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CDD-GHANA

Review of the Education Sector Medium Term Development Plan (ESMTDP) 2018-2021

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent that of the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BSTEM	Basic Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CDD-Ghana	Ghana Centre for Democratic Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
Eduwatch	Africa Education Watch
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESMTDP	Education Sector Medium Term Development Plan
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
ESPR	Education Sector Performance Report
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FSHS	Free Senior High School
JHS	Junior High School
GALOP	Ghana Accountability and Learning Outcomes Project
GES	Ghana Education Service
GETFund	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IGF	Internally Generated Fund
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KG	Kindergarten
MoE	Ministry of Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEA	National Education Assessment
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NST	National Standardized Test
PAs	Parent Associations

PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTRs	Pupil-Teacher Ratios
SDR	Student Desk Ratio
SMCs	School Management Committees
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SSR	Student to Seating Ratio
TLRs	Teaching and Learning Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

The review of the Education Sector Medium Term Development Plan (ESMTDP) 2018-2021 is a joint research project by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and Africa Education Watch (Eduwatch), with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office-UK (FCDO). The aim of developing this report is to influence the development of the next medium-term strategy of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The review was undertaken in eight (8) [deprived] rural districts and seven (7) [endowed] urban municipalities across the country, where primary data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) held with School Management Committees (SMCs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) targeting community, district, and national level stakeholders in the education sector.

The ESMTDP 2018-2021 was reviewed using the eighteen (18) indicators in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2021. The indicators are Kindergarten (KG) Net Enrolment Rate (NER); Primary-Junior High School (JHS) Transition; JHS Completion; Gender Parity Index (GPI); Proficiency in Maths and English; Trained Teachers' Deployment; SMC Participation; Capitation Grant Disbursement and Use; Implementation of the New Curriculum; Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) Pass Rates; School Buildings; Seating and Writing Facilities; Information Communication Technology (ICT) Facilities in Schools; Electricity in Schools; Textbooks' Availability; Water Supply in Schools; Financial Accountability and Basic Education Financing.

The deprived districts sampled were Sefwi Akontombra (Western North), Nkwanta South (Oti), Tatale Sanguli (Northern), Zabzugu (Northern), Tain (Bono), Bongo (Upper East), Nabdam (Upper East), and Ejura (Ashanti). In contrast, the endowed districts were Obuasi East Municipal (Ashanti), Ejisu Juaben Municipal (Ashanti), Adenta Municipal (Greater Accra), Ga-East Municipal (Greater Accra), Ledzokuku Municipal (Greater Accra), Ga West Municipal (Greater Accra), and La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal (Greater Accra). In all, sixty (60) schools were covered.

In addition, secondary data was collected through the analysis of MoE's Education Management Information System (EMIS) data, annual Education Sector Performance Reports (ESPR), and other relevant reports, including the National Education Assessment (NEA) reports.

Key Findings

Findings from the EMIS Desk Review enabled a broader analysis of the national picture by providing specific data for the relevant equity analysis of deprived and endowed districts. The research findings were organized under three broad themes, namely: Improved Equitable Access to and Participation in Inclusive Quality Education at all Levels; Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning and Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at all Levels; Sustainable and Efficient Management; and Financing and Accountability of Education Service Delivery. This was done purposively to align the study with the objectives of the ESMTDP.

Improved Equitable Access to, and Participation in Inclusive Quality Education at all Levels

As of 2021, KG NER stood at 89.3 percent, which was almost five percent less than the target of 94 percent set for the period. The performance represents a significant achievement because of the intervening impact of COVID-19 and its associated school closures and health and safety concerns during school re-opening. The absence of reliable NER data at the district level, prevented further analysis of the attainment of this target in the sampled deprived and endowed districts. However, 2020 data from the 75 GES-classified deprived districts indicates that the NER was 83.6 percent, at a time national level attainment was lagging at 71.4 percent, below the baseline (74.6 %).

The target for JHS completion for the period 2018-2021 was 92 percent, with a baseline of 75.2 percent in 2016/17 and national attainment of 83.1 percent by 2020/21[1]. However, the JHS completion rate was higher in sampled endowed districts[2] (162.73%) than the deprived districts (72.1%) by 2020/21[3]. The rate in deprived districts indicates a fall below the national average by about 16 percent, while that of the endowed districts superseded the national average by about 74 percent.

At the national level, the KG, primary and JHS achieved the indicative GPI target of 1, by 2020/21, indicating that there is an equal proportion of boys to girls enrolled at all levels within the basic education system. All the sampled endowed and deprived districts met the primary GPI with 1.04 and 1 respectively, however, with an index of 0.9 they missed the target for JHS.

The medium-term target for transition from primary to JHS transition, i.e., 99 percent, was not met by 2019/20. From a baseline of 94.3 percent in 2016/17, the national primary-JHS transition rate stood at 92.5 percent as of 2019/20. Further analysis in the sampled districts indicates a 15-percentage point difference in primary-JHS transition between endowed (97.8%) and deprived (82.8%) districts.

The availability and state of school infrastructure and facilities significantly affect enrolment, retention, and completion. The majority (58%) of participants in this research indicated that their buildings needed renovation, with 6 percent of respondents, all from deprived districts showing they required new school buildings as they were either under trees or sheds.

The recommended target for seating and writing is that every pupil at the basic level must have a seat and a table within the dual desk system, denoted by a ratio of 1. By 2021, the Student to Seating Ratio (SSR) and Student to Desk Ratio (SDR) reduced from 0.7 in 2016/17 to 0.6, indicating an increase in the percentage of students without desks and seats by 10 percentage points. At present, 40 percent of pupils do not have access to desks and seats in public basic schools compared to 30% in 2016/17.

Electricity supply to school is critical to the teaching and learning of STEM. From a baseline of 51 percent in 2016/17, the percentage of schools connected to the national grid increased to 60 percent in 2019/20. The findings indicate 89 percent of endowed districts have access to electricity as against 47 percent in deprived districts, highlighting the wide rural-urban gap in access to electricity.

1 Education Sector Medium Term Development Plan (ESMTDP) 2018-2021
2 A net of 162.73% is an example of the distortions in the EMIS data which requires remedy to enable a much more accurate measurement of outcomes.
3 EMIS Basic National Profile (2020/21)

There has been significant improvement in water supply to schools, with an increase from 42 percent in 2016/17 to 75 percent in 2019/20. Sampled deprived districts recorded remarkable improvements (74%) almost at par with the national level attainment.

Similarly, there was progress in providing urinal and toilet facilities in schools, especially toilets. The percentage of schools with toilet facilities increased considerably from a baseline of 65 percent to 74 percent in 2019/20, while the percentage for urinals increased marginally from 67 percent in 2016/17 to 69 percent in 2019/20. Noticeably, the sampled deprived districts recorded similar trends of 68 percent for urinals and 72 per cent for toilet facilities.

Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning and STEM at all Levels

In the area of quality, the study shows a marginal decrease in the national BECE pass rate from 76.03 percent in 2016/17 to 75.05 percent in 2020/21. However, the performance in sampled deprived districts increased from 64.21 percent in 2016/17 to 68.05 percent in 2020/21 after recording successive lower pass rates in 2018/19 (58.4%) and 2019/20 (59.6%). Conversely, that of the sampled endowed districts declined consistently from the 2016/17 baseline of 87.70 percent to 85.84 percent (2017/18), 85.39 percent (2018/19), 82.40 percent (2019/20) and 81.91 percent in 2020/21. The performance in the sampled deprived districts improved relative to endowed districts, evidenced in a reduced gap in performance from 23 percent in 2016/17 to 13 percent in 2020/21.

Similar disparities were recorded in the NEA reports of 2018. The study outcomes reveal a rural-urban divide in the distribution of proficiency levels in Maths and English. The results for Maths for Primary 6, disaggregated by deprivation status showed a mean score of 45 percent for endowed districts and 39 percent for deprived districts, representing a 6-percentage point difference. In comparison, the mean percentage difference in English proficiency for endowed and deprived districts stood at 11 percentage points as pupils in endowed districts scored 45 percent, and those in deprived districts had 34 percent.

The percentage of trained teachers is a key quality indicator in the ESMTDP 2018-2021. It targets 75 percent (KG), 84 percent (primary) and 96 percent (JHS) of teachers to be trained by 2021, from a baseline of 65 percent (KG), 76 per cent (Primary), and 88 per cent (JHS) respectively in 2016/17. By 2020/21, the percentage of trained teachers at the KG level stood at 92 while that of primary and JHS stood at 96 percent and 97 percent

respectively. Remarkably, there was a corresponding increase in trained teachers in the deprived districts from 65 percent in 2016/17 to 97 percent in 2020/21 for primary and from 83 percent to 97 percent for JHS, giving significant credibility to the government's teacher training and deployment policies.

Closely related is the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) for which the targets, 35:1 (KG), 35:1 (Primary), and 30:1 (JHS), were exceeded by 2019/20, a year to the end line, with KG recording 27:1, Primary – 26:1 and JHS – 12:1. PTR attainments in sampled deprived districts were similarly met for primary (30:1) and JHS (12:1), with that of KG lagging mildly at (39:1) by 2019/20, one year before the ESMTDP 2018-2021 end line.

On the other hand, endowed districts met all targets -KG (20:1), primary (26:1) and JHS (14:1). The improvement (decline) in PTR affirms an improvement in teacher deployment, especially in JHS where the number of teachers increased from 88,805 in 2016/17 to 111,019 by the 2019/20 academic year.

Nevertheless, class sizes of up to 80 were common features in sampled schools in Adentan, Ga West, and La Nkwantanang Madina municipalities, despite the surplus teachers and low PTR. The situation is due to the limited school infrastructure in urban areas, against increasing enrolment.
The introduction of robotics and coding in some schools and the provision of STEM equipment and training for teachers through the Basic STEM (BSTEM) intervention contributed to improvements in the teaching of STEM in the piloted schools.

The lack of ICT facilities in many JHSs pose a threat to STEM development, as only 65 percent of sampled basic schools had ICT facilities, with 50 percent located in schools in endowed districts. In comparison, the remaining 15 percent are in deprived districts. In all, only 38 percent of the available ICT laboratories are functioning. There must be a strategic effort to provide electricity or other forms of renewable energy to all JHS to enhance their participation in STEM.

Sustainable and Efficient Management, Financing, and Accountability of Education Service Delivery

SMCs play a critical role in ensuring efficient management and accountability in basic schools. The ESMTP 2018-2021 targeted 85 percent of schools with functioning SMCs and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) by 2019/21, to enhance community participation in school governance. While there is no data on SMC/PTA on the EMIS

platform, all 60 schools sampled in this study had SMCs, even though there were concerns about how active they were in the governance of their schools. Among the SMCs sampled, 75 percent indicated they did not have regular meetings. The change from PTA to Parents Associations (PA) has significantly weakened parental participation in school governance, as teachers were key mobilizers of PTAs. Developing a framework for PAs operation and subsequent orientation should rekindle their involvement in school governance and development.

Basic education funding continues to be insufficient and delayed. At the macro level, education expenditure as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product has declined from 5.4 percent in 2017 to 4.6 percent in 2020. Education expenditure as a percentage of public expenditure also declined from 21 percent in 2017 to 17.6 percent. At the micro (school) level, delays in the disbursement of the Capitation Grant to basic schools continue to affect teaching and school management. In addition to the delays in disbursing the Capitation Grant, the capping and partial securitization of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), which serves as the major infrastructure financing source for the basic education sub-sector, has weakened the government's ability to adequately construct and renovate basic schools.

The gap between national attainment and endowed districts on one side, and deprived districts on the other, continues to exist, despite marginal improvements over time. The study concludes that the absence of an equitable system for deploying and managing education resources accounts for the inequity, and therefore proceeds to make the following recommendations.

Recommendations

The next medium-term strategy should focus on adopting an affirmative approach to bridging the gap between endowed schools and deprived schools. The aim is to address and eliminate the disparities between urban and rural disadvantaged schools.

A targeted institutional, policy, budgetary, management, and operational structure should be put in place to support and supervise the provision of basic education in the 75 deprived districts.

Among the key actions that should drive efforts towards achieving the outcomes of the ESP 2018-2030 are:

Systemic

- Guided by an affirmative action principle, the MoE should develop a Purposive

Institutional Framework for managing education in deprived districts. The framework must include specific protocols for resource allocation to deprived districts, particularly teacher incentives and timetable for teaching and learning, a school infrastructure plan that incorporates teachers' accommodation, customized teaching supervision and monitoring systems.

