to Spring Schools, Winter Schools and Saturday classes and teaching materials; the Uitenhage report only to Spring schools, Winter Schools and 'Ilima' project/camps; and the King Williams Town district report only to Spring and Winter schools. The 'LAIS framework aims' and 'desired outcomes' are however only used in introductory test in this district report. These are not used as basis for reporting progress against aims or outcomes, neither are budgets and expenses reported against these.

The Port Elizabeth district report provides some descriptive information about teacher development programmes for teachers in underperforming schools in the FET and GET band and indicates that there was declining attendance in these programmes, but that 'those who stuck with the programme returned improved results'. We note the absence of hard data on attendance in these programmes and that it is unclear whether the 'improved results' related to improved teacher attainment in assessments for the programme, or improved results of their learner in school-based or standardised assessments.

What were the envisaged impacts (and related unit costs) considered to be evidence of value for money?

In this section we respond to *Evaluation question 6: What were the envisaged impacts (and related unit costs) considered to be evidence of value for money?*

We have not received any financial documentation which reports against the LAIS Action plan, or the implementation plan. The budgets and reports we have received from Cluster B and C refer to specific events such as Spring and Winter schools. Some of the Cluster C reports refer to learning materials. In neither of the key documents referred to above, nor in any others received, is there ever the mention of impacts that are the goal of the LAIS intervention. Similarly, there is no mention of what would be considered evidence of ‘value for money’.

Critical features of Grade 12 learner support

In this section we respond to *evaluation question 7: What are the critical features of the Grade 12 learner support intervention within the LAIS, which should be used as a basis for comparison with other Learner Support interventions?*

Taking the set of ‘strategy’ documents, these critical features may be considered to be the main foci of Pillar 2:

7. An early start to the academic year;
8. The setting of targets (such as for syllabus coverage and assessments);
9. The establishment of subject committees;
10. The protection of teaching and learning time (ensuring that teachers are in school and teaching);
11. Human resource provisioning (including filling vacant posts);
12. Monitoring, support and evaluation.

However, the means of attaining each of these foci aims are not clear.

On the other hand, taking the ‘intensive implementation’ plan documents, the critical features may be the ‘LAIS projects’

- Autumn schools;
- Winter schools;
- Spring schools;
- Evening studies;
- Morning classes;
- Afternoon study period; and
- Evening study period

It is these ‘projects’ (activities) that have generally been the focus of the Grade 12 learner support component of LAIS to date.

Financial reporting on budgets and expenditure

In this section we answer *evaluation question 8: What financial reporting is available, and what does this reveal about expenditure to date on the LAIS Grade 12 support?*

There is very limited financial reporting available for the LAIS Grade 12 learner support. We were able to obtain information on the total budgets, and how this was broken down per district. The budget breakdown for the year is based on the number of schools and related total number of learners in a district. How this budget was then spent at district level was only available from Cluster B. We received no financial reporting from Cluster A or from Cluster C. The Cluster B reports related only to spring and winter schools, and none of the other activities that are meant to be part of LAIS.

District level budgets

The allocation of LAIS funding to districts is based on learner numbers, and not related to targeted priorities. According to the priority targets in the planning documents, the funding allocation should

rather be made in relation to the number of learners in underperforming schools/secondary schools within a district, or in terms of the number of learners enrolled in priority FET subjects. The way in which funding is allocated does not allow for differentiated strategies, depending on the needs within a district and particular schools.

The district level budget allocations and related expenditure documents we received relate only to Cluster B and Cluster C for the 2014 year. The standardised reports for Cluster B districts included separate reports on Spring and Winter School events held at centres throughout the cluster (these are some of the LAIS projects referred to in the ‘intensive implementation’ plan). These reported on:

- Centres, including the centre names, the type of programme (day/residential), the centre manager and contact details;
- Learner attendance, including participating schools, expected and actual attendance of learners from each school and comments;
- Tutor attendance, including the centre name, subjects offered, and expected and actual attendance of tutors;
- Tuition, including timetabling, teaching and learning and learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs), time management, discipline and study periods reported in terms of findings, challenges and recommendations;
- Logistical arrangements, including transport and catering reported in terms of findings, challenges and recommendations;
- Expenditure reported, in terms of the number of learners, catering, accommodation, photocopy paper, stationery and toilet paper. The expenditure reports did not include the costs for paying tutors.

We have compiled a table of figures obtained from the Cluster B District reports we received:

Table 6: Cluster B summary of financial reports

DISTRICTS	NCS (2014-15)	budget	District reports: LAIS budget (winter school and spring school 2014)	District reports: LAIS expenditure (winter school and spring school 2014)		
Butterworth	R	968,763	R	1,129,616	R	2,323,489
Cofimvaba	R	816,232	R	2,033,097	R	1,733,423 ¹²
Dutywa	R	1,014,175	R	961,720	R	1,990,723
Lady Frere	R	542,940	R	18,031,945 ¹³	R	3,667,500
Mthatha	R	1,551,976	R	795,829	R	3,431,848
Ngcobobo	R	867,575	R	345,254	no financial reporting in district report	
Queenstown	R	845,539	R	591,000	R	1,103,696
Sterkspruit	R	849,947	R	99,530	R	304,273
Total	R	7,457,147	R	23,987,991	R	12,821,529.00

¹² No financial section was included in the district report. This figure is a collated figure from ‘2nd final winter school LAIS plan costing Cofimvaba’ spreadsheet. It includes weekend classes, revision syllabus camps, spring school and Ilima camps.

¹³ The financial reporting on this district included winter school, spring school, ‘incubation programme’ and revision camps in ‘Lady Frere LAIS’ spreadsheet. This differed from the figures provided in the ‘Lady Frere’ spreadsheet which only reports on winter school (R1,253,404). The higher amount with more detailed reporting has been included here. This may include NECT funds.

This table reveals a lack of alignment between the budget figures reported in the Provincial NCS budget, and the LAIS budgets for winter and spring schools reported in the district reports. The NCS budget is money decentralised to the districts for LAIS, whereas the 'LAIS' budget is centralised and is distinct from NCS budgets.¹⁴

We have used the spring school reports from Cluster C to create a summary of the budget and expenditure against the targeted schools and learners for Spring Schools. We use the reported expenditure (from the district report) and the targeted learner numbers to calculate an average cost per learner. It should be noted that attendance relates only to Spring school (winter school attendance has been assumed to be similar, and involve the same learners as for Spring schools).

Table 7: Cluster C summary of expenditure against targeted schools and learners for Spring schools

DISTRICTS	NCS budget (2014-15)	District report on			Targeted schools	Targeted learners	Learners attending ¹⁵	Average cost per targeted learner ¹⁶
		LAIS budget 2014	LAIS expenditure	LAIS				
Butterworth	R 968,763	R1,129,616	R2,323,489	32	1798	1611	R1,292.26	
Cofimvaba	R 816,232	R2,033,097	R1,733,423	47	1063	1329	R1,630.69	
Dutywa	R 1,014,175	R961,720	R1,990,723	34	2741	2644	R726.28	
Lady Frere	R 542,940	R18,031,945	R3,667,500	no data for Spring school			No data	
Mthatha	R 1,551,976	R795,829	R3,431,848	15	1690	1473	R2,030.68	
Ngcobob	R 867,575	R345,254	Not reported	23	1835	1539	R188.15	
Queenstown	R 845,539	R591,000	R1,103,696	45	1841	1649	R599.51	
Sterkspruit	R 849,947	R99,530	R304,273	24	1998	234	R152.29	
Total	R7,457,147	R23,987,991	R14,554,952	220	12 966	10 479		

The partial reporting in the Cluster B district plans is of concern, as this further exacerbates the inconsistent financial reporting. Two of the Cluster B districts did not complete the expenditure report section. The Lady Frere budget appears to include NECT funding. The range of costs per targeted learner also varies greatly from R152 to R2,030 per learner.

We received a pdf file of a fax copy of Cluster C report (21 February 2015). This report includes district reports from Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Cradock. King Williams Town district is reported on in a separate document. We have not received reports from the other Cluster C districts. In the Uitenhage report the 'NCS budget' is distinguished from 'centralised LAIS' budgets and reported on separately. The other districts do not make this distinction.

¹⁴ This information was reported by DoE officials in the evaluation draft report meeting, 8 April 2015. This distinction was not clear in the financial reports provided to us. As such it is not clear how much has been spent on LAIS via NCS budget, and how much was spent via the centralised LAIS budget.

¹⁵ Learner attendance is reported per day in some of the reports. Where this was the case we took the highest reported attendance figures.

¹⁶ This figure has been calculated by dividing the reported expenditure by the targeted number of learners.

Table 8: Cluster C summary of financial reports

DISTRICTS	NCS budget (2014-15)	District report on LAIS budget 2014	District report on LAIS expenditure	Number of targeted schools	Number of targeted learners	Number of learners attending	Average cost per learner
Cluster C							
Cradock	R 1,189,210	R 632,748	R 586,307	12	585	527	R 1,002.23
East London	R 3,581,955	no report					
Fort Beaufort	R 2,657,680	no report					
Graaff-Reinet	R 1,105,488	no report					
Grahamstown	R 1,105,448	no report					
King Williams Town	R 3,297,911	R 1,786,590	R 1,786,590	74	2958	2191	R 596.52
Port Elizabeth	R 1,947,208	R 1,947,208	R 1,347,763	34	4551	not reported	R 296.15
Uitenhage	R 1,684,423	R 1,684,423	R 1,676,963	18	not reported	not reported	
Total	R 16,569,323	R 6,050,969	R 5,397,623	138	8131		

Once again the cost per targeted learner varies greatly from R291 to R1,002 per targeted learner. Reporting on learner attendance was not consistently done across the districts where we had reports. The Cluster C reports from the four districts do not make use of a standardised reporting template. Most districts list the number of schools benefitting from LAIS, and budget allocations against expenditure for line items such as catering departmental activities, personnel, learning support materials/ learner support texts/ text books, printing, stationery, accommodation and transport.

Further, we note that we did not receive any district level reports or budgets from Cluster A.

4.3 Reporting on implementation

4.3.1 Review of district level reports

In this section we respond to *Evaluation question 9: What are the trends evident from district level reports on the LAIS implementation in relation to LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support?*

The terms of reference for the evaluation suggested that district reports would be available which reported regularly on the LAIS Grade 12 Learners Support interventions. However, the only reports we received from the EC DoE pertained to Cluster B and four districts from Cluster C. The districts within Cluster B were expected to make use of a standardised report to report on Spring School 2014 and Winter School 2014. Within Cluster B, these reports were not provided for all districts. Amongst those districts that completed these reports, they did not all make consistent use of the reporting template, and the financial reporting in particular was absent or incomplete for several districts.

The Cluster B district reports did not make use of a standardised template. There was considerable variation on which aspects were reported, as well as the level of detail in reporting, across the districts received from this Cluster.

No Cluster A reports were received.

4.3.2 Perceptions of key stakeholders

In this section we draw on the stakeholder interviews, to respond to evaluation question 10: *What are the perceptions of key stakeholders (gleaned from stakeholder interviews) in relation to the implementation of the LAIS objective of Grade 12 learner support, with a particular focus on the following: What was working well and what was not working well, and what were the main challenges experienced.*

Perceptions of what LAIS Grade 12 learner support entailed

One of the questions posed to DoE officials during the interviews was: *Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.* In almost all of the responses, the respondents mentioned only the extra tuition activities, provision of extra materials (such as newspaper supplements; study guides; telematics live programmes; and exemplar question papers). and ‘roving teachers’. A few spoke additionally of motivational talks.

What is working well and what is not working well?

The high-level DoE officials’ general response was that the implementation is a mixed bag. For example, a typical response was the following “It varies from district to district: some have implemented well; others not. Even within a district it was effective in some and not in others. It depends on how seriously the learners took the sessions”.

The circuit managers were more positive, talking about the winter and spring schools going “as planned”, and the programme being “good and organized”. However, they did highlight some logistical issues, like water supply problems to rural schools (tanks running dry); lack of transport; poor levels of monitoring, and so on.

What are the main challenges experienced?

The high-level DoE officials had plenty to say with respect to the question around LAIS challenges. One even went so far as to say “where do I start?!” when asked the question. The commonly-identified challenges by these officials are the following (in order of concern, from highest to lowest):

- The large number of vacant posts in the schools. This means that by the time that the learners get to the vacation schools, in some subjects they are far behind where they should be in the syllabus. Therefore, the tutors have a problem of deciding what and how to teach
- Vacation school tutors not arriving or being of poor quality. It was noted frequently that the better teachers at schools in the province choose not to teach at the vacation schools
- The weak leadership/management in many schools (“no intervention will work in such schools”)
- LAIS funds are being top sliced (taken away) by Head Office to pay other things.
- Lack of support by line functionaries in the districts. For example, one official commented that circuit managers are often unionised – not executing their tasks effectively (e.g. neglecting the deep rural schools).
- Logistical problems: Learner transport to the holiday school venues is not always available and/or parents need to fit the bill. This restricts attendance of the learners
- Lack of monitoring of the implementation of LAIS due to a lack of sufficient subject advisors and circuit managers

- The decision about what to cover in the vacation schools is not made through careful input of teachers
- Logistical problems: Caterers at the holiday schools are sometimes not meeting their obligations.
- Poor coordination at district and provincial level
- LAIS funds are being used by some districts to employ teachers but should be an HR function.
- There are not enough places available in the winter schools – learners are turned away

The challenges identified by the circuit managers tended to be of a more logistical nature. These are the challenges they identified (again, listed in order from highest concern downwards):

- Funding is low – budget is insufficient. Sometimes money is withdrawn from LAIS budgets.
- Security for the learners – often the school/site fencing is poor and the learners are attacked on the way to and from the early morning and/or evening classes
- Getting good tutors is a challenge
- Water issue: schools have water tanks, which can run dry during the winter school. The municipality comes with water tankers but they are often slow to respond to the request
- Accommodation at the vacation schools (where the learners sleep over) is not ideal – often mattresses on the floor; many learners in the same room
- Learner attendance is not as high as it should be.