- The MoE should review and expand the EMIS data collection system to capture all the indicators in the ESP. These include providing data on ICT facilities, SMCs and PAs, construction and renovation of schools, class PTR, separate toilet facilities for girls, and source of water in schools among others.
- The EMIS system should separate data and analysis of indicators of endowed and deprived districts to determine the attainment of targets across national, endowed, and deprived districts and their annual variations for policy action.

Policy

- The MoE should prepare and implement a responsive basic education infrastructure plan that takes cognisance of the distance commuted to school, urban population growth trends, large class sizes in urban areas, primary schools without JHS and KGs, and related issues.
- The MoE must initiate discussions with the Ministry of Finance on uncapping the GETFund and make resources available for education infrastructure development, especially at the basic level.
- The MoE should evaluate the outcomes of the BSTEM pilot and organise a stakeholder review to determine if it is an effective strategy for teaching STEM in basic schools.
- The MoE, in collaboration with the Regional Coordinating Councils, should innovatively engage corporate and religious bodies to leverage opportunities for a harmonized funding of the procurement and distribution of school furniture nationwide.
- The process for absorbing JHS established by non-state actors into the Ghana Education Service (GES) must be decentralized and expedited.

The MoE/GES must initiate a national conversation on the responsibility and relevance of teacher accommodation to their deployment and retention in deprived districts.

Local governments and communities play a critical role in this process.

- The MoE must prioritize ongoing efforts to operationalize the rural allowance for teachers with a specific road map indicating timelines for action.

- Based on a National Teacher Rationalization Policy, the MoE must implement a deliberate policy that allows the GES to allocate existing teachers who are excess to labor requirements to schools in need.
- The GES must publish teacher postings and transfer lists on their website to enable Civil Society to track compliance and promote transparency.
- The MoE/GES must review the financing framework for the Capitation Grant and model it on a more regular and predictable funding source.
- The GES should collaborate with partners to develop a framework and strengthen the capacity of PAs to demand accountability.
- The MoE/GES must fast-track the procurement of textbooks for primary schools and JHS to ensure that all primary schools and KGs have textbooks in the new curriculum in the 2021/22 academic year, with JHS textbooks ready in the 2022/23 academic year.
- The GES should standardize and control the conduct of extra classes, which has become more of a norm than an exception, despite its prohibition.
- The MoE should explore Corporate Social Responsibility partnerships to finance and develop basic education infrastructure.
- The procurement of school infrastructure must strictly follow an approved school design by MoE which incorporates single-sex toilet facilities, urinals, electricity, and water connectivity.
- Basic education infrastructure targets under the next medium-term plan should be increased to realistic levels, considering the existing wide gap in basic school infrastructure, particularly between primary and JHS. This is a pre-requisite if progress is to be made in improving primary to JHS transition.
- Development Partners must support actions to build awareness, stimulate participation and social accountability among multi-stakeholders, including Parliament, local government, and Civil Society on the next medium-term plan.
- The MoE must develop a framework to mainstream the outcomes of interventions like the Ghana Accountability and Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP) into policy, ensuring sustainability and impact beyond the project's lifeline. This includes mechanisms to ensure the timely release of learning grants to schools and teacher accountability systems.

Limitations

The analysis of national attainment of targets in the ESMTDP 2018-2021 were limited to indicators measured in EMIS. Where indicators did not find expression in EMIS, the study relied on data collected from the 60 sampled schools, which does not represent the

entire basic education sector, and other published reports of the MoE and agencies, some of which were not current.

There were data quality issues with EMIS, including enrolment and completion data in deprived districts, limiting the measurement of some indicators within a three-year period (2018-2020). Finally, changes in data sets hampered the analysis of trends in attainments for some indicator targets. For instance, the definition of teachers in EMIS changed in 2020/21 to exclude teachers who were not on GES payroll, reducing statistically, the number of teachers by over 30,000, and making it difficult to compare with 2017/18 to 2019/20 where EMIS defined teachers as all who were teaching and managing teaching in schools, irrespective of their employer within the public space.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

CDD-Ghana, with support from FCDO, is implementing a new project titled: Promoting Accountability in the Medium-term Interventions and Outcomes in the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 (ESP 2018-2030). The project seeks to assess the outcome of government policies and programs, related to basic education, implemented within the first 4 years of the ESP 2018-2030.

The ESP 2018–2030 is the third in a series of education strategic plans that have been produced since 2000 (i.e., ESP 2003–15; ESP 2010–20; and now 2018–30) and follows from the ESP 2010–2020. The 2018 Education Sector Analysis identifies several challenges in basic education, including an inequitable distribution of teachers, education resources and learning outcomes against deprived districts, gender disparity, and equitable access.

Other inequities exist when looking at gender parity at a regional level. Completion rates vary substantially by income and region, with those from the lowest income quintile less likely to complete JHS than those from the highest income quintile[4]. Also, wide variations in learning outcomes exist across regions and by gender. In particular, the five northern regions perform poorly in the BECE compared to the national capital - the Greater Accra Region, and these effects are exacerbated when looking at gender disparities by region, where results are skewed against girls in all four core subjects.

Resource constraints worsen the situation due to government prioritization of secondary education. Basic education's share of the education budget has declined from 55 percent in 2018/19 to about 41 percent in 2020, limiting investments in the sub-sector.

In 2018, the MoE developed the ESP 2018-2030 to direct actions that would ensure learners in educational institutions are equipped with the skills, competencies, and awareness that will make them functional citizens who can contribute to the attainments of national goals. At the basic education sub-section, the objective is to ***improve equitable access to quality basic education.***

To operationalize the plan, an ESMTDP 2018-2021 was developed under the auspices of the National Development Planning Commission, in collaboration with the MoE with the objectives of:

[4] Ministry of Education. Education Sector Analysis, 2018.

- Increasing equitable access to and participation in education at all levels
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning at all levels, and
- Improving the management of education service delivery

In the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the ESP 2018-2030 and the ESMTDP, there are output, and outcome level indicators geared towards achieving the overall objective of improving equitable access to quality basic education and learning outcomes. There are indicators for measuring progress against targets, key of which are those related to enrolment, transition, completion, proficiency, school governance, teacher quality and deployment, teaching and learning resources, school infrastructure, and financial management.

In 2021, the implementation of the ESMTDP ended after four years of strategies and policies in line with its policy objectives and the overall goal of the ESP 2018-2030. This necessitated the development of another ESMTDP for the next four years, i.e., 2022-2025.

In order to define the strategic direction of the next ESMTDP, it is required to examine the implementation progress of the previous ESMTDP 2018-2021 in order to resolve to develop and persistent gaps in furtherance of the overall policy objectives and aims of the ESP 2018-2030.

The report is a qualitative and quantitative assessment of progress and challenges in the implementation of the ESMTDP 2018-2021 (the first four years of the ESP 2018-2030). It uses evidence from fifteen districts (a mix of endowed and deprived) and national-level data from EMIS, to provide information to influence policy actions and strategic priorities in developing the next ESMTDP.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design is guided by the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the attainment level of key targets in the ESMTDP 2018-2021
2. To examine the existing inequities in the attainment of targets in the ESMTDP
3. To make recommendations to improve the attainment of key targets in the ESMTDP 2022-2025

The study adopts the Comparative Case Study of schools in selected deprived and endowed communities in Ghana. The Case Study assesses the state of schools in eight(8) [deprived] rural districts and seven (7) [endowed] urban municipalities in Ghana. The Comparative Case Study design helped the researchers understand the drivers of inequitable access and quality gaps identified in the analysis of statistical data on education outcomes, and how to sustainably address them from the policy level. Also, there were five (5) district-level and three (3) regional-level stakeholders' engagements for the report validation, as well as an Executive Briefing meeting with the Minister of Education. Inputs from these engagements provided further understanding of the issues and their peculiarity to enable the researchers to provide policy prescriptions.

The ESMTDP spans 2018-2021, with the baseline and end-line being 2016/17 and 2020/21 academic years respectively. This report tracks the attainment of indicators from 2016/17 to 2020/21 using statistical analysis and case studies from the field discussions and observations. However, the non-availability of EMIS data in 2020/21 on some output and outcome indicators occasioned the limitation of some of the analyses to 2019/20 academic year. Selected outcome level indicators in the ESP were tracked to review the performance of the MoE within the context of the ESMTDP 2018-2021 and in cognizance of the activities and targets outlined in the ESMTDP 2018-2021 (reference Table 1).

Data Collection

A mixed-method approach to data collection (i.e., qualitative and quantitative approaches) was adopted for the study to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject matter from stakeholder experiences from communities, schools, and the stakeholder community while appreciating the macro-level picture through national-level statistical data. The following types of data were collected for the study:

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected from secondary sources, through the analysis of the EMIS data, Education Sector Performance Reports, and other relevant reports, including the NEA reports. Findings from the EMIS desk review enabled a broader analysis of the national picture while providing specific data for the relevant equity analysis for deprived and endowed districts. Data analyzed from the EMIS covered 2016/2017 – 2020/2021[5].

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was mainly gathered from primary and secondary sources- FGDs with SMCs and KIIs with community, district, and national level stakeholders in the education sector.

Sampling

The sampling procedure for selecting the districts relied on the GES classification of deprived districts among the 261 districts in Ghana. Eight (8) deprived districts and seven (7) endowed municipalities were purposively selected to aid in comparing equitable attainment of targets in deprived districts and endowed districts. The selection considered the geographical and geo-political factors, with districts being selected from seven (7) regions.

Four schools were then randomly selected within each of the selected districts, where FGDs and interviews with key informants were held. All schools in the deprived districts are low-performing schools under GALOP. The following districts and municipalities were selected from the Western North, Oti, Northern, Upper East, Bono, Ashanti, and Greater Accra regions.

[5] 2021/2022 EMIS data had not been released at the time of the study.

List of Deprived Districts:

- Sefwi Akontombra (Western North)
- Nkwanta South (Oti)
- Tatale Sanguli (Northern)
- Tain (Bono)
- Bongo (Upper East)
- Nabdam (Upper East)
- Ejura Sekyedumase (Ashanti)
- Zabzugu (Northern)

List of Endowed Districts:

- Obuasi (Ashanti)
- Ejisu Juaben (Ashanti)
- Adenta (Greater Accra)
- Ga-East (Greater Accra)
- Ledzokuku-Krowor (Greater Accra)
- Ga West (Greater Accra)
- La Nkwantanang Madina (Greater Accra)

What was Tracked?

Specifically, the following output and outcome indicators in the ESMTDP 2018-2021 and the ESP 2018-2030, were tracked within the basic education sub-sector:

1. KG Enrolment
2. Primary-JHS Transition
3. JHS Completion
4. Gender Parity
5. Proficiency in Maths and English
6. Trained Teacher's Deployment
7. SMC/PTAs Participation in School Governance
8. Capitation Grant Disbursement and Use
9. Implementation of the New Curriculum
10. BECE Performance

11. School Buildings
12. Seating and Writing Facilities
13. ICT Facilities in Schools
14. Electricity in Schools
15. Textbooks Availability
16. Water Supply in Schools
17. Financial Accountability
18. Basic Education Financing

Table 1: Selected Indicators for the ESP 2018-2030/ESMTDP 2018-2021

Indicators		Target for 2021
KG NER		94%
Gender Parity	Primary	1.0
	JHS	1.0
Primary – JHS Transition		99%
JHS Completion		92%
Proficiency in Math and English	P4 Math	30%
	P4 English	45%
	P6 Math	32%
	P6 English	44%
Trained Teachers' Deployment	KG	75%
	Primary	84%
	JHS	96%
Pupil Teacher Ratio	KG	35:1
	Primary	35:1
	JHS	30:1
Basic Schools with Functioning SMC/PTAs		85%
Availability of Textbooks, Teaching & Learning Resources (TLR)		1:3
BECE Performance		More than 50% PASS in all Core Subjects
School Buildings	KG	336 new buildings
	Primary	324 new buildings
	JHS	437 new buildings
Electricity in Schools		No Targets
Water Supply in Schools		No Targets
Urinal		No Targets
Toilet Facilities		No Targets
ICT Facilities in Schools	Primary	40%
(% Primary Schools with Computers and Internet for Teaching)	JHS	60%
Financing, Financial Management, and Accountability		No indicators
Capitation Grant Disbursement and Use		No indicators

Limitations

The analysis of national attainment of targets in the ESMTDP 2018-2021 were limited to indicators measured in EMIS. Where indicators did not find expression in EMIS, the study relied on data collected from the 60 sampled schools. There were data quality issues with EMIS, including enrolment and completion data in deprived districts, limiting the measurement of some indicators to the first three-years of the ESMTDP 2018-2021 (2018- 2020). Finally, changes in data sets hampered the analysis of trends in attainments for some indicator targets. For instance, the definition of teachers in EMIS changed in 2020/21 to exclude teachers who were not on GES payroll, reducing statistically, the number of teachers by over 30,000, and making it difficult to compare with 2017/18 to 2019/20 where EMIS defined teachers as all who were teaching and managing teaching in schools, irrespective of their employer within the public space.

Chapter 3

FINDINGS

Introduction

The strategic goal of the basic education section of the ESP 2018-2030 is to ensure all children enjoy improved equitable access to and participation in quality basic education. Three major policy objectives operationalize the goal in the ESMTDP 2018-2021:

- Improve equitable access to, and participation in inclusive quality education at all levels
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and STEM at all levels
- Sustainable and efficient management, financing, and accountability of education service delivery

This section ascertains the attainment of the key targets in the ESMTDP 2018-2021 and examines existing inequities between deprived and endowed districts and national-level attainment.

Policy Objective 1: Improved Equitable Access to and Participation in Inclusive Quality Education at all Levels

Indicators monitored under equitable access and participation include those related to enrolment, transition, completion, and infrastructure. This is because access is incomplete until one enrols and completes the entire course of basic education. To determine the levels of attainment, the assessment processes focused on the NER, Gender Parity, Primary-JHS transition, JHS completion, the number and state of classrooms, desks, water and toilet facilities, and electricity.

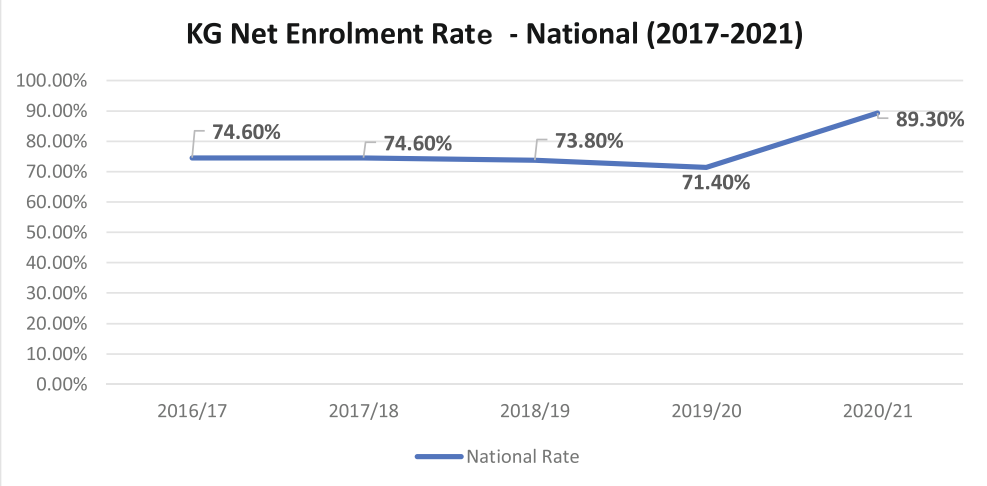
Kindergarten Enrolment

The KG-NER is the percentage of children aged four years enrolled in KG 1 to commence basic education. The ESMTDP targets an increase of 94 percent for the period 2018-2021 from a baseline of 74.6 per cent in 2016/17. In Figure 1, the national attainment as of 2021, stood at 89.3 percent, indicating a significant move towards achieving the target, which was missed by five percentage points.

The performance represents a significant achievement because of the intervening impact of COVID-19 and its related school closures and health and safety concerns within school re-opening. The GES's Back to School Campaign, which has been in effect since 2020, has had a significant impact.

The absence of reliable NER data in 2020 and 2021 at the district level, limited analysis of the attainment of this target in the sampled deprived and endowed districts. However, Figure 2 presents 2016/17 to 2019/20 data from the 75 GES-classified deprived districts. It indicates a NER of 83.6 percent, at a time national attainment was lagging at 71.4 percent, below the baseline (74.6 %).

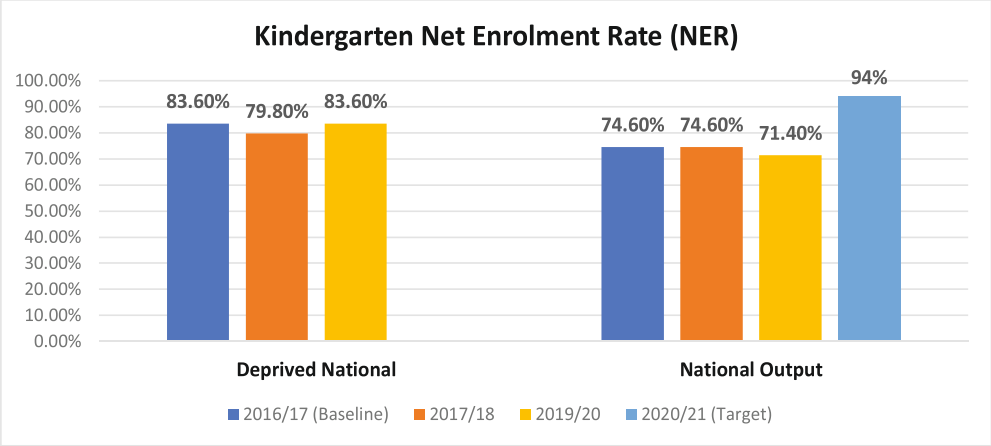
Figure 1: National KG Net Enrolment Rate (2017-2021)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Discussions with parents and teachers in deprived and endowed districts indicated that, more children of school-going age enrolled in KG compared to the period before 2018, an indication that enrolment in KG has been increasing steadily.

Figure 2: KG Net Enrolment for deprived districts versus national (2016/17-2020/21).



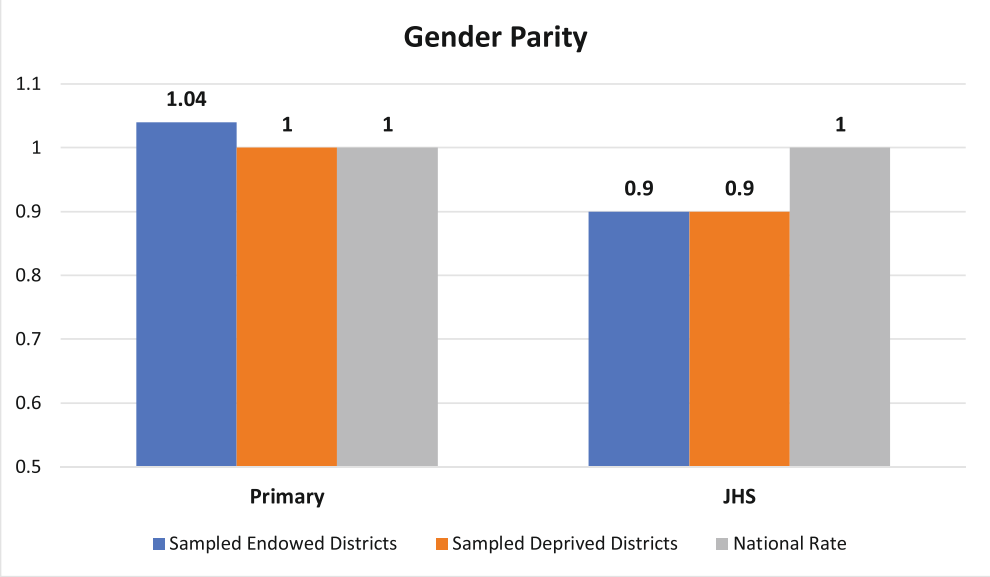
Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Among the key factors attributed to increased enrolment in deprived districts is the School Feeding Program. In contrast, large class sizes, inadequate KG attendants/assistants, and poor/lack of school infrastructure continue to hinder progress in achieving the target for the NER in the ESMTDP. The prioritized operationalization of the Early Childhood Policy by providing public nurseries and KGs is critical to ensuring children enrol in school at the right age to achieve the NER target in the next medium-term plan.

Gender Parity

The gender parity target of 1 across all levels of basic education by 2020/21 seeks to achieve an equal ratio of girls to boys in school. A value less than 1 indicates a disparity in favor of boys, with a greater than 1 co-efficient signifying a disparity in favor of girls. By 2020/21, as depicted in Figure 3, the national attainment at KG, primary and JHS was 1, in line with the target, indicating there is an equal proportion of boys to girls enrolled at all levels within the basic education system. In the sampled endowed districts, the primary GPI was also met (1), similar to the national attainment, unlike that of JHS (0.9).There were, however, slight GPI positive and negative disparities in deprived districts at primary and JHS. While the primary GPI (1.04) exceeded the national target, indicating more girls than boys, that of JHS (0.9) fell slightly below the target, similar to the GPI in endowed districts (0.9). District stakeholder engagements revealed the efforts of the Girls Education Unit and partners aimed at ensuring girls' enrolment and re-entry to school, contributed significantly to the GPI improvements recorded at all levels.

Figure 3: Gender Parity attainment (2020/21)



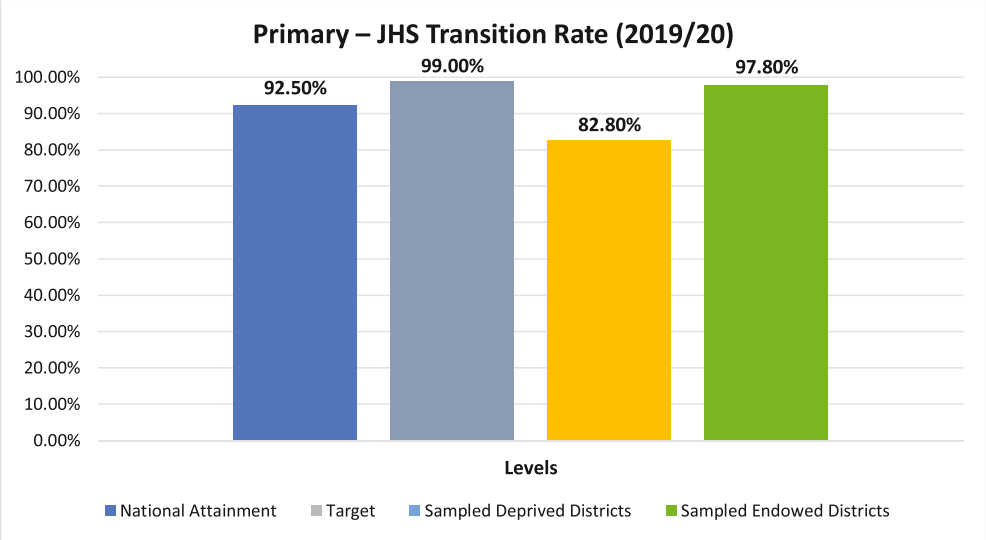
Source: MoE, EMIS 2020/21

Primary – JHS Transition

The transition from primary to JHS is critical to the completion of basic education. The medium-term target for Primary-JHS transition was 99 percent, with a baseline of 94.3 percent in 2016/17. While the 2021 end-line data for Primary-JHS transition is not available, (with reference to Figure 4), as of 2019/20, the national rate for transition to JHS was 92.5 per cent. Further analysis of the transition rate in the fifteen sampled deprived and endowed districts indicates that, between 2018-2020, the average primary- JHS transition rate for endowed districts was 5.3 percentage points higher (97.8%) than the national average (92.5%). That of the deprived districts was 82.8 percent, also below the national average rate (92.5%) by 10 percentage points.

A difference of about 15 percentage points existed in primary-JHS transition rates between sampled deprived and endowed districts mainly due to the distance traveled to JHS. For instance, about 60 percent of primary schools in the Northern Region lacked JHS, forcing pupils to commute an average of ten kilometers to school daily, eventually affecting transition.