4.3.3 Perceptions from stakeholders at four case study schools

In this section we report on the perceptions of the school-based stakeholders (principals, Grade 12 teachers and Grade 12 learners). We answer *Evaluation question 11: Focusing on 4 case study schools (2 performing above average and 2 performing below average¹⁷), what are the school-level experiences of LAIS implementation for Grade 12 learner support?* These views were obtained through school visits to four schools where the principals were interviewed, focus groups were convened with the grade 12 teachers, and focus groups were held with a selection of Grade 12 learners.

Perceptions of what LAIS Grade 12 learner support entailed

One of the questions posed to the principals and teachers at the school visits was: *Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.* Respondents usually spoke only of the extra tuition activities (the afternoon and evening classes, weekend classes, Spring and Winter Schools, exam preparation camps), and extra support materials supplied. Thus they all referred to the activities identified as ‘LAIS projects’ in the implementation plan.

It was clear from interactions with the school-based stakeholders that morning, afternoon and evening classes were conducted on the initiative of the school, not making use of LAIS budget allocation, and usually not with the direct logistical support of the district.

The reported number of additional hours of teaching and support provided by teachers at the case study schools was astonishing. At three of the four schools, teachers reportedly worked with Matric learners from before school (often 7 am or even earlier) to late afternoon (around 5 pm in most cases) on Mondays to Fridays. In addition, there were regular Saturday and sometimes even Sunday morning

¹⁷ The responses from the school-based personnel were quite similar, notwithstanding whether they were from ‘above average’ or ‘below average’ schools. Thus there has been no separation of responses.

lessons at all schools¹⁸. All these lessons were run on a roster basis, with different subjects being run at different times. Matric learners themselves also had study sessions on most evenings, usually scheduled for 7 – 10 pm, either self-supervised or supervised by parents or community members that volunteered to assist. These reported extra classes were confirmed independently from all three sources of school-based stakeholders: teachers, learners and school principals.

The school visits interview guide included probes relating to the broader functioning of the school, which are relevant to the focal areas in the action plans. In relation to these aspects, in three of the four schools it was reported that lessons for Grade 12 started on either 12th or 14th January this year (thus, a week or more earlier than the official school opening). However, classes were only provided in certain subjects – those where the teacher was prepared to start teaching earlier than they were required by the DoE. One such teacher’s comment was that they “gave up their holidays for the good of the country”. Those teachers who did not start early provided as reasons for this that they did not see the need to come earlier, and/or “needed” their holidays.

In terms of protecting teaching and learning time, and ensuring that teachers were in the classes teaching as scheduled, it is clear from the interviews with the Principals and teachers at the four case study schools that the vast majority take their work very seriously. This is obvious, of course, from the willingness of all but a handful of teachers to take classes outside the official school day (as described above). Some did express some frustration that they were not being paid for these classes, however (the only financial support received, and only in some cases, was a travel allowance if they had to come to school for weekend lessons). The Principals were asked about the dedication and level of absenteeism of their teachers, and uniformly replied positively. In two of the schools the Principals commented that there were a few problems with teacher lateness and absenteeism, but these appear to be isolated to certain individuals.

The learners corroborated the above independently at all schools during their focus group session. At all four schools the learners commented that they were very happy with the teaching and the level of support from the teachers that they were receiving.

In terms of human resource provisioning, in all four case study schools the Principals complained of serious problems with vacant posts and inactivity on the part of the DoE with respect to resolving this. A typical example is that in one case study school the staff complement is 35 when post provisioning is for 45 educators. The educators missing were both deputy principals, 3 HoDs, and 5 Level 1 teachers. Another Principal expressed the view that filling the vacant posts is “the most important use of money!”

Views on the support received from their district were varied. Generally, Principals were somewhat dissatisfied with the support received by circuit managers, pointing out that they are seldom seen at the schools. However in mitigation, the circuit managers themselves pointed out that they have to assist an enormous number of schools (typically around 25 schools each), and those in the Libode district claimed that there are not enough pool vehicles in the Libode district for them to be able to visit schools (and if they use their own vehicles, which they do on occasion, they are not reimbursed)¹⁹.

¹⁸ At the fourth school, there were additional afternoon classes, evening study sessions, and Saturday morning sessions (so just no pre-school classes)

¹⁹ Libode circuit managers also claimed a general lack of tools, like laptops, 3G cards, and cell phones. One even complained “We are victimised by the DBE”

The teachers' comments about the support received by the subject advisors were mixed. Typically, their comments were very positive about certain of the subject advisors, and very negative about others. Most felt supported by the advisors during visits, but others felt "fearful" during their visits because of the way the interactions were handled by the subject advisors. Some of the subject advisors appear to be regular school visitors, and others are only seen during workshops. No subject advisors were interviewed.

Perceptions of value

The Principals and Grade 12 teachers were, on the whole, positive about LAIS and its implementation, speaking of how the learners like to hear the information from new voices and are motivated to learn at the extra teaching sessions provided.

Concerns relating to LAIS Grade 12 learner support

The principals at the four case study schools identified a number of concerns:

- The planning for these vacation schools is "poor" or "haphazard"
- The revision programmes are not always well structured
- Some of the tutors contracted to teach do not turn up or turn up late. The reason for this could be poor communication from the DoE side: one Principal said tutors are often only approached to see if they want to teach at the vacation schools very late, often in the last week before the start of the vacation schools. This may explain a point made above about the best teachers often not being available and/or not choosing to teach at the vacation schools.
- Tutors are paid very late for their services (months after the schools/camps)
- Classes at some of the vacation schools are unmanageably large. One Principal said the problem was worst in Maths and Physical Science, and in one case 200 learners had to be taught by only 1 Maths tutor. Teachers at another school commented that 2 tutors for 300+ learners was "quite common".
- The (Libode schools) requirement is that Grade 12 learners living far from the schools leave their families and live close to the schools for their Matric year (so that they can attend the extra lessons easily). These appear to result in an increase in teenage pregnancies, due to the learners having little to no adult supervision.

Two Principals mentioned that they were concerned by the fact that not all subjects are covered at the vacation schools. The decisions as to what to provide appear to be taken by the Department, and are not necessarily what is required by individual schools.

Their concerns about logistical issues are:

- There is never enough food at these schools (the portions are too small) and the water runs out at times
- Learners are meant to bring their own bedding, but some are too poor and so do not want to attend as a result
- The sleeping quarters are also not always ideal
- (in the case of one school) Transport was 5 hours late turning up on the first day of winter school 2014 (however, this Principal added that transport service providers are not always informed that they have been chosen/selected as a service provider until a day or two before, so they could not organize all the pick-ups in time)

The teacher focus groups echoed similar logistical and general concerns as the Principals, saying for example that the vacation classes are often overcrowded, with 65 – 80 learners in a classroom. Two sets of teachers were also unhappy that they did not see their learners again after the mock exams, not even to return and go through scripts, as they (the learners) went off to a final exam preparation camp. Some of the teachers also mentioned concerns about learners being away from home and unsupervised, mentioning an increase in teenage pregnancies. However, on the whole, the teachers were nonetheless positive about the vacation schools, and wanted them to continue.

The learners spoken to did not have a lot to add, since they had experienced none of the vacation schools so early in the year. However, they were very positive about the additional classes provided by the schools (“this will help us pass”), and generally extremely positive about the prospect of going on these camps, since they felt it meant they would finish the syllabi earlier and therefore allow more time for revision. They did also express a number of concerns around the extra classes put on by their own teachers:

- The lack of security around the early morning and evening classes (all groups reported previous Matrics being attacked whilst working in the dark to/from these classes)
- In some schools, the Matrics had to leave their families and live close to the school so as to be able to attend these lessons at very early and/or very late hours, and this was difficult emotionally (they missed their families).
- They were tired from the endless lessons and lack of sleep. Some mentioned they didn’t even have time anymore to wash and iron their school clothes anymore
- Their parents and siblings have had to take on the chores that they usually performed due to the lack of time outside classes

4.4 Evaluating efficacy and value for money

In this section we respond to *Evaluation question 12: Is there evidence for improvements in Grade 12 performance in the province as a result of the implementation of LAIS in relation to learner support?* To answer this question we first revisit the perceptions of value as described through the stakeholder interviews and school case study participants. We then turn to consider the available statistical data on Grade 12 learner attainment in the Eastern Cape.

4.4.1 Perceptions of effect and value of money

The high-level DoE officials’ views differed from person to person. Some felt that it had made a difference, whilst others felt that it had not. When asked for evidence to back up their source of confidence, the officials in the former group were only able to offer anecdotal evidence of schools that attended the vacation schools whose results went up. A number also spoke of the fact that Matric results have “stabilized” in the EC in recent years, with even a slight improvement, and feel that LAIS might be the cause of this.

However, a number of others respondents realised that one cannot identify LAIS success or failure on the basis of anecdotal evidence, or even provincial result changes, without controlling for other factors that might have caused the change. The general response of these officials was to use words like “uncertain”, “a thumb suck”, and so on when asked whether the Grade 12 learner support has brought

about an improvement in Matric performance. One official commented, “By how much and what percentage I cannot say – I have no scientific evidence”

A few other officials were quite negative, saying that LAIS “seemingly” does not yield better results, or has had very little effect. “Is it really working? – so much money...millions....surely...we should be better by now”. Another official felt that the vacation schools were being held just because they are “fashionable”.

The majority voice seemed to be saying much the same as this official, though: even though there is room for improvement, “we wouldn’t be where we are today w.r.t. [Matric] results if it wasn’t for LAIS”.

Two of the three circuit managers interviewed were very positive about the impact of LAIS, but were only able to provide anecdotal evidence to support their view. The third felt that although the LAIS intervention was working to some extent, it needs to be done away with soon since “this intervention is like making us walk with crutches. We cannot run the department with interventions”. The far better permanent solution, according to this official, is to have quality teachers in front of the learners in every classroom.

The Principals and teachers were similarly positive about the impact of LAIS, but without any analytical support besides anecdotal evidence. As one Principal said, learners are being taught for longer, so the extra classes “must help” and that “If there were no such programme, we would be doomed”. Another Principal commented that LAIS is a “worthwhile venture” but that the Department needs to “tighten screws where they are loose”. So there was some sense of overall value.

Teachers and learners were not in a position to comment on perceptions of value of money.

4.4.2 Statistical analysis of impact

Having considered perceptions of impact (evident from the stakeholder interviews and school visits), we turn now to consider whether there is any discernible impact of the grade 12 learner support interventions on Matric results.

In terms of the broad evaluation objectives it should be noted that there was not sufficiently detailed learner attainment data to measure the impact of the Grade 12 learner support pillar of the LAIS intervention for January 2013 to date. To do such an analysis the following data would be required:

1. Clear delineation of LAIS schools from non LAIS schools. This involves the selection of schools within each district to participate in the intervention, and ring-fencing these ‘experimental’ schools, from a ‘control’ of all the other schools in the province or district. This has not been done for the LAIS EC project.
2. Gathering agreed baseline data relating to both the number and quality of passes per subject at each of the schools in the Eastern Cape. Such data exists at a national level. Currently the Eastern Cape data relates only to the number and percentage of Grade 12 passes per school. No data on passes or quality of passes per subject per school was provided to the evaluation team. The baseline for this would most probably be the 2012 Grade 12 results. However prioritisation in terms of subjects would be necessary.

3. Agreeing on the minimum number of inputs required for a school to be considered a LAIS school. Is attendance at a Spring or Winter school adequate? Or should a LAIS school attend both the Spring and the Winter School, and be active in weekend camps / extra classes? We illustrate this analysis considering a minimum input (Spring school attendance), however it is likely that tighter criteria are required.

It seems appropriate to consider school-level data. However, it may also be feasible to consider learner-level data, in which case the learner attendance records (at Spring and Winter schools convened at district centres, as well as for the extra class at school-level) together with information on which subjects they have received enrichment classes in would be necessary.

We consider only the elements for which we have sufficient data to disaggregate 'LAIS schools' from 'non LAIS schools'. We have such data for Spring and Winter school events in Cluster B. We provide this analysis as an example of this kind of statistical analysis contrasting experimental schools (those who attended the Spring School in 2014 with control schools (those who did not attend the Spring School in 2014).

In the planning documentation a "LAIS school", as defined by the EC DoE, is a school that is underperforming in its Matric results. Typically, this is defined very simply as a school with a Matric pass rate of below 60% (EC DoE, n.d.). A close look at the choices of schools who received the extra support seems to indicate that in most Cluster B districts this rule was not adhered to. It is not unusual that schools with pass averages above 60% attended the vacation schools whereas, occasionally, schools with pass averages well below 60% were not invited.

To illustrate this point (that the criterion to target underperforming schools was not adhered to) we considered the Queenstown district in more detail. In this district nine schools (over 20% of all the Queenstown schools) attended the 2014 Spring School despite getting above 60% pass rate in the 2013 final exams. So these nine schools did not meet the criterion of being underperforming schools. One school – Sijongephambili – did not attend the Spring school despite never having achieved even a 40% pass rate since 2008. Almost every district shows strange idiosyncrasies in their choice (or non-choice) of schools for the vacation schools. It is unclear as to why there were these deviations, and perhaps there were good reasons, but certainly the desired plan of LAIS focussing only on the underperforming (below 60%) schools was not implemented evenly.

As the LAIS strategy defines the three year intervention from 2013 – 2015, we took the Grade 12 2012 school pass results as a base line. The mean pass rates of the experimental (mean = 53.6%) and control (mean = 67,9%) group were not comparable. It was expected that the experimental group would include more underperforming schools than the control group. However, it was not expected that the experimental group (number of school = 167) would be so much bigger than the control group (number of schools = 61). This confirmed that the criteria relating to targeted underperforming schools was not adhered to.