Figure 4: Primary to JHS Transition Analysis (2019/20)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2019/2020

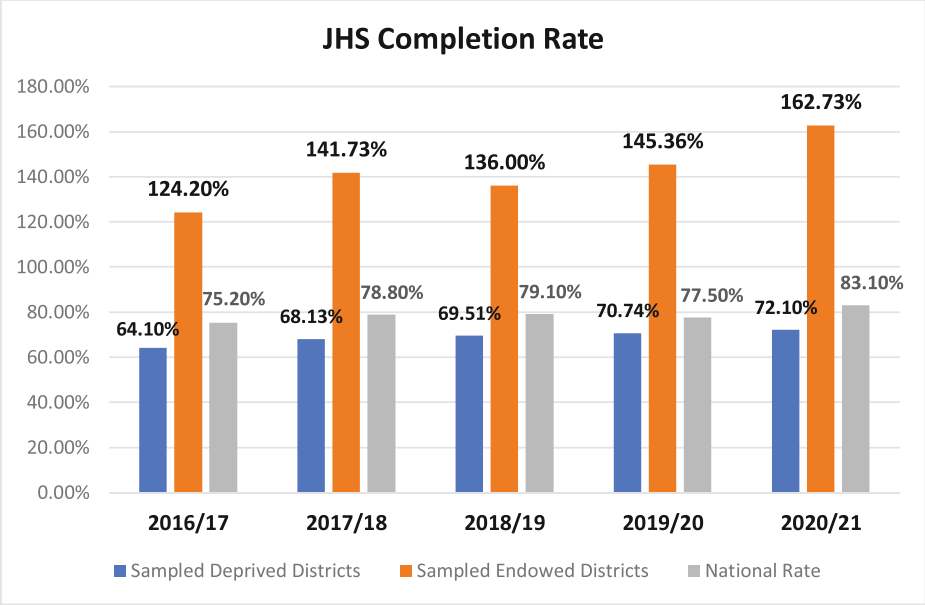
The Lack of JHS and Low Primary-JHS Transition

The poor primary-to-JHS transfer rate is due to the availability or lack thereof of JHS. In 2020, about 57 percent of a total national deficit of 4,008 JHS were identified in 75 deprived districts, with the Northern Region being the most affected by having the greatest (20%) share of the deficit. Some 60 percent of primary schools in the region did not have JHS within the approved radius of up to five kilometers. A related analysis of primary school data reveals that communities with primary schools without JHS havelower transition rates (70%) than communities with both primary and JHS (81%). It also affirms that distance travelled to school has negative consequences on retention, especially in rural communities where transport networks are under-developed.

JHS Completion

The target for JHS completion for the period 2018-2021 was 92 per cent, with a baseline of 75.2 per cent in 2016/17. The national attainment as shown in Figure 5 is 83.10 per cent in 2020/21 making the target one of the critical equitable access ones that were not attained.

Figure 5: JHS Completion Rate (2016/17-2020/21)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 to 2020/21.

However, the JHS completion rate was higher in sampled endowed districts (162.73%) than in the sampled deprived districts (72.1%) in 2020/21[6]. The rate in the sampled deprived districts fell below the national average by about 11 percent, while that of the endowed districts superseded the national average by about 91 percent, as presented in Figure 5. In all the sampled endowed districts, the Completion Rate was more than 100 percent, suggesting distortions in the age-specific population data.

It emerged from the FGDs held in the sampled endowed districts that there were instances where JHS enrolment, and for that matter, completion, increased because parents of private school students enrolled their wards at JHS 2 to benefit from the 30 percent 'protocol' allocation for basic school JHS graduates in Category A schools during Senior High School (SHS) placement. Further research into JHS 2 and 3 enrolment data gives a better clarity to this claim, since EMIS does not provide class disaggregated data.

[6] EMIS Basic National Profile (2020/21)

Infrastructure and facilities

Classrooms

The availability of decent education infrastructure, including classrooms, desks, single-sex toilet facilities, determines to a large extent whether children will enrol and remain in school in all communities. Eduwatch's recently published study into deprivation and learning outcomes in Ghana indicates that most parents in deprived communities did not just enrol their children in school but preferred to take them along to the farm because of the deplorable state of their classrooms[7].

Medium-term targets for infrastructure included:

- Construction of 336 new KGs
- Construction of 324 new Primary Schools
- Construction of 437 new JHS
- Refurbishment of a total of 372 dilapidated KGs, primary and JHS

The analysis of infrastructure attainment focuses only on the newly constructed school buildings because EMIS does not capture data on refurbished schools.

Table 1. Number of New Basic School Buildings Constructed (2017/18 to 2020/21)

	Target	Achievement from 2018-2021	Variance
KG	336	795	236%
Primary	324	700	216%
JHS	437	864	197%

Source: MoE, EMIS 2018-2021

Table 1 presents an analysis of new school buildings constructed between 2017/18 and 2020/21. Over the period of review, 795 KGs, 700 primary schools and 864 JHS were added to the national stock, exceeding all the targets by 236 percent, 216 percent and 197 percent respectively. In as much as significant progress has been made beyond the infrastructure targets for the medium-term, continuing at this targeted pace would be too slow a response to the urgent infrastructural deficits in the sub-sector. For instance, the pace of constructing 864 JHS, which translates into 216 per annum, may take at least eighteen years to achieve parity in the number of primary and JHS, as some 4,000

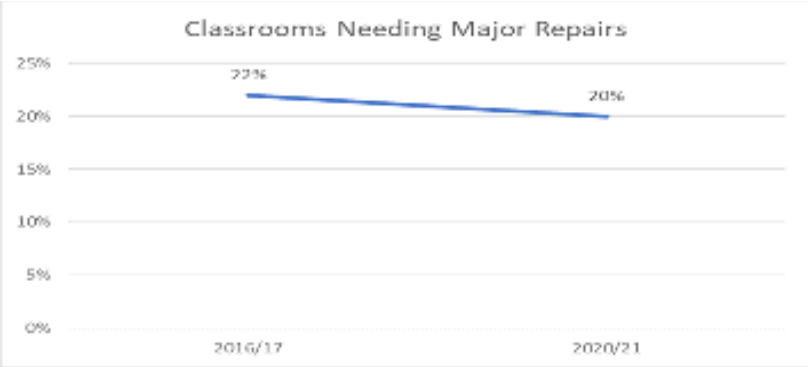
[7] Africa Education Watch: A study into the extent of deprivation in basic schools in deprived areas and its impact on learning outcomes. 2021

primary schools remain without JHS, especially in deprived parts of the country. The need for responsive infrastructure targets is critical for the next medium-term plan.

The number of classrooms needing major repairs is another useful determinant of the state of education infrastructure captured under EMIS. An analysis of EMIS data over themedium-term period indicates that the percentage of school buildings needing major repairs only reduced from 22 percent in 2016/17 to 20 percent in 2020/21, mainly in deprived districts across the country, as depicted in Figure 6. Evidence from the field affirms the GES report that there are over 5,400 schools under trees, sheds, and dilapidated structures at the basic level[8]. While classrooms in endowed districts were relatively in good condition, poor ventilation and lighting were identified as defects in the buildings in both sampled deprived and endowed districts.

The current situation is the result of a gradual decline in basic education's share of the education sector expenditure from 55.7 percent in 2008 to 41 percent in 2020, limiting infrastructure investments. In 2017, Parliament passed the Earmarked Funds Capping and Realignment Act, 2017 (Act 947), which capped the GETFund at 25 percent. The capping of the GETFund and its partial securitization has exacerbated matters, leaving very little for Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) allocation in the education budget to finance infrastructure. In 2021, 60 percent of the GETFund was allocated for debt servicing, with only about 4 percent going to basic education.

Figure 6: Classrooms Needing Major Repairs (2016/17 & 2020/21)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 & 2020/21

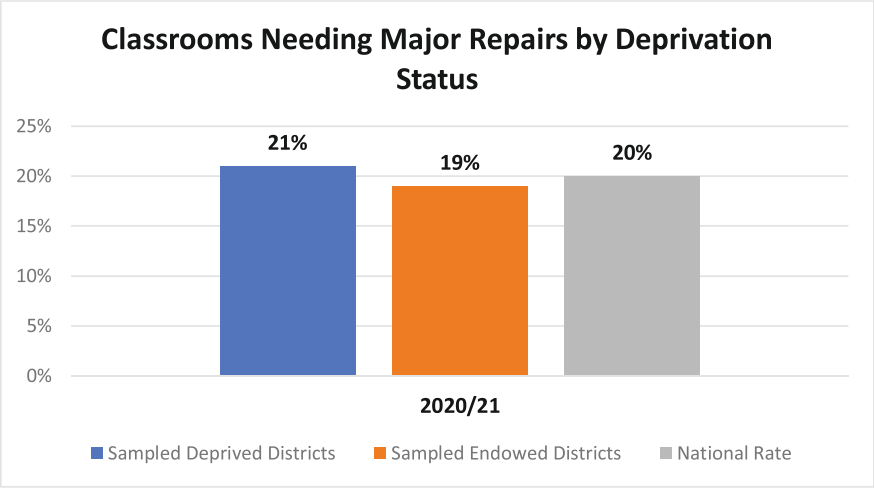
[8] MoE. Retrieved from https://ges.gov.gh/2021/06/04/valco-trust-fund-launches-project-to-remove-schools-under- trees/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=valco-trust-fund-launches-project-to-remove-schools-under-trees

Respondents in 58 percent of sampled schools described the state of their classrooms as "Manageable" while 27 percent, 9 percent, and 6 percent described theirs as "Good," "Very Good," and "Poor" respectively. Buildings described as "Manageable" required minor renovations of roofing, doors, windows, and painting. All the 6 percent of classrooms described as "Poor" were located in the deprived districts either under sheds or trees.

The study observed abandoned classroom projects by both government and non-governmental projects in 7 percent of schools surveyed. For example, projects in Teshie Salem JHS in Ledzokuku, Yawkrom D/A Basic School in Sefwi Akontonbra, and Nkwantanang Cluster of Schools in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal, have been abandoned for up to ten years.

EMIS data for sampled deprived and endowed districts, as portrayed in Figure 7, indicates a marginal difference of almost two percent between the number of classrooms needing major repairs in the sampled deprived districts (21%) compared to the national average (20%), and that of endowed districts (19%)[9]. This suggests that deprivation of basic school infrastructure was not restricted to only deprived districts. Nonetheless, the magnitude of deprivation is slightly higher in deprived districts compared to endowed districts.

Figure 7: Classrooms Needing Significant Repairs by Deprivation Status (2020/21)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2020/21

[9] EMIS Basic National Profile (2020/21)

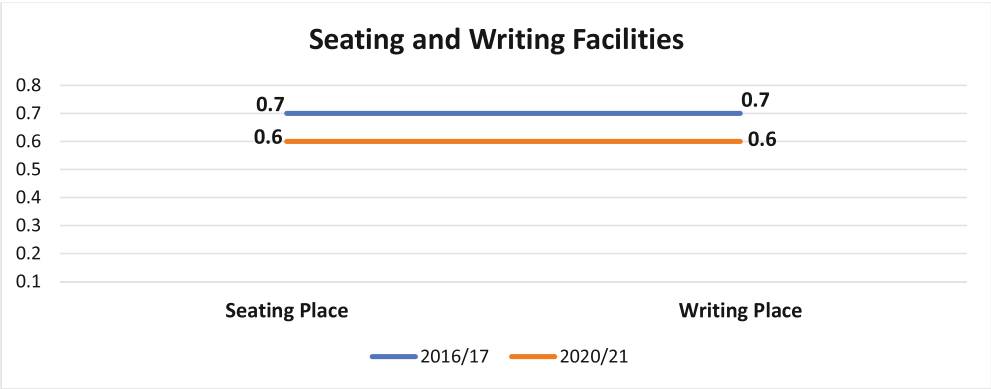
There were, however, cases of completed JHS sponsored by religious organizations that had been waiting for years to be absorbed into the GES system. At a regional stakeholder engagement in the Ashanti Region, faith-based organizations expressed worries about the bureaucracies involved in passing established JHSs to the GES.

Moreover, the current absorption process for JHS, which happens at the GES headquarters is very cumbersome, unlike that of the primary school, which is decentralized to the regional level. Consequently, these completed JHSs are unable to go through the absorption processes and are either run as private schools or remain obsolete for years.

Seating and Writing Facilities

The general target for seating and writing is a ratio of 1, meaning every student at basic school must have a seat and a table within the dual desk system. The national baseline for Student to Seating Ratio (SSR) and Student Desk Ratio (SDR) are both 0.7 (i.e.,70%)[10], indicating that some 30 percent of pupils did not have access to a desk and a seat.

Figure 8: Seating and Writing Facilities (2016/17 & 2020/21)



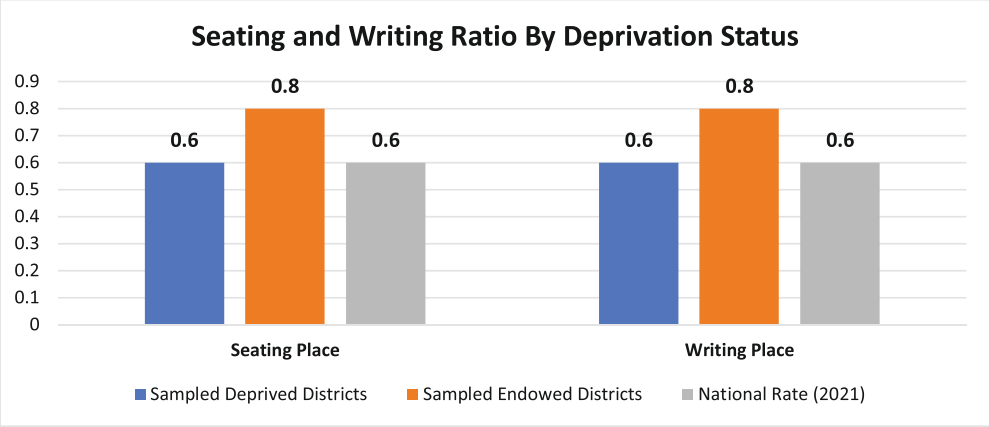
Source: MoE, EMIS, 2016/17 & 2020/21

By 2020/21, both SSR and SDR reduced from 0.7 to 0.6, indicating an increase in the percentage of students without desks and seats by 10 percentage points. Specifically, 40 percent of pupils did not have access to desks and seats in public basic schools as indicated in Figure 8. The issue of seats and desks requires a coordinated strategic

[10] EMIS Basic National Profile (2016/17)

approach, involving the MoE/GES, private sector, local government, and traditional authorities, especially in districts where there are timber resources. In addition, a national framework for mobilizing corporate donations would be useful.

Figure 9: Seating and Writing Facilities by Deprivation (2020/21)



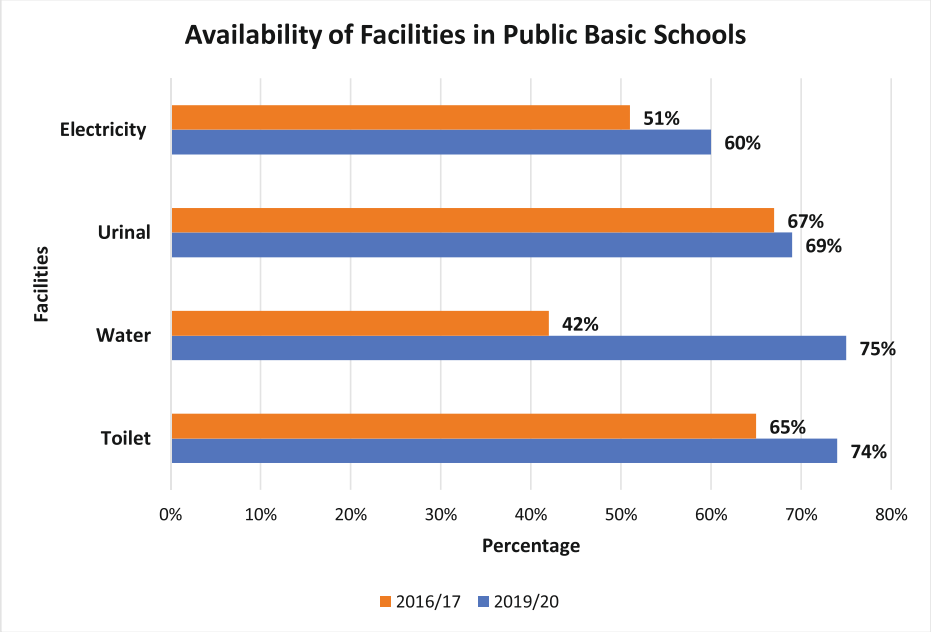
Source: MoE, EMIS, 2020/21

Additional analysis to ascertain the disparity in access to seats and desks between national level, sampled deprived and endowed districts indicates that, while there were no disparities between the seating and writing places available in deprived districts versus the national level, as depicted in Figure 9, there were wide disparities between deprived and endowed districts sampled for this report. For both seating and writing places, as of 2020/21, the difference between the average for deprived districts (60%) and endowed districts (80%) was 20 percentage points.

Electricity in Schools

Even though the ESMTDP 2018-2021 captured electricity, water, and sanitation facilities in its M&E Framework, no specific targets were set. The context for reviewing progress on these indicators is based on improvements measured by availability, relative to the baseline in 2016/17, as presented in Figure 10. Inadequate data availability in the 2020/21 EMIS data limited the analysis of attainment to the 2019/2020 academic year. Compared with the baseline rate of 51 percent in 2016/17, the percentage of schools connected to the national electricity grid increased to 60 percent in 2019/20.

Figure 10: School Facilities (2016/17 & 2019/20)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 & 2020/21

The average rate for the endowed districts sampled was 89 percent, while that of deprived districts sampled stood at 47 percent. It was further observed that in some schools with electricity connectivity, funds for the procurement of pre-paid electricity credits were an issue due to the delayed release of the Capitation Grant. The average one percentage point growth in electricity connectivity to schools since 2017 is very slow, considering that Ghana's electricity coverage was about 85.9% by 2020[11]. This suggests there are some schools without electricity connectivity but located in communities connected to the national grid.

One strategy to minimize growing the number of schools without electricity is to incorporate electrical connectivity into school infrastructure procurement in localities connected to the national energy grid.

Water Supply in Schools

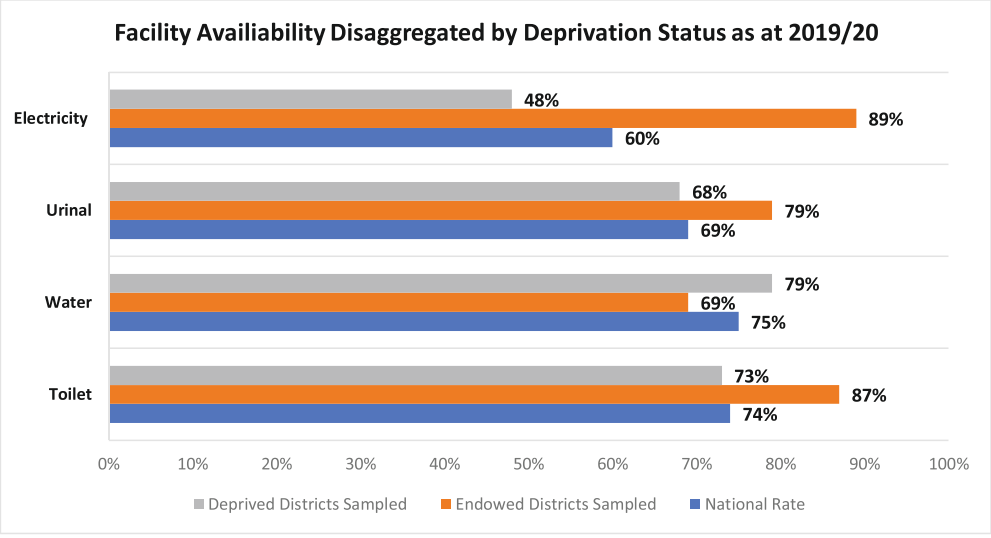
There was a significant improvement in the water supply to schools. Regarding Figure 11, at baseline in 2016/17, only 42 percent of basic schools had a regular water supply. However, this increased to 75 percent in 2019/20[12], indicating the government's commitment to improving WASH facilities in schools. Surprisingly, deprived districts

[11] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=GH

[12] EMIS Basic National Profile (2016/17 & 2019/20)

(79%) outperformed the endowed districts (69%) by 10 percentage points, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: School Facilities Disaggregated by Deprivation Status



Source: MoE, EMIS 2019/20

Notwithstanding, there were schools like Nsawkaw Methodist JHS in the Tain District and Nahuyili JHS in Tatale Sanguli where pupils walked two kilometers to the nearest community to buy water for the school. There were also instances where schools in the endowed districts had to depend on purchased water from vendors for use in school, as in the case of Nii Otto Kwame III M/A Basic School in the Ga East Municipal.

Urinal and Toilet Facilities

Appreciable efforts have been made in improving access to urinal and toilet facilities in schools. From a baseline of 67 percent (urinal) and 65 percent (toilet) in 2016/17, the provision of urinals in public basic schools marginally improved to 69 percent and that of toilet facilities significantly improved to 74 percent in the first three years of the ESMTDP as referenced in Figure 11. However, there remain about a third of basic schools without urinal and toilet facilities, a situation that requires policy and local-level attention.

The situation of schools without toilet facilities and urinals is the result of the existence of many school designs, some of which do not include single-sex toilet facilities and urinals during procurement. This is fuelled by the existence of various procurement entities in the basic education infrastructure space- District Assemblies, GETFund, CSOs, religious bodies, Development Authorities, private sector companies etc. A deliberate policy to harmonize school infrastructure design in line with the national building code would help the MoE streamline the infrastructure sub-sector by ensuring only approved school designs are constructed, irrespective of the procurement entity.

Beyond availability, there are issues with separate toilet facilities and changing rooms for girls and boys. While all schools visited had separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, there were instances where some toilets were shared with the community. It is important that EMIS captures data on single sex-toilet and urinal facilities, in line with the indicators in the medium-term plan, to enable a much more detailed assessment of progress under this indicator.

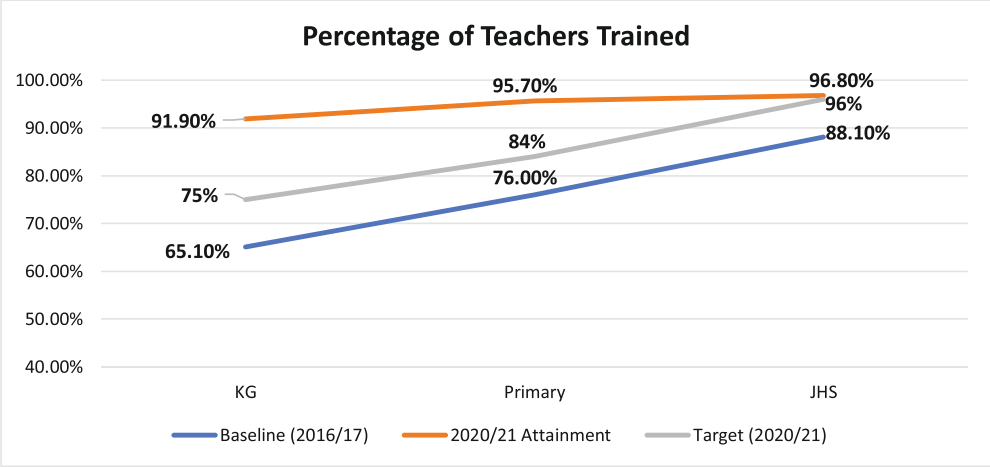
Policy Objective 2: Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning and STEM at all Levels

Indicators related to teaching and learning outcomes and STEM are analysed in this section of the report. They include trained teacher deployment, teacher quality, availability of teachers and TLRs, English and Math proficiency levels, and BECE pass rates.