As the control and experimental groups had different baseline means of percentage passing, we did not compare the baseline (2012 pass rate) to the endpoint (2014 pass rate) in absolute terms. Instead we considered their change in pass rate from the baseline to endpoint (2014 pass rate – 2012 pass rate). We also calculated the standard deviation of this mean changes in results to provide an indication of the spread of this change for schools within each district and within each group. It may be argued that

underperforming schools are less likely to increase their pass rate. However, it may also be argued that underperforming schools are starting off from a low baseline, where there is more room for improvement in pass rate, and that performing schools – starting from a higher base line - are less likely to see improved pass rates and maintenance of their performance (above 60% pass rate) should be the target. We considered that a change in pass rate would at least provide a statistic on the direction of change in pass rate (improvement or decline), and considered that the scale of such changes may need to be considered distinctly for the performing and underperforming school groups.

The table on the next page summarises the statistics around the mean changes in matric pass rate from the baseline (2012) to the endpoint (2014), considering attendance at Spring schools in 2014 in Cluster B.

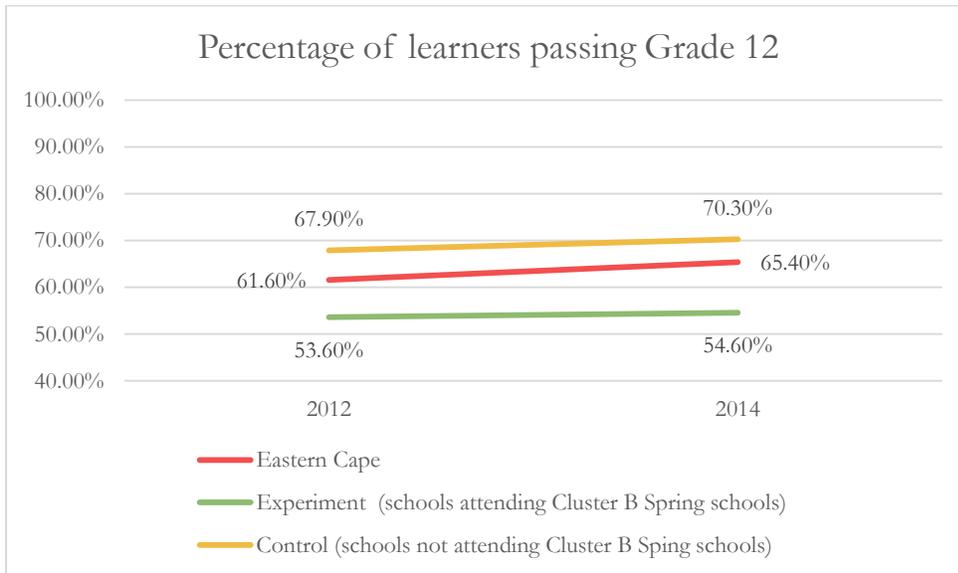
Table 9: summary of statistics around matric pass rates for LAIS vs. non-LAIS schools (Cluster B)

DISTRICT ²⁰	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	2012 PASS RATE (%)	2014 PASS RATE (%)	CHANGE	STD DEV OF CHANGE	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	2012 PASS RATE (%)	2014 PASS RATE (%)	CHANGE	STD DEV OF CHANGE
ALL E Cape	923	61.6	65.4	3.8						
	SPRING SCHOOL ATTENDEES					SPRING SCHOOL NON-ATTENDEES				
Butterworth	32	54.2	58.4	4.2	22.2	18	57.8	58.7	0.9	32.2
Dutywa	30	48.9	51.3	2.3	19.7	5	66.1	71.9	5.7	4.2
Lady Frere	22	65.7	63.3	-2.4	18.7	1	59.6	85.7	26.1	n/a
Mthatha	35	51.9	52.8	0.9	18.5	22	73.2	76.1	2.9	17.8
Ngcobo	21	62.3	63.6	1.3	23.7	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Queenstown	27	43.8	41.9	-1.9	15.6	15	73.6	74.1	0.6	19.7
ALL DISTRICTS	167	53.6	54.6	0.9	19.9	61	67.9	70.3	2.4	23.0

²⁰ Note that data from all districts within Cluster B where full information provided has been included. The other two districts in the Cluster – Cofimvaba and Sterkspruit – were not able to be analysed due to missing Spring School 2014 data

The Grade 12 pass rates for the three groups can be depicted graphically as follows:

Figure 1: Grade 12 mean percentage rates for 2012 and 2014



The similar gradients between the Eastern Cape and the control group show that there was a comparably change in pass rate from 2012 to 2014 for the control group and the whole province. The flatter gradient for the pass rate for the experimental group depicts that there was less of change evident for the experimental group (schools that *did* attend the Spring Schools), than those that did not attend the Spring School (in the same districts in Cluster C). This implies that the Spring School had no impact on the pass rates of schools attending it. The mean change in pass rates from 2012 to 2015, as well as standard deviation of this mean, reveals that there was a greater change in pass rates for the control group than was evident for the experimental group.

What follows are some observations about this data:

1. Overall, the changes in Matric pass rates of schools that *did* participate in the Spring school provided by the district increased on average LESS than those who *did not* receive the attention (viz. +0.9% vs. +2.4%). Both groups shows a smaller change than the change in percentage passing for the province (+ 3.8%). This means that there is no discernible impact of the Spring school intervention on the change in pass rates at the participating schools for this Cluster.
2. In fact, the above point is true in three of the four districts in which there was a substantial number of non-supported schools (Dutywa, Mthatha and Queenstown)
3. The average standard deviation of the changes in Matric pass rates is very high overall and in every district. This relates to the experimental group (SD = 19.9%) of schools that did attend the Spring school and the control group (SD = 23.1%) of schools that did not attend the Spring school. What this statistic tells us is that the Matric pass rates of schools tend to fluctuate widely from year to year.

4. Matric pass is probably too crude a measure to discern impact (though, as mentioned previously, was the only measure available to us). Quality of passes, and subject level (passes and quality of passes) which are mapped to the prioritised subjects in the Spring Schools events, are necessary.
5. We have assumed that the majority of learners from a targeted school attended the Spring School event. From the available data, it is not known whether the learners attending the Spring Schools represented all or the majority of the learners at these schools. As such it may be necessary to report on learner-level data and not on school pass rates.

4.4.3 Other effects

In this section we answer *evaluation question 13: Is there evidence (or reported evidence) of any other effects of the Grade 12 learner support intervention?*

None of those interviewed spoke at any great length about any other effects that the intervention would have had, except for a few who mentioned that they felt the extra attention that the Grade 12 learners received motivated them to perform better.

One teacher commented specifically that during weekend classes learners were freer to talk and discuss issues than during the week. He wasn't sure why the weekend classes brought about this change.

In terms of negative effects, the disruption to family life and the impact on the learners socially of being forced to move and live closer to the school during their matric year (common in the two Libode case study schools) was a concern to learners. The concerns raised by some principals and teachers about teenage pregnancy as a negative effect of learners being away from home is relevant here.

4.4.4 Cost of the intervention to date

In this section we answer *evaluation question 14: What has been the cost of the intervention to date in terms of*

- *total expenditure?;*
- *expenditure per Grade 12 learner engaged in the learner support intervention? and*
- *expenditure per successful Grade 12 learner? (with success defined in terms of number and quality of passes)*

Total expenditure of the intervention

Making use of provincial level reports (power point presentations dated 28 February 2014) the following was the expenditure on the LAIS in the 2014-2015 financial year:

Table 10: NC Budget and expenditure by district for 2014-2015 financial year

DISTRICTS	Cluster	NCS budget (2014-15)	NCS expenditure (to 28 Feb 2015)	Commitments	Assumed expenditure	total Balance
Cluster A		R 8,556,571	R 6,223,397	R 409,624	R 6,633,021	R 1,923,550
Libode	A	R 1,377,325	R 1,019,772	R0.00	R 1,019,772	
Lusikisiki	A	R 1,305,527	R 1,234,461	R39,458.00	R 1,273,919	
Maluti	A	R 948,193	R 595,086	R1,491.00	R 596,577	
Mbizana	A	R 1,367,558	R 773,226	R199,841.00	R 973,067	
Mt Fletcher	A	R 976,002	R 912,667	R19,525.00	R 932,192	
Mt Frere	A	R 1,486,232	R 767,298	R78,639.00	R 845,937	
Qumbu	A	R 1,095,734	R 920,887	R70,670.00	R 991,557	
Cluster B		R 7,457,147	R 3,654,370	R1,151,114	R 4,805,485	R 2,651,662
Butterworth	B	R 968,763	R 805,883	R106,380.40	R 912,263	
Cofimvaba	B	R 816,232	R 445,006	R816,232.00	R 1,261,238	
Dutywa	B	R 1,014,175	R 557,099	R3,040.00	R 560,139	
Lady Frere	B	R 542,940	R 136,956	R10,525.00	R 147,481	
Mthatha	B	R 1,551,976	R 123,802	R0.00	R 123,802	
Ngcobo	B	R 867,575	R 611,406	R133,215.00	R 744,621	
Queenstown	B	R 845,539	R 600,280	R48,223.91	R 648,504	
Sterkspruit	B	R 849,947	R 373,940	R33,498.17	R 407,438	
Cluster C		R 16,569,323	R 12,463,493	R571,201.95	R 13,034,695	R 3,534,628
Cradock	C	R 1,189,210	R 575,395	R169,427.12	R 744,822	
East London	C	R 3,581,955	R 3,498,205	R38,157.00	R 3,536,362	
Fort Beaufort	C	R 2,657,680	R 2,180,741	R16,899.00	R 2,197,640	
Graaff-Reinet	C	R 1,105,488	R 905,192	R292,015.00	R 1,197,207	
Grahamstown	C	R 1,251,866	R 669,814	R54,120.00	R 723,934	
King Williams Town	C	R 3,297,911	R 1,609,419	R583.83	R 1,610,003	
Port Elizabeth	C	R 1,947,208	R 1,347,763	R0.00	R 1,347,763	
Uitenhage	C	R 1,684,423	R 1,676,963	R0.00	R 1,676,963	
Total		R 32,729,459	R 22,341,260	R 2,131,940	R 24,473,201	R 8,109,840

The above was not corroborated with any district level or cluster level reports. This reveals an underspend of R8,109,840, approximately one quarter of the budget allocation.

Expenditure per Grade 12 learner engaged in the learner support intervention

The 'per learner' cost that was calculated in the allocation of the LAIS budget to districts is based on the total number of learners in schools in each district. This figure of R15,95 per learner was cited in the provincial level reports.

However, as all of the reporting (bar the Port Elizabeth district report) relates to Grade 12 interventions, a 'per Grade 12 learner' cost is a more appropriate indicator of the per learner cost.

Using the data relating to the number of Grade 12 matriculants in the Eastern Cape or 2014, (69 294 full-time grade 12 learners), and considering the approximately R28,000,000 'NCS funds' budget then the per Grade 12 learner figure is R404. There are several assumption which should be considered when interpreting this lower range figure:

1. The reported budget for NCS funds appears to be R 32,583,041 (based on the powerpoint presentation on budget against expenditure).
2. We have evidence of top slicing of the LAIS budgets, which was a practice reported on in the interviews. For example:
 - a. For the NCS budget it appears that R2,000,000 was removed from the R30,000,000 allocation; leaving R28,000,000 for district budgets;
 - b. We have evidence of the same kind of practice at district level. The Kind Williams Town district report states that it was expecting a budget of allocation R3,201,490, but then 'after it has been taken from H/O' is received only R1,798,590 (56% of the expected budget).

The upper range figure considers the reported NCS budget of R32,582,041. In this case the cost per Grade 12 learner is R470. The cost per grade 12 learner is therefore in the range R404 – R470.

However – in the absence of attendance registers for Spring and Winter schools for all districts - it is not possible to calculate the expenditure per Grade 12 learner engaged in these activities. Comparison of the different Spring and Winter schools in just one district in Cluster C, where such records were provided, reveals a range in cost per learner (attending the schools) from R149 to R1 129 per learner, showing a wide range in cost per learner. Similar variation was evident when comparing districts to each other.

Expenditure per successful Grade 12 learner (with success defined in terms of number and quality of passes)

In the absence of learner attendance records at Spring and Winter schools, it is not possible to calculate costs of expenditure per successful Grade 12 learner. We were not provided with attendance records of exactly which learners attended the Spring and Winter schools, and it is unclear whether comprehensive attendance records are actually kept (all that was received, for a few districts only, was total number in attendance). Tracking impact of these schools on the successful learners (defined simply as those passing matric) is not possible. No matching of the number of subject passes to districts offering schools in particular subjects was possible. Further, the absence of data on the quality of passes meant that this statistic could not be calculated.

4.5 Recommendations emerging from stakeholders

In this section, we answer *Evaluation question 15: What recommendations emerge to guide the further implementation of LAIS Grade 12 Learners Support:*

- *What do stakeholders recommend as solutions or areas for overcoming challenges?*
- *What do the case study schools recommend for consideration in the next implementation phase?*

Our recommendations (evaluative comment and resulting recommendations) are presented in the concluding section.

4.5.1. Recommendations of the department officials

The EC DoE officials had numerous suggestions about how the implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support could be improved.

In terms of the winter and spring schools – seemingly the backbone of the LAIS intervention in its enacted state – the following recommendations were provided:

- The support interventions and assistance should be individual school-based.
- The centralised venues approach currently used means that too much money goes on logistics (e.g. catering, transport, accommodation) and too little directly to learner tuition.
- Separate out those learners who have had no teaching all year, and those who have had teaching but need their understanding and skills refined.
- There should not be syllabus coverage at vacation schools, as it is ineffective (too little, too late; and can lead to some teachers not using their normal teaching time effectively since they know the work will be covered in the vacation schools)
- Try to get the best teachers to teach at these vacation schools. Do not employ those who do not get good results at their own schools
- Standardized prices for items across all districts (e.g. amount paid to service provider per meal provided)
- Keep the vacation schools focused on only a “few things” each year – “Things should slow down – we should focus on what we know what we can achieve” and “we cannot do everything”
- Ideally the vacation school tutors should come from the ex-Model C schools – but the school teachers should be required to attend to get experience and learn from the better teachers (this has worked well in the PE schools, apparently).