Deployment of Trained Teachers

The quality of teaching is a product of quality instruction delivered by trained and competent teachers; this explains why the deployment of trained teachers is a crucial indicator of quality in the ESMTDP 2018-2021. From a baseline of 65 percent (KG), 76 percent (Primary), and 88 percent (JHS) in 2016/17, the ESMTDP 2018-2021 targeted 75 percent, 84 percent, and 96 percent trained teachers by 2021. By 2020/21, the targets for KG, primary and JHS were exceeded by 16 percent, 11 percent, and 0.8 percent respectively, with 91.9 percent (KG), 95.7 percent (Primary), and 96.8 percent (JHS) recorded, as depicted in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Percentage of Teachers Trained (2016/17 & 2020/21)

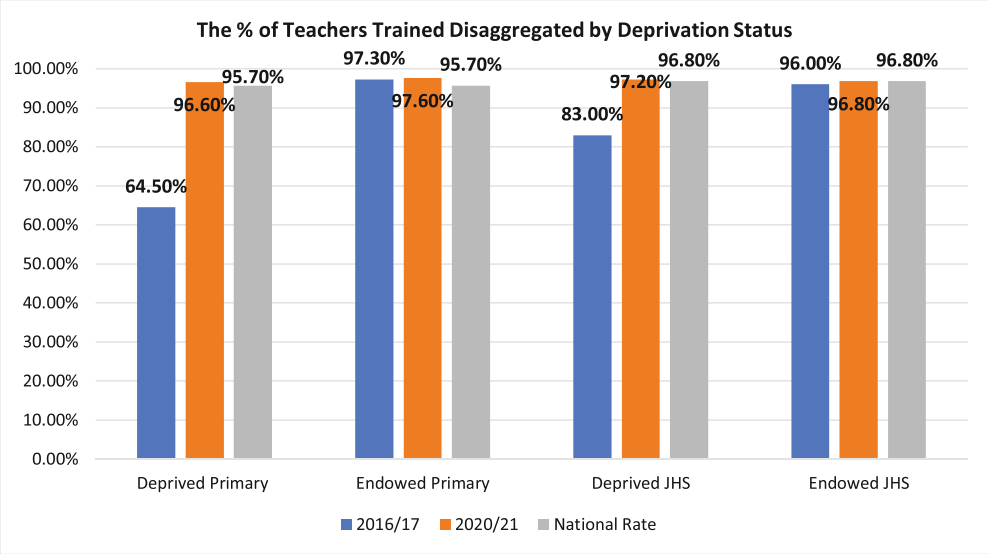


Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 & 2020/21

An analysis of the percentage of teachers trained in primary and JHS in the fifteen (15) sampled deprived and endowed districts, as presented in Figure 13, indicates the average trained teachers in deprived districts improved from 51 percent in 2016/17 to about 97 percent in 2020/21, consistent with trained teacher levels in endowed districts (97%) which are higher than the national average of 96 percent. The appreciable progress made in increasing the percentage of teachers trained across deprived and endowed districts confirms the effectiveness of the government's in-service and pre-service teacher training and upgrading interventions, especially the distance education programs providing opportunities for existing untrained teachers to upgrade.

However, there are still thousands of teachers in urban schools who are surplus to labor needs, while many rural primary classrooms lack teachers. According to MoE's EMIS, as of 2019/20, Adentan Municipal, with only 18 primary schools had 362 teachers while Zabzugu District with its 55 primary schools (three times that of Adentan) had only 260 teachers, over a hundred less teachers. To improve teacher deployment efficiency, GES must be deliberate in re-distributing teachers through a national teacher rationalization exercise.

Figure 13: Comparison of Teachers Trained in Sampled Deprived and Endowed Districts (2016/17 & 2020/21).



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 & 2020/21

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Associated with the increased percentage of trained teachers is the number of teachers per pupil. The PTR measures the average number of pupils a teacher handles in a class. The targets for PTR by 2020/21 are 35, 35, and 30 for KG, primary and JHS respectively. A review of PTR attainments using 2020/21 EMIS data was not possible due to the change in the definition of the data set at the end year to exclude other non-GES teachers. As of 20116/17, and within the first three years of the medium-term plan (2018-2020), the definition of a teacher by EMIS included teachers under GES, National Service Scheme, Nation Builders Corps etc., amounting to over 10% of the total number of teachers (30,000). Their exclusion from the statistic poses measurement issues for the PTR, hence the need to use 2019/20 data for accurate measurement.

It is worth noting that, three years into the ESMTDP, EMIS recorded PTR of 27 (KG), 26 (primary) and 12 (JHS), exceeding the 2020/21 set targets. Further analysis of the PTR in deprived districts in 2019/20 reveals a PTR of 39 (KG), 30 (primary) and 12 (JHS), withthe primary attainment meeting the set targets and JHS missing out narrowly. The highest PTR was recorded in KGs in the sampled deprived, indicating the need for more teachers in KGs as enrolment increases as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: PTR Analysis (2016/17 to 2019/20)

Level	No. of Teachers (2016/17)	No. of Teachers (2019/20)	National PTR		Endowed Districts PTR	Deprived Districts PTR
			2016/17	2019/20	2019/20	2019/20
KG	42,941	46,895	30	27	20	39
Primary	110,433	125,094	30	26	26	30
JHS	88,805	111,019	14	12	14	12
Total	**242,179**	**283,008**				

Source: MoE, EMIS, 2016/17 to 2019/20

There were significant variations in the distribution of PTRs in endowed and deprived schools, manifesting in very high Class-PTRs and class mergers.

High urban class-sizes

Field visits to endowed schools like Ashiyie Model School in Adentan Municipal and Sarpeiman M/A Basic School in Ga East Municipal revealed class sizes of up to 85 in primary and JHS. This situation, which is common in many urban public basic schools, exists because of the limited school infrastructure, as the growth of public schools continues to lag urban population growth. Between 2010 and 2021, while the population of Greater Accra grew by about 36% (from 4.01 million[13] to 5.45 million[14]), there was only an 11% increase in the number of public basic schools in the Region. In a fast- growing lower middle-class municipality like Adentan where the population increased from 78,000 to 111,000 between 2010 and 2021[15], the number of public primary schools has only increased by 4% in the past ten years[16].

A remedy deployed by GES in overcrowded urban schools visited (in Adentan, Madina, Ga East etc.) was the practice of placing two teachers in one large class, where one focuses on teaching with the other handling class assignments. However, this only lessens the burden on teachers without necessarily improving the pedagogy, as the maximum number of pupils required to facilitate effective instruction and pedagogic practice is 35.

[13] https://statsghana.gov.gh/gsscommunity/adm_program/modules/downloads/get_file.php?file_id=27

[14] https://census2021.statsghana.gov.gh/

[15] https://adma.gov.gh/

[16] Africa Education Watch, Briefing Paper on Education Privatization in Ghana, 2021

Classrooms without Trained Teachers

There were 100,577 trained teachers (excluding school heads) teaching in 92,346 primary school classrooms nationwide, portraying a national surplus of 8,231 trained teachers at the primary school level in the year 2020. In deprived districts, only 26,251 trained teachers (excluding school heads) were handling the 31,500 primary school classrooms, depicting a trained teacher deficit of 5,24917. While there are in most cases, two teachers handling the largest class sizes in urban and peri-urban schools, this does not in any way water down the issue of over-concentration of teachers in urban schools to the detriment of rural deprived schools.

A field visit to the Beo Sapooro KG/Primary School in Bongo District of the Upper East Region revealed only five teachers were handling eight classrooms despite very high enrolment levels. Also, there were schools in deprived districts like Tatale Sanguli and Nkwanta South where two to four teachers handled the entire JHS, with class mergers being common at the primary level, due to a mix of teacher and infrastructure deficits.

Regional and district level stakeholder validation engagements on this report revealed political interference in the centralized teacher posting and transfer processes, as a major contributory factor. The situation of teacher availability is dire in communities where teacher accommodation is a challenge, compounded by the poor incentivisation of rural postings, as both urban and rural teachers (including those in deprived communities) receive the same salary and allowances.
While monitoring by Civil Society to ensure accountability in teacher deployment is crucial to achieving equitable distribution and re-distribution of teachers, this has been largely ineffective due to the lack of information on teacher postings.

Standard-Based Curriculum

A major target of the ESMTDP 2018-2021 was to develop and implement a comprehensive standard-based basic school curriculum to improve learning achievement in basic (foundational) skills areas referred to as the 4Rs (- Reading, wRiting, aRithmetic and cReativity). The development of the Standard-Based Curriculum and Assessment framework were undertaken through a consultative process and eventual approval by Cabinet in 2019, leading to the roll-out of the KG and primary school curriculum in the 2019/2020 academic year.

[17] Author's calculations from 2020 EMIS data of the Ministry of Education, based on a standard of one teacher per primary classroom and one headteacher per primary school.

This was preceded by the training of teachers, headteachers and School Improvement and Support Officers and the distribution of resource packs to facilitate the transition. In addition, various training interventions have been delivered to enhance teacher pedagogic capacities in the new curriculum such as instituting Professional Learning Communities in schools and Continuous Professional Development Day. As part of the process to establish proficiency baselines, a National Standardized Test (NST) was administered in Basic 4, within the context of the National Pre-Tertiary Curriculum Assessment Framework to serve as a diagnostic test to inform teaching and strategy.

While the timelines for implementing the KG and primary curriculum were met in the 2019/20 academic year, that of JHS delayed till 2022, creating a situation where pupilswere taught with the Standard-Based Curriculum in Primary 6 only to graduate to JHS 1 to be instructed in the old curriculum. This incoherence, in addition to the lack of textbooks, after two years of its roll-out-out constitutes a major setback to the effective implementation of the Standard Based Curriculum.

The expected outcomes of the Standard Based Curriculum continue to be threatened by large urban class sizes averaging 50 for the Greater Accra region and up to 100 in municipalities like Adentan, Ga West, Ga North, Weija Gbawe and Kpone Katamanso. For instance, schools like AdMA Model Basic School, (Ashiyie, Adentan); Oyibi Presby Primary (Kpone Katamanso) and Umraniya Islamic Basic School (Ga South) are recording between 80 to 100 pupils in a class18. This situation is a result of the inadequate classrooms in urban schools, occasioned by low investments in basic education infrastructure relative to population growth over time, even as the region enjoys a teacher surplus19. Such large class sizes cannot permit the use of participatory and creative pedagogical approaches required for the effective implementation of the Standard Based Curriculum.

Textbooks

Textbooks are critical to the teaching and learning process in schools. The ESMTDP 2018-2021 aimed to acquire and distribute textbooks for primary and secondary schools (in accordance with revised curriculum) and ensure that the Core Textbook–Pupil Ratio was improved to or maintained at 3:1 at primary and 4:1 at secondary.

The Plan also emphasized the need to develop and enforce the policy on textbook procurement, distribution, and use. While textbook development for KG and primary schools was completed with approvals by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment by 2021, there are still no textbooks were available for use in the new curriculum, a year thereafter. The MoE missed its own deadlines in August 2021 and

March 2022, citing quality assurance and procurement delays, with a recent new deadline being set for the delivery of textbooks for KGs and primary schools by September 2022. There is no official communication on whether the development of textbooks for JHS has even commenced.

The lack of textbooks in basic schools remain the weakest link in the on-going education reforms, as it has a strong tendency to negatively affect teaching, learning, and learning outcomes, especially in poor-performing public basic schools where parents cannot afford textbooks and supplementary reading materials. The situation affects instruction, as teachers sometimes must copy passages from their resource packs on the blackboard or dictate for pupils to write at a pace that makes inefficient use of time on tasks. Related to textbooks is the issue of inadequate or unavailable learning materials relevant to the teaching and learning process, especially in deprived communities.

Social Interventions - Exercise Books and Uniforms

Under the ESMTDP 2018-2021, social intervention programs to provide school uniforms, free sandals, exercise books for selected individuals, schools, districts, and regions, according to the targeting, were earmarked with the program commencing in the five northern regions. These interventions were in apparent response to the lack of basic education inputs like exercise books in poverty-endemic-deprived communities, which affected schools. Respondents from deprived districts, including those from the northern regions complained that the lack of exercise books for some children made teaching and learning ineffective, as they could not participate. Except for sampled schools in Tatale-Sanguli where some uniforms were received from the District Assembly, no school received any of the other two items in all the sampled deprived districts and neither did any of the other key informants suggest otherwise.

STEM

Improved access to, and quality of STEM education at the basic school level is crucial to improving STEM proficiency. The ESP 2018-2030 and ESMTDP 2018-2021 target to achieve a science to humanity programmes ratio of 60:40 by 2030. While this target aims at the secondary and tertiary levels, it cannot be achieved without developing an interest and proficiency in STEM at the basic level. One key activity under this target is to use ICTto promote teaching and learning in basic schools, introduce robotics and coding into JHS in a phased approach (through the implementation of the Basic STEM program), and support the promotion of STEM subjects to girls through the Girls Education Unit.
The MoE has procured teaching and learning materials for Science, Maths and ICT which

[18] Africa Education Watch (2021). Ghana COVID-19 Partial School Reopening: Case studies from schools
[19] Author's analysis of 2021 EMIS data in Greater Accra

were supplied to the selected beneficiary BSTEM schools to aid the teaching and learning of BSTEM related subjects (Maths, Science and ICT). Also, MoE through its BSTEM program has introduced Robotics and Coding in 100 selected Basic Schools and organised training for selected basic school teachers. By 2020, a total of 200 teachers had benefited from the BSTEM training. A scale-up strategy, based on comprehensive evaluation is critical for the next medium-term strategy.