It should be added, though, that (as outlined above), some officials proposed a more radical change. For example, one official commented: ““I don’t see why we should run vacation schools – rather do away with them since they start too late (June) and spend too much money on logistics. Rather introduce specific school-based interventions from early in the year.” Similarly, another opined: “If you can provide enough [teachers; resources] for the schools, there will be no need for winter schools”. A third commented that Ex-Model C schools do not have camps, winter schools, etc., and yet they get better results. These are not needed there, he said, because they are taught well in school time. A fourth felt that, if they could make the decision, they would cut vacation schools, but keep the afternoon classes. This, they felt, would give the learners more time to relax in the holidays and get refreshed (other officials made similar comments about the need for learners to have some time off in their Matric year).

Another set of recommendations revolved around the schools themselves, and how they should be supported:

- Schools need to be made more responsible to sort out their own problems (e.g. assisting a teacher that is getting poor Matric results)
- Monthly reports by schools should be compulsory

- Monitoring and support should be demand-driven to assist those needing help
- Increasing teachers' and officials' accountability
- Performance measurement is needed (e.g. need to measure the difference each person is making)
- Add more monitoring of the LAIS intervention
- Increase/improve mentoring of, and basic management training for, Principals, deputy-principals and HoDs.

A number of the officials commented on the critical need for more budget, so that all the LAIS activities can be carried out (one cluster director commented on how a number of the planned programmes had to be shelved each year due to the funds being too limited to cover everything). Another stated that it is too easy to access LAIS funds – they can be diverted to other uses (another referred to ‘top-slicing’ the LAIS funds).

A very common recommendation was to avoid the current excessive focus on Grade 12 learners (due to the country’s focus on these results above all else). A number of officials voiced the comment that to intervene in Matric was simply too little too late. The general feeling was that support for the learners should start in Grade 9 or 10., slowly ramping up each year.:

- Not at all, because “by Grade 12 we have already missed the boat”.
- The funding should be skewed more towards GET so that the problems are rectified at a much earlier stage (e.g. English should be the LOLT yet there is regular code-switching). There is not enough focus on literacy in the earlier grades, so they cannot handle the academic discourse.
- “we are throwing good money after bad if we only focus on Grade 12”.
- “Too little, too late... [we] must secure a better foundation, so that the Gr 12 learners will be better prepared”

Some specific suggestions around this included:

- Common exams for Grade 10
- Proper guidance to Grade 9 learners re subject choices (career guidance). And don’t only use the LO teacher here, but psychometric testing. Subject combinations must be thought out carefully (e.g. ban the combinations Accounting and Maths Lit; and Maths Lit and Physical Science).
- Ensure that learners are immersed in English from Grade 4 (no code-switching)

Finally, one recommendation from a high-level official is worth mentioning: create a provincial ‘rapid response’ team of about 60 people: subject specialists, CMs, social support unit’ etc. They should visit circuits for 2-3 days each and “shake” the system and people out of their comfort zone.

4.5.2 Recommendations of the SADTU official

A high-level EC trade union official (from SADTU) was also interviewed about LAIS. Their recommendations for changes to LAIS are as follows:

- The LAIS money should be spent on more than just Grade 12s – start from Grade 9 (one of the areas where the learners struggle)
- The name of LAIS should be changed to something like “education improvement strategy”, so that it is wider in focus.
- There needs to be systemic changes so that the intervention talks to the needs of the learners and teachers and communities.
- “If you can provide enough [teachers; resources] for the schools, there will be no need for winter schools”, thus fill vacant posts
- The EC DoE should involve more stakeholders – e.g. trade unions, parent reps – in decision making around LAIS. The decision-making is not transparent enough

4.5.3. Recommendations of the school-level stakeholders

As mentioned previously, the Principals and teachers were generally very positive about LAIS, and keen (at times very keen) for it to continue, albeit an improved version eliminating the logistical and other issues highlighted earlier.

Specific recommendations, not surprisingly, focussed almost entirely on ways of improving the vacation schools. These include:

- Subject advisors should teach at the vacation schools, and/or better Maths and Physical Science tutors should be contracted (perhaps from outside the EC, or by using recently retired teachers)
- Better planning by starting much earlier in the year, and communicate timeously with the schools about what is to happen
- Make the programme more structured (e.g. one Principal suggested that a programme and manual be created for the vacation schools)
- Schools which are centres for the winter and spring schools need hostels to be built
- More negotiation/discussion with schools around what to cover in the vacation schools
- Better pay, and more rapid payment, for the holiday tutors
- Include more subjects in the vacation schools

Other more general recommendations were:

- Begin the support lower down in the school (“Grade 12 is too late”)
- More training for teachers (there are content gaps due to the introduction of CAPS that have not been addressed yet through CAPS training and other workshops)
- Increase the funds allocated to LAIS

5. Evaluation comments and recommendations

In this section we provide an account of our evaluative comments against the key focus areas of the evaluation. These are followed by our recommendations which draw on these evaluative comments.

5.1 Context of implementation

5.1.1 The conceptualisation of LAIS

There are two distinct groups of the EC LAIS provincial planning documents: ‘strategy’ documents and ‘intensive implementation’ documents. The former relate to whole-school improvement in learner attainment, with priority given to particular subjects (literacy and numeracy at primary school level, and mathematics, science and technology subjects at high school level). The latter focuses almost exclusively on one aspect of the strategy: Grade 12 learner support and enrichment programmes. There is no clear prioritisation of subject focus.

What is clear is that there is substantial variation between the strategy documents and the intensive implementation documents. Although some of the learner support activities promoted by each are the same, many are different. Also, the layout of the two groups of documents and, more importantly, the focus areas are completely different. Whereas in the ‘strategy’ documents it is made clear that “LAIS now covers the whole of the Basic Education System from Gr R – 12” (p. 2), the focus in the ‘intensive implementation’ documents is almost entirely on Grade 12, with some attention also to GET grades, but only insofar as preparation for the ANAs is concerned.

At the Provincial level of planning documents there therefore appears to be a lack of *clear conceptualisation, coherence, and alignment* of LAIS intentions and focal areas. The documents we reviewed did not provide evidence of collaboration, clarity and coherence in the planning of interventions; the related communication required between stakeholders; and the related evidence/reporting required to make further plans and address areas of need.

The involvement of the Office of the Premier in commissioning the evaluation and the inclusion of the deputy-director-generals in writing forewords for the implementation plans indicates some alignment with the lesson emerging from the scan of other FET interventions: *The requirement of high level political commitment to the intervention.*

Both sets of plans seem to target underperforming schools, although there is some slippage where indicators or inputs refer to ‘all’ schools or ‘all’ teachers. This is contrary to the lesson emerging from the scan of other FET interventions: *For plans to be effectively implemented they required targeted management of resources. It is simply not possible to reach all schools – appropriately targeting which schools receive the resources for a project intervention is therefore critical.*

The Provincial strategic plans seem to be *comprehensive* (in terms of the services and inputs offered, as well as in relation to consideration for Grade R to Grade 12). Priority subjects are made clear at primary and secondary level. The provincial implementation plans are not comprehensive and focus

narrowly on Grade 12 enrichment and support programmes. Although a categorisation of districts has been attempted in the intensive implementation documents, neither sets of plans *differentiate* the kind of services offered by particular districts or offered to particular types of schools. This is contrary to the lesson emerging from the scan of FET level interventions: *Differentiated approaches are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality.*

5.1.2 LAIS activities

It seems to us that the lesson emerging that *'indicators for success should be negotiated by all role players before the intervention begins'* has not been the case for this intervention.

The two indicators which we have found reference to, and which we infer are relevant to both the strategy and the intensive implementation plan, are:

- 100% attendance at the enrichment programme (which we take to mean Spring and Winter Schools) by learners and teachers; and
- 20% average increase in subject passes.

Related to these are the following targets:

- 5% improvement in overall NSC pass rate
- 6% improvement in the average Bachelor pass rates

However, we do not think that these align with the observed lesson that *'For plans to be effectively implemented the goals need to be realistic and anticipate incremental progress'*. A 20% increase in the number of subject passes seems high.²¹ Additionally, this goal – by focusing on percentage of passes, and not on mean results - pays no attention to the quality of passes. Further, the subject-specific target set does not refer to the prioritised subjects.

To expect 100% attendance is also unrealistic (there are many acceptable reasons for an attendance of below 100%, such as illness). In addition, a goal of attendance at enrichment programmes makes no reference to the quality of such programmes, and to measuring the learner attainment impact of such programmes. Furthermore, we understand that teachers at schools were not required to attend the Winter and Spring school events (as district-employed tutors were in attendance), making the attendance goal relevant to tutors and not teachers. As such we notice the absence of classroom teachers in these goals which is contrary to the lesson :

- *'teachers are [to be] the centre of any learning attainment improvement intervention'*.

Also, the 'attendance at enrichment classes' goal does not distinguish vacation schools conducted at district centres from extra classes conducted at schools.

At the district level, reports most commonly report on Spring and Winter schools. In some cases evidence of schools, tutor and learner attendance at the events is recorded.

²¹ However, it is not clear whether this is a one-year or a three-year goal.

Where reports are provided relating to teacher development interventions, there is no reporting on teacher attendance, teacher throughput and quality of passes based on the programme assessments, or the impact this has had on learner attainment in school-based or standardised assessments.

There does not seem to be agreement on the critical features of Pillar 2 of the LAIS. The action plan and implementation plans offer different ways of conceptualising this. The action plans relates to broader whole-school focal areas, while the implementation plan is narrowly focused on additional classes to extend Grade 12 teaching time.

We notice that while underperforming schools are mentioned in planning documents, these schools are not targeted through the allocation of resources or through the reporting requirements of the intervention. This is contrary to the lesson: *A few well considered quality interventions in fewer schools is advocated for. There is clear evidence that schools require a minimal level of basic functionality for any intervention to have an impact. Differentiated approaches are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality.*

5.1.3 The LAIS budget

The LAIS budget is not aligned to either the LAIS projects in the ‘intensive implementation plan’ or to the focal areas in the LAIS ‘strategy’ documents. It is allocated to district clusters equally, based on learner numbers per district. This is contrary to the emerging lessons from the scan of other FET interventions: *For plans to be effectively implemented they required targeted management of resources. It is simply not possible to reach all schools – appropriately targeting which schools receive the resources for a project intervention is therefore critical*

The provincial level budgets for LAIS (which are reported as the NCS budgets) were allocated based only on learner numbers in districts, with no prioritisation or resourcing. We received no coherent or consistent information relating to the centralised LAIS budget or expenditure. This is contrary to the lesson: *for plans to be effectively implemented they required targeted management of resources. It is simply not possible to reach all schools – appropriately targeting which schools receive the resources for a project intervention is therefore critical*

There is also a lack of consistent district level financial reporting, and inconsistent and patchy reporting on expenditure (where there is a lack of alignment between the overall budget and how this is then disaggregated into spring and winter school expenditure).

There is lack of clarity with regard to how weekend classes (Saturday classes, Ilima classes or camps) are funded, as this is inconstantly reflected in some district reports and not in others. There is no indication of financial reporting about any other LAIS activities.

From the data provided by the province, it is reported that R 24,473,201 has been spent on the LAIS intervention for 2014-2015 financial year (one month before the end of the financial year. This is less than the reported budget of R30,000,000.

5.2 Reporting on implementation

5.2.1 District reports

We only found evidence of district reports on Spring and Winter schools for 2014 from some districts within Clusters B and C. No other district reports were provided to us, despite repeated requests. These reports reflect only partial reporting against the LAIS projects of the 'implementation plan', as we received no reports on the following priority projects: Autumn schools; Morning classes; Afternoon study period; and Evening study period (although these were reported on verbally by stakeholders and discussed during school visits).

We have received no reports on implementation of the priority areas of Pillar 2 as outlined in the LAIS strategy documents:

1. An early start to the academic year;
2. The setting of targets (such as for syllabus coverage and assessments);
3. The establishment of subject committees;
4. The protection of teaching and learning time (ensuring that teachers are in school and teaching);
5. Human resource provisioning (including filling vacant posts);
6. Monitoring, support and evaluation.

As such we conclude that district reporting has only been in terms of Winter and Spring schools as 'LAIS projects' in the 'intensive implementation plan'. And that such district reporting was not undertaken for Cluster A. There is no available documentation on how the LAIS implementation was undertaken or how their allocated LAIS budgets were spent.

For Cluster B and C we have evidence of district level reporting on Spring and Winter schools. The other 'LAIS projects' mentioned in the implementation report are absent from the district reports. The reporting is inconsistent and reports on expenditure frequently exceed the reported budget. We have not found evidence of standardised reporting (except Cluster B reports on Winter and Spring schools) and no evidence of reporting consistently to management structures. From this we infer that there has been no analysis or response, indicating an absence of a critical feedback cycle.

All the above is contrary to the following lessons emerging from the scan of FET interventions:

- *The project intervention progress should be regularly reported on using standardised reports. The reports (from schools, districts, and other role players) should be made to appropriate management structures.*
- *The project progress reports need to be analysed to inform future action and, where necessary, adapting the plan. Management action is required to ensure accountability and adherence to the overall implementation plan.*
- *The data/evidence/information collected during an intervention is critical, and should use standardised reporting formats which are then analysed and responded to speedily. Reports used for this critical feedback cycle include adherence to common work schedules, reports from mentors, learner assessment results (analysed question by question, based on the assessment items), employment contracts with related performance indicators, teacher lesson planning documents and teacher tests on subject knowledge.*

5.2.2 Perceptions and opinions of department officials

Departmental officials at the provincial office and at district level referred to the LAIS plan as contained within the ‘intensive implementation’ document, but showed little awareness of the ‘strategy’ document.

Mention was frequently made by these officials of ‘Human resource provisioning (including filling vacant posts)’, one of the priority areas of the LAIS strategy. The lack of capacity and leadership at all level of the system was also of concern to them, as were the quality of district support and monitoring of the implementation of LAIS; and the quality of school leadership. This is consistent with the following lesson emerging from the scan of other FET interventions: *staff vacancies, insufficient staffing and lack of permanent positions were seen to impact negatively on intervention attempts. This was particularly acute in the more rural provinces (such as Eastern Cape, and Limpopo).*

The departmental officials reported on Winter and Spring schools at district centres, as well as additional classes held at schools. All of this related only to Grade 12 learners – there was no reference to the lower grades and primary school interventions. There was reference to underperforming schools in vague terms, with little evidence of how these schools were treated differently to other schools. As a result all schools appeared to be eligible for the LAIS intervention and there was no differentiation (in terms of different offerings to targeted schools). In relation to the Winter and Spring schools, the challenges are summarised as follows:

- The lack of engagement between schools and districts on what is taught (in terms of subjects priorities)
- The poor quality of some of the tutors at these events
- Logistical concerns about transport, accommodation, catering and safety at these events;
- Lack of transparency on LAIS budgets, with reference to budgets being ‘top sliced’ or allocated to issues.

This is contrary to the following lessons emerging from the scan of other FET interventions:

- *Organisation must start from the school with clearly defined roles.*
- *Differentiated approaches are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality.*
- *Lower grades and primary schools should not be neglected.*

5.2.3 Perceptions and opinions of school-based personnel and learners

Principals, Grade 12 teachers and Grade 12 learners at the case study schools referred to the LAIS plan as contained within the ‘implementation’ document, but showed little awareness of the ‘strategy’ document.

The school-based stakeholders echoed the concerns of the department officials about the quality of Winter and Spring school programmes:

- The lack of engagement between schools and districts on what is taught (in terms of subjects priorities)
- Poor quality of the tutors at these events
- Logistical concerns about transport, accommodation, catering and safety at these events;

and also noted the late payments of tutors for these events.

In addition, the school-based stakeholders referred to the negative social impact of the vacation schools and (particularly) the extra classes at school level, which disrupted social coherence and the family base of the Grade 12 learners. This is contrary to the lesson emerging from the scan of other FET interventions:

- *When working with a targeted school there is a need to engage the parents and surrounding community and ensure their support and commitment. This relates both to their investment in learner attainment improvements, as well as the psycho-social needs related to communities in poverty.*

The school-based stakeholders reported on activities relating to the LAIS intensive implementation plan including evening, morning and Saturday classes. Once again these were only for Grade 12 learners and all subjects were in focus. There was no budget available for these activities and they were undertaken by the teachers at the schools (leading to some patchy coverage, depending on teacher willingness to offer such additional classes). Nonetheless, the offering of these extra classes is consistent with the lesson emerging from the scan of other FET interventions: *Principals and district officials can be involved in arranging and supporting study groups.*

5.3 Evaluating efficacy and value for money

5.3.1 Evidence of impact of LAIS on learner attainment

When reflecting on the impact of LAIS interventions all of the stakeholders (both department officials and school-based stakeholders) referred to the extra classes ('LAIS projects' in the intensive implementation plan) and did not refer to the broader LAIS strategy.

None of the stakeholders engaged in the evaluation process were able to provide any concrete evidence of improvements in learner performance as a result of LAIS interventions. Anecdotal evidence was not backed up with any macro-level data, and it was recognised that there was a lack of controlled conditions to measure impact on learner results.

To do an analysis to measure the impact of the Grade 12 learner support pillar of the LAIS intervention for January 2013 to date, the following data would be required:

1. Clear delineation of LAIS schools from non LAIS schools. This has not been done for the LAIS EC project.
2. Baseline and endline data relating to both the number and quality of passes, per prioritised subject, at each of the schools in the Eastern Cape. Unfortunately, the only learner attainment data provided to us Cluster B Spring schools (only Matric pass rates per school, over time),
3. Agreeing on the minimum 'basket of service' required for a school to be considered a LAIS school. This has not happened at this stage.

However, from the analysis of the learner attainment data which was provided, we found that the changes in Matric pass rates (from a baseline of 2012 to an endpoint of 2014) of schools that *did* participate in the Spring school provided by the district increased on average LESS than those who

did not receive the attention (viz. +0.9% vs. +2.4%). Both groups showed a smaller change than the change in percentage passing for the province (+ 3.8%). This means that there is no discernible impact of the Spring school intervention on the change in pass rates at the participating schools for this Cluster.

We also found very high average standard deviations of the changes in Matric pass rates in the experimental and control groups and in every district. This means that Matric pass rates of schools tend to fluctuate widely from year to year.

We conclude that matric pass is probably too crude a measure to discern impact. Quality of matric passes, and subject level passes (and quality of passes) which are mapped to the prioritised subjects in the Spring schools events, are necessary.

5.3.2 The perceived value of LAIS

There were some positive sentiments about the value of the Spring and Winter schools. However when considered explicitly in terms of ‘value of money’, negative sentiments were expressed by selections of both district officials and the school-based personnel.

As a measure of perceived value, Principals and teachers (separately) were asked to consider an imaginary situation where they had been elected as provincial Minister of Education and needed to decide how to allocate funds to improve Matric results. Four options were offered:

- A. Spend the money on extra classes or workbooks for learners (Spring schools, winter schools, Saturday classes)
- B. Spend the money on professional development for teachers (courses and qualifications with school-based support)
- C. Spend the money on curriculum advisors and more support from the district
- D. Fill the vacant posts in schools

What was interesting was the variety of responses from the 4 Principals and 4 sets of teachers asked (the latter were asked to vote individually). Principals tended to come down most strongly in favour of option D (filling vacant posts), and teachers for option B (more teacher professional development). Option A (extra classes for learners) was also relatively popular but – interestingly in the context of the focus of LAIS – only third in popularity overall (though some groups put it first). Least favoured by far was to spend the money at district level.

5.3.3 Value for money

We did not receive any documentation which made clear the envisaged impacts (and related unit costs) which would be considered to be evidence of value for money. This reflects a *lack of clarity with regard to the planning documentation and the envisaged impact*. Questions relating to the cost-effectiveness of the choice to run additional classes (defined as LAIS projects in the implementation plan), do not appear to have been considered in the planning stages of LAIS.

From the available district level reports, the cost of Spring and Winter school interventions vary widely per learner (from R149 to R 1129 per learner). As attendance registers at the level of learners are not available, it is not possible to reports on the cost of these interventions per successful learner. This is compounded by the lack of data relating to quality of passes, and subject level results.

5.4 Emerging recommendations

The DoE officials had numerous suggestions for improving LAIS, indicating their concern that it has not been running optimally thus far. There were recommendations to improve the vacation schools; recommendations to improve the enacting of LAIS at school level, and an oft-repeated recommendation to stop focussing all the LAIS funds on Grade 12s (and to work more in lower school grades). Some of the officials felt that the Grade 12 vacation camps should be done away with.

The EC DoE officials had numerous suggestions about how the implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support could be improved. In terms of the winter and spring schools – seemingly the backbone of the LAIS intervention in its enacted state – the following recommendations were provided:

- The support interventions and assistance should be individual-school-based;
- A number of officials commented that the centralised venues approach currently used means that too much money goes on logistics (e.g. catering, transport, accommodation) and too little directly to learner tuition;
- Separate out those learners who have had no teaching all year, and those who have had teaching but need their understanding and skills refined;
- There should not be syllabus coverage at vacation schools, as it is ineffective (“too little, too late”; and can lead to some teachers not using their normal teaching time effectively since they know the work will be covered in the vacation schools);
- Try to get the best teachers to teach at these vacation schools. Do not employ those who do not get good results at their own schools;
- Standardized prices for items across all districts (e.g. a standard amount paid to service provider per meal provided);
- Keep the vacation schools focused on only a “few things” each year – “Things should slow down – we should focus on what we know what we can achieve” and “we cannot do everything”; and
- Ideally the vacation school tutors should come from the ex-Model C schools – but the school teachers should be required to attend to get experience and learn from the better teachers (this has worked well in the PE schools, supposedly).

Some DoE officials recommended doing away with vacation schools. Another set of recommendations revolved around the schools themselves, and how they should be supported:

- Schools need to be made more responsible to sort out their own problems (e.g. assisting a teacher that is getting poor Matric results) – self-managing;
- Monthly reports by schools should be compulsory;
- Monitoring and support should be demand-driven to assist those needing help;

- Increasing teachers' and officials' accountability ;
- Performance measurement is needed (e.g. need to measure the difference each person is making);
- Add more monitoring of the LAIS intervention; and
- Increase/improve mentoring of, and basic management training for, Principals, deputy-principals and HoDs.

A number of the officials commented on the critical need for more budget, so that all the LAIS activities can be carried out (one cluster director commented on how a number of the planned programmes had to be shelved each year due to the funds being too limited to cover everything). Another stated that it is too easy to access LAIS funds – they can be diverted to other uses (others referred to 'top-slicing' the LAIS funds).

A very common recommendation was to avoid the current excessive focus on Grade 12 learners (due to the country's focus on these results above all else). A number of officials voiced the comment that to intervene in Matric was simply "too little, too late". The general feeling was that support for the learners should start in Grade 9 or 10, slowly ramping up each year. Some specific suggestions around this included:

- Common exams for Grade 10
- Proper guidance to Grade 9 learners re subject choices (career guidance). And don't only use the LO teacher here, but psychometric testing. Subject combinations must be thought out carefully (e.g. ban the combinations Accounting and Maths Lit; and Maths Lit and Physical Science).
- Ensure that learners are immersed in English from Grade 4 (no code-switching)

A high-level EC trade union official (from SADTU) was also interviewed about LAIS. Their recommendations for changes to LAIS are as follows:

- The LAIS money should be spent on more than just Grade 12s – start from Grade 9 (one of the areas where the learners struggle);
- The name of LAIS should be changed to something like "education improvement strategy", so that it is wider in focus;
- There needs to be systemic changes so that it talks to the needs of the learners and teachers and communities;
- Fill the vacant post: "If you can provide enough [teachers; resources] for the schools, there will be no need for winter schools"; and
- The EC DoE should involve more stakeholders – e.g. trade unions, parent reps – in decision making around LAIS. The decision-making is not transparent enough.

The recommendations of the Principals and teachers as to how to improve LAIS focussed predominantly on ways of improving the vacation schools, with only a few other general recommendations. Unlike the officials, all of the school-based personnel do want the LAIS programme to continue, albeit in a modified, improved version. The learners were not able to make any cogent recommendations due to it being so early in the school year, before they have experienced much of what LAIS is about.

As mentioned previously, the Principals and teachers were generally very positive about LAIS, and keen (at times very keen) for it to continue, albeit an improved version eliminating the logistical and other issues highlighted earlier. Specific recommendations, not surprisingly, focussed almost entirely on ways of improving the vacation schools. These include:

- Subject advisors should teach at the vacation schools, and/or better Maths and Physical Science tutors should be contracted (perhaps from outside the EC, or by using recently retired teachers);
- Better planning by starting much earlier in the year, and communicate timeously with the schools about what is to happen;
- Make the programme more structured (e.g. one Principal suggested that a programme and manual be created for the vacation schools);
- Schools which are centres for the winter and spring schools need hostels to be built;
- More negotiation/discussion with schools around what to cover in the vacation schools;
- Better pay, and more rapid payment, for the holiday tutors; and
- Include more subjects in the vacation schools

Other more general recommendations were:

- Begin the support lower down in the school (“Grade 12 is too late”);
- More training for teachers (there are content gaps due to the introduction of CAPS that have not been addressed yet through CAPS training and other workshops); and
- Increase the funds allocated to LAIS

Principals indicated that they would prioritise funding on filling vacant posts, and teachers would prioritise funding relating to training for teachers.

5.5 Evaluators’ recommendations

In this section we respond to *evaluation question 15: What do the evaluators recommend for consideration in the next implementation phase?*

We have six recommendations regarding the way forward:

1. Ensure that in future interventions the planning documents and implementation documents are completely aligned;
2. Categorise the EC schools on the basis of their functionality;
3. Plan different interventions for dysfunctional and functional schools;
4. Stop the centralised Grade 12 vacation schools and revision camps;
5. If the centralised vacation schools and camps are to continue, tighten their monitoring and research their impact; and
6. Strengthen the focus and monitoring of school-based additional FET classes

Recommendation 1: Ensure that in future interventions the planning documents and implementation documents are completely aligned

We have seen earlier that the LAIS planning/strategy documents and the implementation documents are vastly different. Under such circumstances, the chance of confusion among role-players involved in implementation is increased. This will, in turn, increase the likelihood of an intervention having little to no positive impact.

To limit the variance between the original planning documents and those guiding implementation, it would be ideal to have the same team of people involved in drawing up both sets of documents. This was not the case with LAIS, since the strategy documents and action plans appear to have been created by different people to those writing the implementation documents. If it is impossible to have the same team, then the two groups involved in drawing them up should meet to agree on the broad picture of the intervention prior to the creation of any documents. Thereafter, the planning / strategy documents should be drawn up first, and only after that the implementation documents should be created (always paying close attention to, and using similar wording to, the planning /strategy documents).

Recommendation 2: Categorise EC schools on the basis of their functionality

Different schools are at different levels of functionality: some are functional and others, unfortunately, dysfunctional. There are some gradations between these two extremes, and two or three levels of functionality may be agreed upon. Schools should be categorised based on a basket of indicators, such as:

- Track record of learner attainment in ANA assessments;
- Track record of learner attainment in Grade 12 assessments;
- Post provisioning (although vacant posts may not necessary be an indicator of dysfunction, filling vacant posts is a prerequisite for making a school functional);
- Time allocated to teaching (from the first day of the year; for how many days and the length of the school day).

The district plans should make explicit what support /services schools in each category of school receives. The district budgets should reflect these differences. District budgets should not be based on the number of learners, but based on the number of learners in targeted categories of schools.

There are certain inputs or services which we feel should be available for all schools. By way of example, we think that the following are required for every school:

- Vacant posts are filled;
- Every learner has a quality learning support material (text book and/or study guide) in the priority subjects from Grades 1 – 12. Schools should be expected to manage the collection (taking in books from learners) and re-distribution (giving the collected books to the new learners in the grade) of these resources on an annual basis;
- Common assessments are administered at Grade 1-6, Grade 9 and Grade 12 (and possibly other grades too).