ICT Facilities in Schools

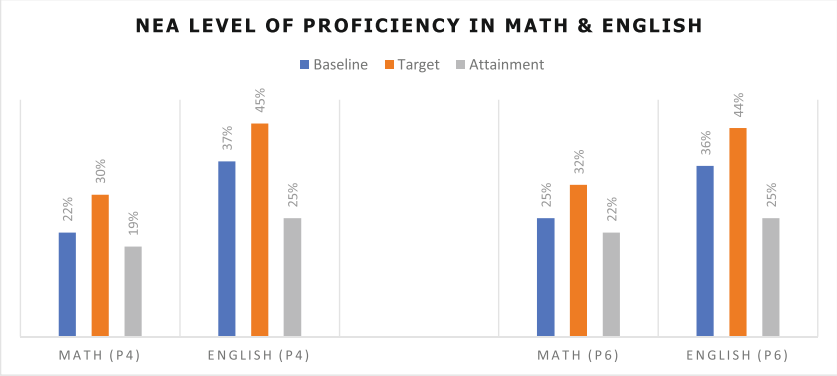
Computer laboratories are key to the teaching and learning of Computing and related subjects. The ESP 2018-2021 subsequently underscored the pedagogic relevance of computer laboratories and the availability of internet in basic schools. From a baseline of 4 percent (primary) and 10 percent (JHS), the ESMTDP 2018-2021 determined to achieve a 40 percent and 60 percent computer laboratory with internet connectivity for primary schools and JHS respectively by 2021. However, there was no national-level data in EMIS that captured ICT facilities as of 2020.

This study, in ascertaining the availability and state of ICT facilities in the sixty schools sampled across the fifteen districts, observed that, 65 percent of basic schools had ICT facilities. Out of this, 64 percent of schools were from endowed districts with 36 percent emerging from sampled schools in deprived districts. However, out of the 65 percent with computer laboratories, only 38 percent were functioning, with the remaining either obsolete, lacking accessories or without furniture.

Proficiency

The ESMTDP 2018-2021 did not provide any specific targets for proficiency levels in Maths and English by 2021. The targets for proficiency in Maths and English were set for 2019/20 with Primary 4 having 30 percent and 45 percent for Maths and English respectively. While the last NEA was conducted in 2018, (may not constitute a fair yardstick for measuring proficiency levels by the end of 2020/21), it provides some useful leads about trends that require remedial policy action pending the release of the NST results for 2021.

Figure 14: Maths and English Proficiency Levels 2018 - NEA

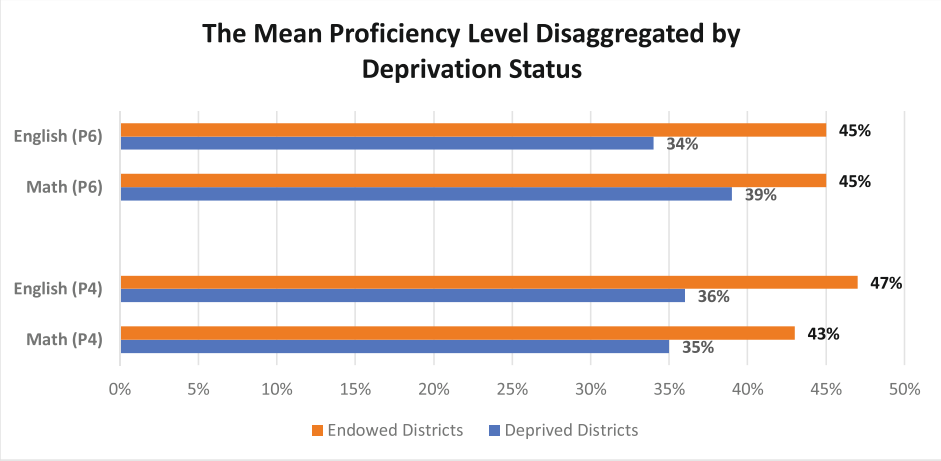


Source: MoE-NaCCA, National Education Assessment Report, 2018

Per Figure 14, at Primary 4, the NEA report of 2018 recorded 19 percent and 25 percent proficiency levels in Mathematics and English respectively. These are far below the set targets with the performance in Maths (19%) sliding even below the baseline of 22 per cent.

Unlike the previous issues, the 2018 NEA Report undertakes a disaggregation based on deprived and non-deprived districts. As presented in Figure 15, the mean[20] proficiency level in Maths for non-deprived districts (43%) is 8 percentage points higher than for pupils from deprived districts (35%). Similarly, for English, the mean percentage difference in proficiency between pupils from non-deprived districts (47%) and deprived districts (36%) was 11 percentage points.

Figure 15: Mean Proficiency Levels for Deprived and Endowed Districts



Source: MoE-NaCCA, National Education Assessment Report, 2018

The medium-term targets for Primary 6 proficiency in Maths and English are 32 percent and 44 percent respectively by 2019/20. There was no target for 2021. The latest NEA report (2018) indicated that, performance in Maths (22%) and English (25%) were far below the set target by 10 percent and 19 percent respectively with the results for English and Maths still falling below their respective baseline rates of 36 percent and 25 percent. Furthermore, Primary 6 disaggregation by deprivation status showed a mean score of 45 percent for non-deprived districts and 39 percent for deprived districts in Maths; representing a 6-percentage point difference.

[20] The mean average of scores in Math and English

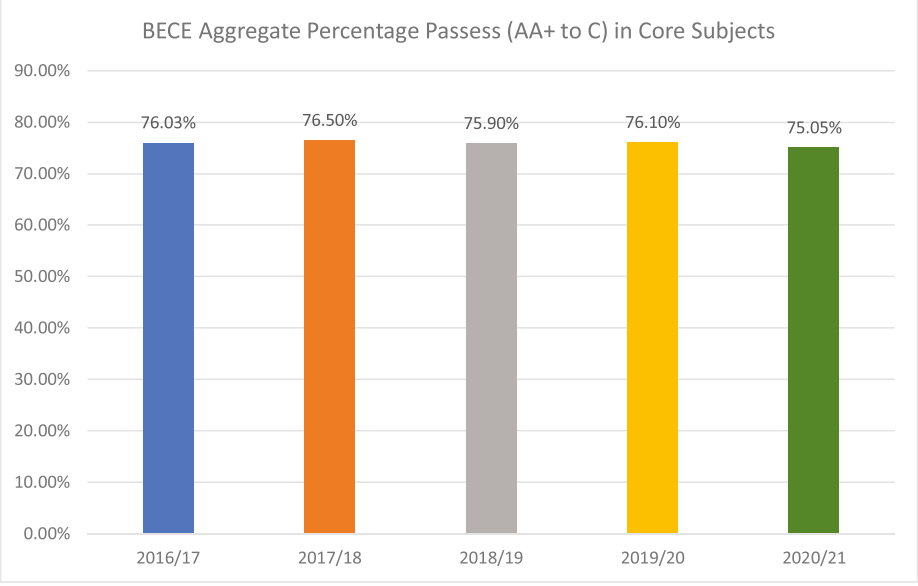
In English, the mean percentage difference for pupils in endowed districts (45%) and pupils in deprived districts (34%) also showed an 11 percentage points difference, confirming the rural-urban divide in the distribution of learning outcomes. Key challengesaffecting Maths and English proficiencies include ineffective teaching strategies resulting from lack of content mastery or pedagogical skill on the part of some teachers, lack of textbooks, and well-resourced libraries.

BECE Performance

The BECE is a key measure of learning outcome in the basic education sub-sector. Even though the medium-term indicator was to achieve more than 50 percent of candidates scoring more than 50 percent in all core subjects, no specific targets were made in the four-year period. In addition, data on specific scores of candidates are not available in the EMIS. However, EMIS has data on the BECE pass rate which is relevant to this review.

An analysis of the BECE pass rate indicates a national pass rate of 76.03 percent with subject baselines of 75.60 percent (English), 76.40 percent (Maths), 76.00 percent (Social Studies) and 76.10 percent (Science) in the 2016/17 academic year before the inception of the ESMTDP 2018-2021. By 2020/21, the national pass rate declined marginally to 75.05 percent, as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: BECE Pass Rate Analysis (2016/17 to 2020/21)

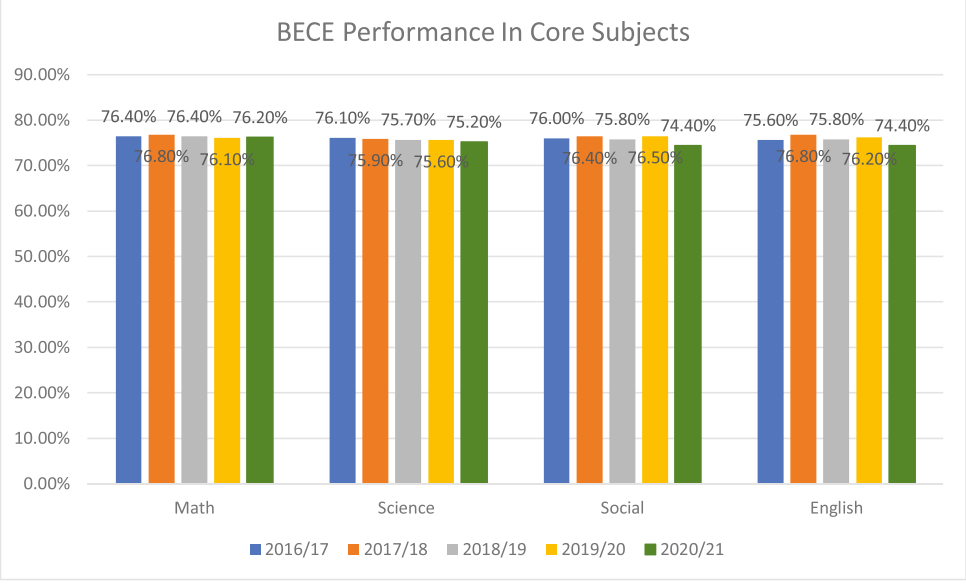


Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 to 2020/21

Subject analyses show that, with the exception of Maths, where the end line performance increased somewhat from 76.2 percent in 2016/17 to 76.4 percent in 2020/21, the end line performance in Science (75.20 percent), English (74.40 percent), and Social Studies (74.40 percent) remained unchanged (74.40 percent). As demonstrated in Figure 17, the 2016/17 baselines of Science (76.1%), English (75.6%), and Social Studies (76%) all showed a decrease from the 2016/17 baselines. This is not too encouraging considering the significant progress made in improving teacher quality. However, negating factors, including the lack of textbooks, inadequate teacher availability, poor teaching supervision, and lack of conducive learning environments in some schools are likely to negatively affect student performance and must be addressed.

The study further observed the BECE performance of Ejura/Sekyedumse (Ashanti) and Sefwi Akontonbra (Western North), two sampled deprived districts, were above the national and endowed districts' average. While Ejura/Sekyedumse recorded a pass rate of 97.5 percent in 2019/20 and 95 percent in 2020/21, Sefwi Akontonbra scored 96.5percent in 2019/20, with a marginal decline to 89 percent in 2020/21, all above the national average (76% for 2019/20 and 75% for 2020/21) and endowed districts average (82.4% for 2019/20 and 81.9% for 2020/21).

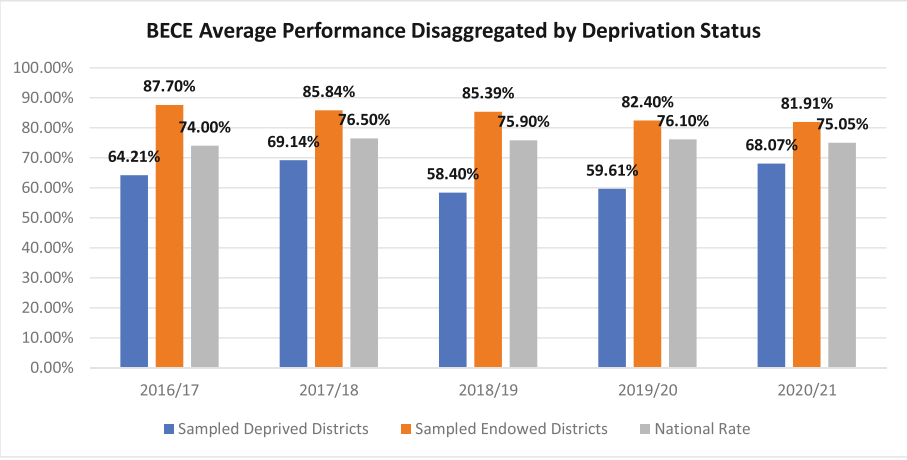
Figure 17: BECE subject Pass Rate Analysis (2016/17 to 2020/21)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 to 2020/21

Contrary to the national trend, significant gains were made in the sampled deprived districts, with the BECE pass rate increasing from 64.21 percent in 2016/17 to 68.05 per cent in 2020/21 after recording successive lower pass rates in 2018/19 (58.4%) and 2019/20 (59.6%). During the same period, that of sampled endowed districts declined consistently from the 2016/17 baseline of 87.70 percent to 85.84 percent (2017/18), 85.39 percent (2018/19), 82.40 percent (2019/20) and 81.91 percent in 2020/21. The performance in the sampled deprived districts improved relative to endowed districts, evidenced in a reduced gap in performance from 23 percent in 2016/17 to 13 percent in2020/21. Even though the improved performance in the sampled deprived districts is not an established trend, it is very encouraging, and provides a basis for the belief that, given quality teaching and learning interventions, BECE performances in deprived districts could improve to the level of the national and endowed districts' average and beyond.