There are other inputs which we think should only be offered to targeted (dysfunctional) schools. These are outlined under the following recommendation.

Recommendation 3: Plan different interventions for a targeted selection of dysfunctional and functional schools

There is clear research evidence that schools require a minimal level of basic functionality for any intervention to have an impact. See, for example, Taylor and Prinsloo, 2005:

“One of the most important lessons of the QLP is that programmes of this kind are only successful in schools which have a minimum level of capacity at the start (Hopkins et al’s Type II and III schools). This is a lesson that government has itself learned from the Dinaledi project, which was in many ways similar to the QLP2 and which also had little success in a significant number of target schools: thus, the second phase of Dinaledi is being targeted at Type II schools.” (p. 12)

Differentiated approaches are therefore required to take into account the level of school functionality.

We recommend that two tightly defined and targeted interventions should be planned and researched: the first targets district and school-based capacity so as to shift *some* targeted dysfunctional schools into a functional school category; and the second targets *some* schools that are functional but performing below expectations, by providing some additional intervention(s), with a focus on improved learner attainment in priority subject areas. We emphasise *some* schools as we feel that a targeted intervention – which clearly demonstrates success in the Eastern Cape context – is required to inform the way in which other districts/schools can be approached in future.

Project inputs and related budgets should make explicit the different requirements for the two groups of schools. It is important that each group comprises of a few carefully selected schools (perhaps in a common geographic location so that there is the possibility of developing capacity within a targeted district), so that resources can be targeted for these schools. The plans should name exactly which schools are being targeted and be explicit about the services they will receive as well as the expectations/obligations from school management and teaching staff in these schools. Indicators for success should be negotiated by all role players before the intervention begins. The goals need to be realistic and anticipate incremental progress.

Indicators for success and targets for the identified dysfunctional schools relate to becoming functional (indicators such as vacant post filled, protection of teaching time, school management support and training, learner and educators attendance are relevant here). We recommend that such an intervention has:

- A clear definition of which schools are targeted for the intervention;
- A strong professional development component relating to district support: planning, monitoring, oversight, school visits and collation of reports;
- A strong professional development component relating to school leadership (principals, deputy principals, SGB members and HODs);
- The suggestion of ‘a rapid response team’ to work with the district/ circuit managers on their daily functions and accountability should be considered;

- The suggestion to involve more stakeholders – e.g. trade unions, parent reps – in decision making around the intervention, should be considered

In addition, we recommend that the priority areas of Pillar 2, as outlined in the LAIS strategy documents, are focussed on for these dysfunctional schools:

- An early start to the academic year;
- The setting of targets (such as for syllabus coverage and assessments);
- The establishment of subject committees;
- The protection of teaching and learning time (ensuring that teachers are in school and teaching);
- Human resource provisioning (including filling vacant posts);
- Monitoring, support and evaluation.

Indicators for success and targets relating to the identified ‘functional’ schools targeted for improved learner attainment should include attainment targets in the priority subjects (such as ANA and Grade 12 attainment; both in percentage and quality of passes). We recommend that such an intervention has:

- A clear definition of which FET schools are targeted for this intervention;
- Agreement on the priority subject areas for both FET and GET levels. We recommend that a maximum of five FET-level subjects are prioritised. We understand the provincial priorities to be ‘Mathematics, Science & Technology’ subjects. We take this to refer to: Mathematics (not Mathematics Literacy), Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, and Information Technology (not Computer Assisted Technology) subjects at the FET level. We also note the evidence emerging from the review of other FET interventions, where English is recognised as a key requirement / priority subject, and so argue that English should be a priority subject at both FET and GET level. As such we recommend prioritising the following at FET level: Mathematics, English and Physical Science (and possibly Life Sciences and IT, but the inclusion of these subjects should be subject to budget availability). We recommend that two GET level subjects are prioritised: Mathematics and English. This reflects the national priority, where these gateway subjects are assessed through ANAs at Grades 3, 6 and 9.
- A strong professional development component for GET and FET teachers of the priority subjects (accredited professional development programmes relating to improved subject matter knowledge and pedagogy in priority subjects should be a requirement);
- Effective provision and use of GET and FET learning support materials in the priority subjects;
- Provision of additional school-based classes (at key points in GET level – Grade 3 and Grade 6 and Grade 9, as well as extra classes for all grades at FET level);
- A strong focus on building instructional leadership capacity (at both the levels of the district and school management teams);
- A clear coordination and management structure for the implementation of the targeted intervention;

- A monitoring, evaluation and research component, planned from the intervention outset, which documents the project inputs, and researches its efficacy.

If there is not sufficient funding for two researched interventions, then we recommend prioritising the functional schools where the focus is on improved learner attainment in priority subject areas.

Recommendation 4: Stop the centralised Grade 12 vacation schools and revision camps

We are referring here to district-run extra classes offered via Spring, Winter or Autumn schools, and ‘revision camps’. Based on the evidence we have gathered for this evaluation we recommend that these are stopped as soon as possible. Our reasons for this are as follows:

- With the data available from this evaluation we do not find evidence of a positive impact of district-based Spring, Winter and Autumn schools;
- The feedback from district officials and the school-based educators suggests problems with the quality of the programme offerings (particularly the tutoring);
- There is a poor level of differentiation relating to which schools are targeted for these revision camps;
- There can be little impact of short camps run by tutors who do not know the students and their knowledge gaps;
- This is ‘too little, too late’ for matric learners, where the academic problems stem from far earlier in the system (as the Grade 9 ANA results attest);
- The large cost of logistical arrangements (transport, food and accommodation) means less money is available from the very limited LAIS budget for teacher and learner support of a direct academic nature;
- The numerous logistical arrangements that need to be made for these vacation schools and camps divert district attention away from supporting schools, towards the management and organisation of such revision camps;
- The lack of involvement of all relevant teachers in these camps (where, ideally, teachers should be the centre of investments in improved learner attainment)²²;
- The lack of standardised monitoring and reporting on these camps; where financial reporting is incomplete and or inconsistent; and there are reports and evidence of ‘top slicing’ of these budgets (suggesting significant wastage in provincial expenditure).

We note that at schools’ level, based on the four case study schools we visited, there is support for the continuation of the winter and spring schools from principals, teachers and learners. However, teachers and learners are assuming that it is making a difference but do not have the full picture. Based on the illustrative statistical analysis of impact on the data we have relating to Spring schools in one district, we see no improvement in pass rate due to participation in Spring school. We think

²² We recognise that tutors may be teachers from schools participating in the camp; however, teacher involvement is not a requirement

that, taken together, the above reasons provide a compelling argument for stopping the vacation schools and revision camps.

Recommendation 5: If the centralised vacation schools and camps are to be continued, tighten their monitoring and research their impact

Based on the evidence we have collected thus far, and argued above, we recommend that these district-level schools should not be offered. We agree with the school-based educators, where the majority felt that the budgets on these would be better spent on human resource provisioning and teacher professional development.

However, we realise that discontinuing the Grade 12 vacation schools and revision camps is a tough political decision, and they will probably continue in the immediate future. This provides an opportunity for the provincial leadership (and political principals) to gather hard evidence on their impact (or, perhaps, lack of discernible impact) which can be used to support their decision on whether to continue with them in the future.

The following will need to be in place for meaningful monitoring and research on the impact of these centralised schools:

- Schools targeted are clearly defined (not all schools should be eligible to be a 'LAIS school');
- Agreement on the minimum basket of services required for a schools to be considered a LAIS school. (e.g. do LAIS schools need to participate in both Winter and Spring schools? What school-based enrichment programmes must be in place at the school, for a school to be eligible for inclusion in a camp?)
- Standardised reports on implementation of the vacation schools and revision camps are submitted by all districts;
- A maximum of five matric level subjects are prioritised for inclusion in these camps in 2015. As argued above, we recommend that English, Mathematics, Physical Science (and possibly Life Sciences, and Information Technology, subject to budget availability) are prioritised.. Agreement on the priority subjects at FET level is a pivotal part of the planning to focus the investments in camps;
- Clear agreement on indicators for success, and how the efficacy of the camps will be measured. This may include gathering agreed baseline (previous Matric and Grade 9 ANA results) and endline (current Matric) data relating to both the number and quality of passes per prioritised subject at each of the schools in the Eastern Cape, at an individual learner level. It may be appropriate to include a tutor and learner survey to gather feedback from participants on the quality of the camps. These agreed indicators should be used as a basis for monitoring and included in the standardised reports
- A research process is agreed at the outset, and researchers influence the reporting formats so that indicators for success are tracked as part of the (standardised) reporting requirements;
- The number, cost, role and functioning of 'roving teachers' is clarified, and their impact is monitored and reported on.

In addition we think that funding norms/ standards should be developed and applied to the vacation camps. There is considerable variation in the costs of these camps, and we think agreement on pricing (for travel, as well as accommodation and catering) is required. Also, teachers from the targeted schools should be expected to contribute to the running of the schools and to be available to support their learners during the vacation school, Expert teachers/tutors can run the classes, but teachers should help the planning process for what is in focus; and be available to support learners during the vacation school.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the focus and monitoring of school-based additional FET classes

We do not have enough data on the school-based additional classes to be able to discern whether or not they are making an impact. We are thus not in a position to make a call on whether or not to stop these classes. However, we note the enthusiasm for these extra school-based classes, which we received from both education officials and school-based educators and learners, and the fact that these classes should allow the syllabi to be completed earlier, and therefore more time for revision. We also note that it is the teachers who are involved in these offerings (and the teachers should be heart of any initiative to improve learner attainment). As such, we suggest that these extra classes could be encouraged to continue.

However, reflecting on the evidence we have collated relating to these schools, there are several ways in which we feel this component of LAIS could be improved:

1. The additional teaching time should not be so intensely focused at Grade 12 level. We recommend that such extra classes are required throughout the FET level (Grades 10, 11 and 12).
2. We recommend that such classes should only be supported in priority subject areas (e.g. English, Mathematics, Physical Science, and IT) and should be linked with teacher professional development. We recognise that schools may choose to offer extra classes in other subjects, but this would not be eligible to any provincial or district level stipend/funding (see point 4 below).
3. We would like to see closer (district) monitoring of what is being offered and how this aligns with priority subject areas. Much tighter definition of how extra school-based classes are offered (the minimum number of additional hours per priority subject per term, as well as the agreed timetabling for such classes, is required). Again, monitoring information on exactly which schools are offering such classes, and reporting on attendance and related learner attainment in standardised assessments (as well as teacher performance in professional development offerings), is required for the impact of these classes to be able to be measured. District officials should be required to support these school-based initiatives with advice, encouragement and sharing of expertise.
4. We think that some budget is required to support the implementation of these extra FET classes in priority subject areas. Such budget should include incentives for the extra time

spent by the teachers in the priority FET subject areas. We recommend that access to such budget is used as an incentive for 'functional schools'. By meeting an agreed level of basic functionality and submitting school-based plans (and consequent reports on progress) relating to extra-tuition to support FET learners in priority subjects, schools would become eligible for this budget/ stipend.

5. It may be appropriate to commission research on the perceptions of value and impact of these extra classes using a few case study schools. We do not currently have sufficient evidence (outside of the enthusiasm for these interventions from the stakeholders we interviewed) to assert whether these are having the desired effect.

We trust that this report does justice to the many hardworking provincial officials, district officials, principals and teachers in the Eastern Cape who have attempted to implement the LAIS Grade 12 Learning Support initiatives to the best of their ability. We have found numerous hardworking educators who have extended themselves phenomenally in the best interests of Grade 12 learners in the Eastern Cape. Our overall recommendation is to better harness this energy and related financial investment to impact on improving the system. We would like to see more focus on filling vacant posts, and developing teacher and district capacity. This should be coupled with better monitoring through standardised reporting on the intervention progress as well as expenditure, which is analysed in a critical feedback cycle. We advocate for targeted interventions for fewer schools, where differentiated services from the district office are combined with the schools' own efforts. With tightly defined inputs, outputs, outcomes, indicators, roles, responsibilities and related budgets, the impact of these interventions can then be researched.

Appendix 1: List of background documents provided

File name	Date	Format	Contents
Mthatha district accountability report	22-Apr-14	ppt	Broad overview of district functioning, some LAIS goals and interventions, but not detailed enough against LAIS framework
2008-2015 pass rates	not dated	xls	Pass rates by school (number writing, number passing and failing by year for 2008 - 2014)
2014 LAIS implementation plan	24-Mar-14	doc	Province wide LAIS includes logical framework for LAIS with pillar 2 targets
National strategy for learner attainment (2015 NSLA)	03-Nov-14	pdf	National reporting template for province in terms of learner attainment against schooling 2025 plan
Ramahuta Masters dissertation LEARNERS IN THE MANKWENG AREA, LIMPOPO PROVINCE	Sep-07	pdf	Masters level study on Grade 12 learner support in a district in Limpopo
Eastern Cape Province final draft of LAIS 2014	08-Apr-14	doc	Includes categorisation of districts at different levels of performance, as well as a summary of the LAIS projects for 2014
LAIS implementation - summary of plan 2015	No date	pdf	2 page document on summary of LAIS plans (provincial)
LAIS strategy 2013-2015	28-Mar-13	pdf	makes clear the link with NSLA, link with action plan 2014, however pillars don't seem to match up with other docs Grade 12 is pillar 1 in objects not clear
List of FET schools	No date	xls	provides list of school names by district
National strategy for learner attainment (2014)	No date	pdf	national DBE plan with goals and responsibility for 2014
NSC funds 2014-2015	No date	xls	annual budget allocations per cluster, appears to be annual total of R30 million, cluster A has some breakdown of allocation per district, other clusters do not
NSC results presentation 2014	No date	ppt	includes district level pass rate 2012-2014, includes subject level pass rates 2012-2014, shows poor performance in maths and physical science, shows decline in number of underperforming districts and schools, includes plans for 2015
NSC pass rate 2008-2014	No date	xls	Pass rates by school for 2008-2014
Cluster A and B financial status reports	Feb-15	ppt	Budget and expenditure for NCS budget per district
Cluster C financial status report	Feb-15	ppt	Budget and expenditure for NCS budget per district
District reports on	Oct-14	doc	Cluster B districts reporting using a standard word template

2014 spring schools			in spring schools, but inconsistent financial reporting
District reports on 2014 winter schools	Oct-14	xls	Cluster B districts reporting using a standard spreadsheet on expenditure against budget for winter school

Appendix 2: References used in the scan of existing FET interventions

The following literature was used to inform the scan of existing FET interventions:

- Besharati, N. A. (2014). *Platinum & Passes: the impact of mining investment on education outcomes in South Africa*. Johannesburg: SAIIA and Wits School of Governance
- Clynick, T. and Lee. R. (2004). *From laggard to world class: Reforming Maths and Science education in South Africa's schools*. Johannesburg: CDE
- Eastern Cape Department of Education. (no date). *Action Plan for LAIS Implementation (2013 – 2015)*. Bisho: Directorate of Communication Services
- Fricke, I., Horak, E., Meyer, L., and van Lingen, N. (2008). Lessons from a Maths and Science intervention programme in Tshwane township schools. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 22(1), 64 - 77
- JET Education Services. (2010). *Systemic school improvement in rural areas: What have we learnt? (Learning Brief 1)*. Johannesburg: JET Education Services
- Kanjee, A., & Bhola, H. (2014). Evaluating a Large-Scale School Intervention Project in South Africa: Lessons and Challenges. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(23), 792 - 803.
- Kanjee, A., & Prinsloo, C. H. (2005). *Improving Learning in South African Schools: The Quality Learning Project (QLP). Summative Evaluation (2000 to 2004)*. Pretoria: HSRC Press
- Khoza, G (ed). (2013). *System school improvement: Interventions in South Africa*. Johannesburg: JET Education Services
- Ngobeni, B. (2014). *Secondary School Improvement Programme: A case of the Gauteng Department of Education*. [PowerPoint presentation]
- Prew, M. & Shar, S. (2013). The Quality Learning Project: An Integrated Theory-Driven Intervention. In Y. Sayed, A. Kanjee, & Nkomo, M (eds.). *The search for quality education in post-apartheid South Africa: Interventions to improve learning and teaching*. (pp 210-229). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Prinsloo, C.H. (2013). The Quality Learning Project: An overall evaluation perspective. In Y. Sayed, A. Kanjee, & Nkomo, M (eds.). *The search for quality education in post-apartheid South Africa: Interventions to improve learning and teaching*. (pp 230-236). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Sci-Bono Discovery Centre. (2015). *The Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP)*. Johannesburg: Sci-Bono Centre
- Taylor, N., & Prinsloo, C. (2005). *The Quality Learning Project: Lessons for high school Improvement in South Africa*. Johannesburg: JET Education Services
- Tuck, R., Mabitsela, V. and Mashamaite, D. (2009). *Khanyisa School Transformation Programme*. Johannesburg: JET Education Services

Appendix 3: Interview schedules

Interview schedule for high-ranking department officials

A. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What is your position and role in the EC DBE? (*or whatever organisation the person works for*)

B. THE LAIS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Context of LAIS

1. How long have you been involved in the implementation of the LAIS? And specifically in the pillar 2 (the Grade 12 learner support programme)?
2. Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.
3. What has your role been in the implementation of the Grade 12 learner support in the LAIS?

Perceptions of effectiveness

4. Are you aware of the planned/documentated ways in which the efficacy of the LAIS Grade 12 Learner Support was to be measured?
5. a. In your opinion, how successfully has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme been implemented?
b. Please provide examples to explain your answer.
6. a. Please describe all challenges to the successful implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme that you are aware of.
b. What recommendations do you have to overcome these challenges?
7. In your opinion, has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme had an impact on learner academic performance? Please explain your answer.
8. Overall, would you regard the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme as a success? Why?

Value for money

9. a. What budget, if any, has been allocated for your role/ your unit's role in this LAIS?
b. If there is a budget, please discuss its appropriateness with regard to the outlined LAIS obligations and whether the budget is ring-fenced
c. If there is no specific budget, please discuss how the LAIS obligations are met within your / the unit's normal functioning

10. In your opinion, has there been adequate budget allocated to the Grade 12 learner support budget of the LAIS, and this been used to good effect? Please explain your answer.
11. In your opinion, does the LAIS Grade 12 learner support project represent value of money? If so / if not please explain.

Recommendations for the future

12. How do you think the LAIS programme could be improved? What changes would you like to introduce?
13. Would you recommend that the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme be continued in its present form?

General

14. Do you have any other comments to add?

Interview schedule for circuit managers

A. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been CM of this circuit?
2. Tell me about the high and SSS schools found within your circuit: how are they performing academically; what sort of communities do they serve, and so on?
3. How often do you visit each school, and for how long each time?

B. THE LAIS IN YOUR CIRCUIT

Context of LAIS

4. Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.
5. What has been implemented in your circuit that would fall under the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS?
6. Are there any extra classes or lessons for matric learners where they can go and get an extra help? When, and in which grades and subjects? Who organises this?
7. Are there any extra learning materials provided for matrics learners, above the basic textbook? What and in which subjects?

8. What type of professional development activities have staff in this circuit been involved in the past 3 years? Who ran this, what was the subject/pedagogic focus? Did anyone visit you at your school? Is anyone studying at the moment?

Perceptions of effectiveness

9. a. In your opinion, how successfully has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme been implemented in your circuit?
b. Please provide examples to explain your answer.
10. a. Please describe all challenges to the successful implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme in your circuit that you are aware of.
b. What recommendations do you have to overcome these challenges?
11. In your opinion, has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme had an impact on learner academic performance of the schools in your circuit? Please explain your answer.
12. Overall, would you regard the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme in the schools of your circuit as a success? Why?

Value for money

13. What budget, if any, has been allocated for your circuit to provide extra Gr 12 support to learners?
14. In your opinion, has there been adequate budget allocated to the Grade 12 learner support budget of the LAIS at circuit level? Please explain your answer.
15. In your opinion, does the LAIS Grade 12 learner support project represent value of money? If so / if not please explain.

Recommendations for the future

16. Imagine you are the EC minister of education. You must decide how to spend the money to improve the results in the EC. What would you prioritise (Order as 1,2 and 3):
 - a. Spend the money on extra classes or workbooks for learners (spring schools, winter schools, Saturday classes)
 - b. Spend the money on professional development for teachers (courses and qualifications with school-based support)
 - c. Spend the money on curriculum advisors and more support from the district?
 - d. Another priority area?

17. How do you think the LAIS programme could be improved? What changes would you like to introduce?

General

18. Do you have any other comments to add?

Interview schedule for school Principals

These questions are for the evaluation of the LAIS intervention. I am not here to evaluate your school. Whatever you say will be used confidentially. I will not tell the district or the province the name of this school or the names of the principal or teachers or learners. In our report we just say: 'a school' that we visited. When we take photos we will not show the name or town of the school. We would like you to speak freely and honestly.

A. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been Principal at this school?
2. Tell me about your school – what kind of school is this? (*is it a good school?, what kind of learners come to this school?, would/ do you send your child to this school*)
3. What are the achievements of this school which you are proud/pleased to tell me about?
4. When the year starts, how long does it take to get the classes and timetable sorted out so you can start lessons with the teachers?
5. Each day, what time do learners come to school? What time does teaching start? When does school end?
6. Are there any problems with learners being late/ absent? What about teachers?
7. Tell me about what matric textbooks and workbooks that you have. Are they being used (ask to see them)?
8. Are the parents / community involved in this school in any way?

B. THE LAIS IN YOUR SCHOOL

Context of LAIS

9. Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.
10. a. What has been implemented in your school/circuit that would fall under the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS?
b. How have these activities been received by your learners? Please explain your answer

11. Do you give any extra classes of lessons for matric learners at this school? When, and in which grades and subjects? Who organises this?
12. Are there any extra classes or lessons for matric learners where they can go and get an extra help? When, and in which grades and subjects? Who organises this?
13. Are there any extra learning materials provided for matric learners, above the basic textbook? What and in which subjects?
14. What professional development activities have you or your staff been involved in the past 3 years? Who ran this, what was the subject/pedagogic focus? Did anyone visit you at your school? Is anyone studying at the moment?
15. Can you tell me about the support you get from the education officials: subject advisors, circuit managers, and so on? Are there subject advisors? In which subjects? How often do you see the subject advisor from your district? What does the district do to support you in your role as Principal?
16. What are you aiming for in terms of matric results this year at this school? Any subject focus or particular areas of weakness that you are targeting/working on?

Perceptions of effectiveness

17. a. In your opinion, how successfully has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme been implemented in your school/circuit?
b. Please provide examples to explain your answer.
18. a. Please describe all challenges to the successful implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme in your school/circuit that you are aware of.
b. What recommendations do you have to overcome these challenges?
19. In your opinion, has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme had an impact on learner academic performance at your school? Please explain your answer.
20. Overall, would you regard the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme at/for this school as a success? Why?

Value for money

21. What budget, if any, has been allocated for your school/circuit to provide extra Gr 12 support to learners?
22. In your opinion, has there been adequate budget allocated to the Grade 12 learner support budget of the LAIS at school/circuit level? Please explain your answer.

23. In your opinion, does the LAIS Grade 12 learner support project represent value of money?
If so / if not please explain.

Recommendations for the future

24. Imagine you are the EC minister of education. You must decide how to spend the money to improve the results in the EC. What would you prioritise (Order as 1,2 and 3):
- e. Spend the money on extra classes or workbooks for learners (Spring schools, winter schools, Saturday classes)
 - f. Spend the money on professional development for teachers (courses and qualifications with school-based support)
 - g. Spend the money on curriculum advisors and more support from the district?
 - h. Another priority area?
25. How do you think the LAIS programme could be improved? What changes would you like to introduce?

General

26. Do you have any other comments to add?

Interview schedule for Grade 12 subject teachers

These questions are for the evaluation of the LAIS intervention. I am not here to evaluate you or your school. Whatever you say will be used confidentially. I will not tell the district or the province the name of this school or the names of the principle or teachers or learners. In our report we just say: 'a school' that we visited. When we take photos we will not show the name or town of the school. We would like you to speak freely and honestly.

A. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your school – what kind of school is this? (*is it a good school?, what kind of learners come to this school?, would/ do you send your child to this school*)
2. What are the achievements of this school which you are proud/pleased to tell me about?
3. When the year starts, how long does it take to get the classes and timetable sorted out so you can start teaching the learners?
4. Each day, what time do learners come to school? What time does teaching start? When does school end?
5. Are there any problems with learners being late/ absent? What about teachers?
6. Tell me about what matric textbooks and workbooks that you have. Are they being used (ask to see them)?

7. Are the parents / community involved in this school in any way?

B. THE LAIS IN YOUR SCHOOL

Context of LAIS

8. Please describe your understanding of what the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS entails/involves.
9. a. What has been implemented in your school/circuit that would fall under the Grade 12 learner support programme of the LAIS?
b. How have these activities been received by your learners? Please explain your answer
10. Do you give any extra classes of lessons for matric learners at this school? When, and in which grades and subjects? Who organises this?
11. Are there any extra classes or lessons for matric learners where they can go and get an extra help? When, and in which grades and subjects? Who organises this?
12. Are there any extra learning materials provided for matric learners, above the basic textbook? What and in which subjects?
13. What professional development activities have you been involved in the past 3 years? Who ran this, what was the subject/pedagogic focus? Did anyone visit you at your school? Is anyone studying at the moment?
14. Can you tell me about the support you get from the education officials: subject advisors, circuit managers, and so on? Are there subject advisors? In which subjects? How often do you see the subject advisor from your district? What do they do when they see you? Do you have any discussions about how to teach particular topics in your subject?
15. What are you aiming for in terms of matric results this year at this school? Any subject focus or particular areas of weakness that you are targeting/working on?

Perceptions of effectiveness

16. a. In your opinion, how successfully has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme been implemented in your school/circuit?
b. Please provide examples to explain your answer.
17. a. Please describe anything that has made the implementation of the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme in your school/circuit that you are aware of.
b. What would you recommend to the government to make it easier to implement LAIS?
18. a. In your opinion, has the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme had an impact on learner academic performance at your school? Please explain your answer.

- b. Is the impact the same for all subjects, or do you think some subject benefits more than others?
19. What was the matric pass rate for the school in 2014, and 2013? And for each of your subjects? What are you aiming for this year in each of your subjects? (*gauge awareness and ownership of targets*)
20. Overall, would you regard the LAIS Grade 12 learner support programme at/for this school as a success? Why?

Recommendations for the future

21. How do you think the LAIS programme could be improved? What changes would you like to introduce?
22. Imagine you are the EC minister of education. You must decide how to spend the money to improve the results in the EC. What would you prioritise (order as 1, 2 and 3)?:
- Spending the money on extra classes or workbooks for learners (Spring schools, winter schools, Saturday classes)
 - Spending the money on professional development for teachers (courses and qualifications with school-based support)
 - Spending the money on curriculum advisors and more support from the district?
 - Another priority area?

General

23. Do you have any other comments to add?

Interview schedule for Grade 12 learners

These questions are for the evaluation of the LAIS intervention. I am not here to evaluate your school. Whatever you say will be used confidentially. I will not tell the district or the province the name of this school or the names of the principal or teachers or learners. In our report we just say: 'a school' that we visited. When we take photos we will not show the name or town of the school. We would like you to speak freely and honestly.

A. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- Tell me about your school – what kind of school is this? (*is it a good school?, what kind of learners come to this school?, would/ do you send your child to this school*)
- What are the achievements of this school which you are proud/pleased to tell me about?
- When the year starts, how long does it take to get the classes and timetable sorted out so you can start lessons with the teachers?

4. Each day, what time do learners come to school? What time does teaching start? When does school end?
5. Are there any problems with learners being late/ absent? What about teachers?
6. Tell me about what matric textbooks and workbooks that you have. Are they being used?
(ask to see them)
7. Are the parents / community involved in this school in any way?
8. Do you enjoy being a Grade 12 learner at this school? Why?

B. THE LAIS IN YOUR SCHOOL

NOTE: as these are new Grade 12s, the focus might need to be on what their friends and peers in the Matric 2014 group experienced and thought of LAIS

9. Have you heard of the LAIS Programme? If so, what is your understanding of what it is?
10. Do you know of any extra support that is organised for the matrics / Grade 12s at your school to help you pass? If so what is it?
 - e. Winter school
 - f. Spring school
 - g. Evening classes
 - h. Afternoon or early morning classes with teachers
 - i. Saturday classes
 - j. Extra materials / workbooks
 - k. Technology...
 - l. Training for teachers
 - m. Extra teachers in the class, teaching together...
11. Is the support for you the same for all subjects or do you get more support for particular subjects?
12. Do you get this support at your school, or must you go to another school?

Perceptions of effectiveness

13. What are you aiming for in terms of your matric results this year? *(gauge awareness of targets, if any subjects are mentioned as priority/ focus areas)*
14. What are you doing that is extra learning/work, (or what are you planning to do) to help with your studies this year, so you will pass and pass well?
15. Do you think the support you get for your matric studies is: enough, average, not enough?

16. Would you describe what is done by the school and district to support you as a matric, as: excellent, good, average, poor, or very poor?

Recommendations for the future

17. Do you want the extra support to continue? Why?

18. a. Is there anything that makes it difficult to participate in the Gr 12 learner support activities?

b. What do you suggest could be done so that more people participate?

19. Suppose you can advise the government. What, if anything, do you think they should change about the Gr 12 learner support programme to change in any way? What should the government do more, what should they do less?

20. Imagine you are the EC minister of education. You must decide how to spend the money to improve the results in the EC. What would you prioritise (Order as 1, 2 and 3)?:

n. Spend the money on extra classes for learners (spring schools, winter schools, Saturday classes)

o. Spend the money on professional development for teachers (courses and qualifications with school-based support)

p. Spend the money on curriculum advisors and more support from the district?

q. Another priority area?

21. Do you have any other comments to add?

Appendix 4: Case study school informed consent form

January 2015

Dear _____

LAIS EVALUATION: CASE STUDY SCHOOL

We are writing to inform that this school has been selected to part of the LAIS Evaluation being conducted by Kelello Consulting (see the attached letter from the Office of Premier).

There are 8 schools that have been selected as possible case studies, but only 4 will be included in the study and visited by a Kelello Consulting researcher. In this way the anonymity of the school will be guaranteed. The name of the case study school will not be included in any of the evaluation reports.

To participate in the evaluation you would need to allow a Kelello researcher - Garth Spencer-Smith – to visit the school for the following data gathering activities:

1. Interview the school principal;
2. Interview the head of the school SGB (if available);
3. Interview the district official who is the main contact with the schools relating to LAIS (this will typically be done at the district offices)
4. Conduct a focus group with the Grade 12 teachers at the school;
5. Conduct a focus group with 10 of the current Grade 12 learners (preferably those who have participated in LAIS activities);
6. Collect copies of the school's Grade 9 ANA assessment results (for 2011 – 2014)
7. Collect copies of the schools' matric results (for 2011 – 2014)

The case study school and all participants will remain anonymous, and feedback will be provided to the provincial department of Education, and Office of the Premier using pseudonyms or role descriptions (e.g. a teacher, a learner, a district official).

On the day of the visit, if your school is included as case study, you will be asked to complete the attached letter of agreement.

Your honest and constructive feedback on this programme is very important to inform future planning in the province. We look forward to working with you on this evaluation. Please be in contact with me if you require any further information.

Kind regards

Nicky Roberts (project leader)

Garth Spencer-Smith (project manager and chief researcher) 084 624 9803

SIGNED AGREEMENT: LAIS EVALUATION SCHOOL VISIT

I hereby consent to a Kelello Consulting researcher visiting the school to obtain evaluative feedback on the LAIS programme (pillar 2). I understand that this will entail a one day school visit during which time the researcher will:

1. Interview the school principal;
2. Interview the head of the school SGB (if available);
3. Interview the district official who is the main contact with the schools relating to LAIS
4. Conduct a focus group with the Grade 12 teachers at the school;
5. Conduct a focus group with 10 of the current Grade 12 learners (preferably those who have participated in LAIS activities);
6. Collect copies of the school's Grade 9 ANA assessment results (for 2011 – 2014)
7. Collect copies of the schools' matric results (for 2011 – 2014)

I understand that the research will be conducted ethically. All participants will be briefed on the project study, and their expected role in it and requested to participate in the study. The principles of voluntary, informed consent will apply. Every effort will be made to minimise any disruption to teaching and learning time. Data collected from the principal, SGM head, principal, teachers, learners and district officials will be kept anonymous in all research reports. The data collected will be kept secure by Kelello Consulting and destroyed after 5 years.

I am aware that we have the right to withdraw from the project, should we find that is not what we expected.

SCHOOL NAME: _____

DATE of VISIT: _____

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

SGB Head / representative

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

GRADE 12 TEACHERS²³ (SCHOOL: _____)

NAME	SIGNATURE

GRADE 12 LEARNERS

NAME	SIGNATURE

²³ The tables on the actual permission form had more rows (sufficient for all teachers and learners to sign their names). The number of rows has been reduced so as to allow the tables to fit on one page.

Appendix 5: List of South African projects supporting improved attainment for FET learners

The following table presents the 23 projects that focus South African interventions aimed at supporting FET learners. These were the projects found through the brief desk top scan undertaken for this evaluation.

NAME OF INTERVENTION	ORGANISATION RUNNING INTERVENTION	CONTACT NAME	GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	YEARS OF INTERVENTION	GRADE(S) TARGETED	SUBJECT(S) TARGETED	AREAS OF FOCUS OF INTERVENTION ²⁴	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Beyers Naude School Development Programme	JET/Kagiso Trust	Carla Pereira	Free State	2006- 2009	Gr 10- 12	Maths, Maths Lit, Physical Science, English FAL	Teacher Development	10 high schools
Bojanala Systemic School Improvement Project (BSSIP)	JET / NW DoE	Carla Pereira	The district of Bojanala (NW)	2009 - 2012	Gr 1 - 12	Maths, Maths Lit, Physical Science, English FAL (in FET)	teacher development	26 schools
Centres of Excellent Project	JET / EC DoE	Deva Govender	District of Mthawelanga (EC)	2009 - 2012	Gr 1 - 12	Maths, Maths Lit, Physical Science, English FAL (in FET)	teacher development	20 schools

²⁴ For the purposes of this summary, the foci of all interventions were grouped as one or more of the following: learner extra tuition; supply of resources; teacher development; learner mentoring; learner online materials

Dinaledi Schools	DBE		national	2001 - present	Gr 8 - 12	Maths; Phys Science; Life Sci and English (FAL)	teacher development; supply of resources	Dinaledi schools receive extra resources (e.g. Science lab kits; ICT hard- and software); teacher subject and pedagogic training; management training of mentoring. Approx. 500 schools (2013 figures)
Fundisa Maths and Science	Kutlwanong	Tumelo Mabitsela (MD)	national	2001 - present	teachers of Gr 10 - 12	Maths and Science	teacher development	2014: 17 centres around SA; over 380 teachers
Ikamva Youth tutoring	Ikamva Youth	Joy Olivier / Zoe Mann	branches in 5 provinces	2003 - present	Gr 8 - 12	all	learner extra tuition	10 branches; 1 200 learners (2014 figures)
Incubation Programme	GMMDU (NMMU)	Werner Olivier	Eastern Cape	2005 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths ; Physical Science	supply of resources; learner extra tuition	500 selected learners with potential from 70 schools
Inkanyezi Project	Zenex Foundation	Lettie Miles	KZN	2009 - 2013; 2014 - present	Gr 8 - 12; Gr 10 - 12	Maths, Phys Science, English (HL and FAL)	learner extra tuition; supply of resources; teacher development; learner mentoring	11 schools; 9 schools
Khanyisa Education Support Programme	JET / Limpopo DoE	Maureen Mosselson	Limpopo	2003 - 2009	Gr 1-12, FET Colleges	Maths, Maths Lit, Physical Science, English	teacher development; supply of resources	200 schools; multi-layered intervention (not specifically targeting FET)

						FAL (in FET)		
Maths and Science Learner Support	Penreach	David Gear	Mpumalanga (mainly in Lowveld)	1991 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths; Physical Science	learner extra tuition; teacher development	Shalamuka Science Discovery Centre
Maths Skills Upgrade	GMMDU (NMMU)	Werner Olivier	Eastern Cape	2009 - present	teachers of Gr 10 - 12	Maths	teacher development	1 300 in-service teachers (accredited content development)
Matric Intervention Programme / Matric Supplementary Tuition Programme	KZN DoE		KZN	2014	Gr 12	all gateway subjects and those with high enrolment	learner extra tuition	
Mind the Gap study guides	DBE		Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Limpopo	2012	Gr 12	Geography; Life Sciences; Accounting; Economics	supply of resources	
Promaths	Kutlwanong	Tumelo Mabitsela (MD)	national	2005 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths and Science	learner extra tuition.	2014: 17 centres around SA; over 6 500 learners
Quality Learning Project	JET / DBE		all of South Africa (selected districts)	2000 - 2004	Gr 8 - 12 (learners and teachers)	Maths; Languages (reading and writing)	learner extra tuition; supply of resources; teacher development	525 high schools in 17 districts (see case study for more information)

Science and Maths Enhancement Program	MIET Africa	Chris Ramdas	District: Zululand; circuit: Pongola (KZN)	2011 - 2014	Gr 12: Direct learner support; Gr 10-12: Support through teacher development & access to resources	Physical Science and Maths	learner extra tuition; supply of resources; teacher development	Learner (high flyers) enrichment programme; each “project learner” provided with scientific calculator, study guides & transport. Each year: 80 learners selected from 16 of the 32 secondary schools in the Circuit; approx. 60 Science and Maths Teachers; Approx. 3200 learners through teacher support and resource provision subsidy.
Science Skills Upgrade	GMMDU (NMMU)	Werner Olivier	Eastern Cape	2009 - present	teachers of Gr 10 - 12	Physical Science	teacher development	400 in-service teachers
Secondary School Improvement Programme	Gauteng DoE		Gauteng	2010 - present	Gr 8 - 12 (learners and teachers)	all main subjects	learner extra tuition; teacher development	62 000 Gr 12 learners (2014 figures). See case study for more information
Soweto Science Centre	Univ of Johannesburg	Azwinndini Muronga	Soweto (Gauteng)	2011 - present	Gr 10 -12	Maths; Physical Science; Life Science; English	learner extra tuition	

Teacher Mentorship programme	University of Pretoria		Tshwane (Gauteng)	2003 - 2006	teachers of Gr 8 - 12	Maths and Science	teacher development	
Thandulwazi Maths and Science Academy	St Stithians Foundation	Mahlati Khoza	Johannesburg (Gauteng)	2006 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths; Phys Sci; Life Sci; Acc; English (FAL)	learner extra tuition; teacher development	Saturday school (> 1 000 learners); teacher training workshops
Wits Maths Connect Project (learners' mentoring program)	Wits Univ	Femi Otulaja / Craig Pournara	Gauteng	2010 - 2012	Gr 9 - 11	Maths (and some Science)	learner extra tuition	160 learners supported & mentored by Wits Univ Maths students (2012 figures)
Wits Maths Connect Project (Maths transition)	Wits Univ	Craig Pournara	Gauteng	2012 - present	teachers of Gr 8 - 12	Maths	teacher development	Transition Maths course (8 x 2 days contact sessions) - Transition Maths 1 for Gr 8 - 10 teachers and TM2 for Gr 11 - 12 teachers; lesson study sessions in schools for 9 afternoons in a year

Appendix 6: List of free, online resources for FET learners

NAME OF INTERVENTION	ORGANISATION RUNNING INTERVENTION	CONTACT NAME	GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	YEARS OF INTERVENTION	GRADE(S) TARGETED	SUBJECT(S) TARGETED	AREAS OF FOCUS OF INTERVENTION ²⁵	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Dr Math	Meraka Institute (CSIR)	Adele Botha / Laurie Butgereit	national (online)	2007 - present		Maths	learner extra tuition (online)	real time support and assistance with Maths homework; accessed via Mxit; 25 000 registered users (2011 figures)
Everything Maths / Everything Science	Siyavula	Mark Horner / Megan Beckett	national (online)	2011 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths and Phys Sci (Gr 10-12); Maths Lit and Life Sci (Gr 10)	learner online materials	learner textbooks and teacher guides; ePubs zero-rated by Vodacom
Microsoft Math	Microsoft / SchoolNet	Angela Schaerer	national (online)	2010 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths	learner online materials	thousands of questions for learners; zero-rated by MTN
Mindset Learn	Mindset	John McBride / Johan Els	national (online)	2004 - present	Gr 10 - 12	all major subjects	learner extra tuition (online)	videos of teachers presenting CAPS-aligned lessons; summary notes. 1.5 million views in last 12 months

²⁵ For the purposes of this summary, the foci of all interventions were grouped as one or more of the following: learner extra tuition; supply of resources; teacher development; learner mentoring; learner online materials

MobiSchool	Vuselela		national (online)	2014 - present	Gr 10 - 12	Maths; Maths Lit; Phys Sci; Life Sci; Acc; English FAL	learner online materials	accessed via Mxit
Quizmax	Learning to the Max Foundation	Ian McDougall	national (online)	2011 - present	Gr 12	Maths; Maths Lit; Phys Sci; Life Sci	learner online materials	accessed via Mxit or Facebook; 260 000 registered users (2014 figures)
UkuFUNda Virtual School	DBE / UNICEF / Mxit Reach	Saadhna Panday	national (via mobile phone)	2014 - present	Gr 8 - 12	all subjects	learner online materials; supply of resources; teacher development	accessed via Mxit. Also offers counselling services and acts as a hub for learners, teachers, parents and department officials