Figure 18: BECE Pass Rate Analysis for Deprived versus National (2016/17-2020/21)



Source: MoE, EMIS 2016/17 to 2020/21

Further engagement with stakeholders in the two districts revealed increased parental support for learning, as parents and the District Assemblies contributed funds to support the conduct of extra classes for JHS students, including organizing up to six mock sessions between JHS 2 and 3 alone. The mock sessions, which were accompanied by feedback, were administered with the technical support of external consultants, mostly retired examiners, who also organized periodic capacity-building workshops for teachers in BECE question-answering skills.

Another strategy was to organize extra tuition, supported by parents, District Assemblies and Members of Parliament. The issue of extra classes and its role in providing added value to the learning process is worthy of conversation. While on paper, the GES has banned the conduct of extra classes which come with an extra cost to parents, in reality, about 60 percent of schools sampled for this review were having extra classes sponsored by parents or the local government, with its impact on learning outcomes well appreciated. Stakeholders underscored the need for the GES to provide the necessary guidance on the issue of extra classes in order not to deprive other communities of the opportunity of benefitting due to the ban and regulating the conduct.

Policy Objective 3: Sustainable and Efficient Management, Financing, and Accountability of Education Service Delivery

Sustainable and efficient management of education, including its financing, is key to the successful implementation of the ESP 2018-2030 and the ESMTDP 2018-2021. This includes the deployment of adequate funding, efficient utilization, efficient governance and accountability systems to ensure judicious and effective resource utilization towards achieving the overall objectives of the ESP. This section reviews targets related to school governance, financing and financial management.

Basic Schools with Functioning SMC/PTAs

The ESP 2018-2030, out of which the ESMTDP 2018-2021 was developed, targeted that by 2020/21, 85 per cent of basic schools should have functioning SMC and PTAs. This was critical to ensure among others, community participation in school governance, including education accountability. While EMIS data is unavailable for this indicator, a study of the 60 sampled schools in deprived and endowed districts showed that, there existed SMCs in all schools, mainly due to the ongoing remobilization of SMCs.

There were, however, concerns surrounding their inactive participation in school governance, as in 75 percent of schools sampled, SMCs were not having regular meetings. Much of their functions, including inspecting quality of food served, monitoring teacherand pupils' attendance, and co-signing the school's account were virtually being performed by the SMC Chair and the school head.

In 2018, when the ESP 2018-2030 was being developed, there existed SMC/PTAs. However, a 2021 directive from the GES led to the withdrawal of teachers from the PTAs, leaving them as PAs. This has significantly weakened their activity, as most PTA meetings and mobilization were initiated by the teachers. It is noteworthy that, there were identified vibrant PAs contributing to school development by making financial contributions to support schools to procure items that originally should have been procured with the ever-delaying Capitation Grant.

"At the Kasei Basic School in Ejura/Sekyedumase in the Ashanti Region, the PA procured fifteen (15) chairs and tables for the teachers. In that same school, the SMC has signed an agreement with the St. Luke Hospital to provide water to the hospital in exchange for the payment of the school's light bills in the absence of a regular Capitation Grant for managing schools".

With SMCs formally part of the school's governing structure as enshrined in the Pre-Tertiary Education Law, there is the need for a strong PA to exercise community-level oversight and accountability from SMCs. This requires capacity enhancement and facilitation in school governance. The need for a regulatory framework for PAs is also necessary to contextualize their relevance and guide their activities, while giving clarity to issues like the collection of funds by PAs to organize extra classes, a banned activity by the GES which we observed was in high demand by schools due to the learning loss through the lack of TLRs and slow-paced teaching and learning in underserved schools where many students did not even have exercise books.

Financing, Financial Management and Accountability

One of the policy objectives of the ESP is to achieve a 'sustainable and efficient management, financing and accountability of education'. This entails among others, ensuring the adequate financing, financial accountability and prudent management of financial resources in line with the public financial management and procurement laws and regulations.

Financing

The total cost of financing the ESMTDP is about GHC 64 billion, as projected in the ESP, and presented in Table 3. This comprises GHC 12 billion (2018), GHC 15 billion (2019), GHC 16 billion (2020) and GHC 19 billion (2021).

Table 3: Projected Cost of ESMTDP Implementation 2018-2021 (cost in GHC million)

Programme	2018	2019	2020	2021
Basic Education	1,248.20	1,661.50	1,644.00	1,634.80
Secondary Education	1,598.40	1,720.10	1,911.50	1,955.50
Technical Vocational Education	853.3	1,166.50	1,662.70	1,908.40
Non-Formal Education	1.9	6.2	6.1	5.4
Inclusive and Special Education	32.2	34.1	36.5	34.2
Tertiary Education	1,904.60	2,614.90	3,115.00	4,099.70
Education Management	349.5	881.2	1,056.30	2,058.70
Subtotal for all programmes	5,988.00	8,084.60	9,432.10	11,696.60
Compensation	6,794.10	7,128.20	7,384.90	7,453.40
Total Cost of ESP	**12,782.10**	**15,212.70**	**16,816.90**	**19,150.00**

Source: ESP (2018-2030), Ministry of Education

Analysis of available data on sector expenditure over the first three-year period (2018-2020) as presented in Table 4 implies that GHC 46.9 billion was expended in the first three years, comprising GHC 13.9 billion in 2018, GHC 15.5 billion in 2019 and GHC 17.6 billion in 2020.

Table 4: Education expenditure trend analysis (2018-2020)

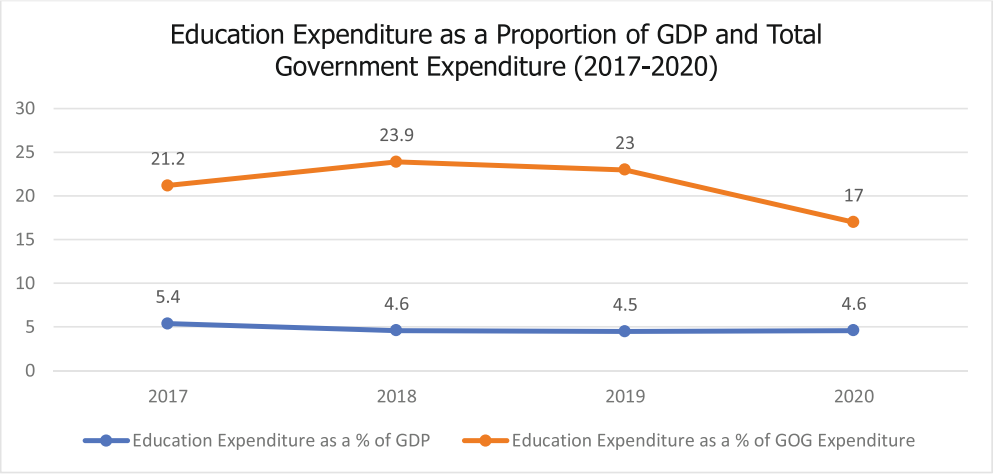
Sector	2018	2019	2020
GoG	9,605,556,629	11,427,107,267	13,040,931,004
Donor	278,020,253	145,364,576	704,537,572
GETFund	869,395,369	1,086,042,668	2,038,481,606
IGF	2,647,401,930	2,082,861,930	1,145,681,869
DACF	56,300,967	115,458,377	27,119,526
ABFA	455,913,085	720,070,682	671,494,547
Total Educ Exp.	13,912,588,233	15,576,905,500	17,628,246,124

Source: Eduwatch Computations from Ministry of Finance and MoE Reports (2018-2020)

While expenditure data for 2021 is presently unavailable, a review of the expenditure trends versus the projections indicates a positive variation of about 5 per cent, meaning more funds were made available for implementing the ESMTDP than projected. It is noteworthy that, much as the 'over-funding' is a good indication of the government's commitment to education, the fact that some of the key targets were not met indicates financial projections were underestimated or spending efficiency was low.

A closer look at education financing over the medium-term period under review indicates a decline in the proportion of government expenditure in the education sector, relative to Gross Domestic Product. The 2030 Education Framework For Action (which Ghana is a signatory), recommends that at least 4-6% of GDP must be spent by countries on education with at least 20% of public expenditure being invested in same. Between 2017 and 2020, the percentage of GDP spent on education declined from 5.4% to 4.6%, with education spending as a share of government expenditure also reducing from 21% to 17.6% as presented in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Education expenditure and GDP trends (2017-2020)



Source: Eduwatch computation from MoE Performance Reports[21]

Significant non-Budgetary Financing

It is also necessary, however, to situate the free SHS expenditures within a huge non-budgetary income stream which emerged in 2018 in the form of a $1.5 billion loan, the largest ever secured in the education sector. The loan, which occasioned the partial

[21] Computations from various MoE Sector Performance Reports; 2017-2020

securitization of the GETFund has not only provided unprecedented financing for SHS infrastructure but also reduced the amount of GETFund allocations for allocation for basic education infrastructure financing. The $218 million GALOP project presents another funding stream for basic education quality improvements. While GALOP's ability to leverage the deficits created in basic education infrastructure financing by GETFund's securitization and capping is minimal since it does not focus on infrastructure financing. However, it provides an opportunity for the policy systems to harvest and mainstream its outcomes on learning improvement.

Capitation Grant Disbursement and Use

The Capitation Grant is used to manage basic schools and is allocated based on a headcount basis. In 2019, the amount per head was increased from GHC 4.5 to GHC 10 to enable schools to receive a much more realistic amount for management, since the amount per head had remained at GHC 4.5 since 2009. Contrary to the target of paying Capitation Grant on time to all basic schools, the study observed that in the sampled schools, the SMCs reported untimely release and inadequacy of the Capitation Grant. The study revealed that, mostly, the Grant arrived at the end of the academic year or thereafter, compelling school heads to run schools with personal loans.

Social Accountability

Stakeholder awareness and participation is critical to achieving accountability in the implementation of plans and policies. When citizens are aware, they are empowered to participate in demanding accountability from duty bearers, playing their collective and individual roles towards set targets and objectives, and periodically measure progress against expected outcomes.

Regional and district stakeholder engagement on the ESMTDP 2018-2021 indicated a very low awareness level amongst staff of GES, local government authorities and Civil Society stakeholders, raising a very important issue of policy education. This is because, without policy awareness, there cannot be participation or accountability. It is necessary to prioritize multi-stakeholder awareness and ownership of medium-term plans, especially at the district level, to ensure all actions cohere to achieving a common medium-term objective, while building a strong social accountability system grounded within the context of ESMTDPs around CSOs.

Conclusion

Significant progress has been made in advancing toward the overall outcome of the ESP 2018-2030 and the three policy objectives of the ESMTDP 2018-2021. Notable areas where set targets were attained or exceeded include gender parity, teacher quality, PTR, and the construction of new school buildings. A tabulation of conclusions arrived at on all targets measured as part of this review is presented in Table 5.

Indicators		Target for 2021	Result 2021	Conclusion
KG NER		94%	89.3%	Unattained
Gender Parity	Primary	1.0	1.0	Attained
	JHS	1.0	1.0	Attained
Primary – JHS Transition		99%	92.5[22]	Unattained
JHS Completion		92%	83%	Unattained
Proficiency in Math and English	P4 Math	30%	19%[23]	Unattained
	P4 English	45%	25%[24]	Unattained
	P6 Math	32%	22%[25]	Unattained
	P6 English	44%	25%[26]	Unattained
Trained Teachers Deployment	KG	75%	91.9	Exceeded
	Primary	84%	95.7	Exceeded
	JHS	96%	96.8	Exceeded
Pupil Teacher Ratio	KG	35:1	27:1[27]	Exceeded
	Primary	35:1	26:1[28]	Exceeded
	JHS	30:1	12:1[29]	Exceeded
Basic Schools with functioning SMC/PTAs		85%	N/A	N/A
Availability of Textbooks, Teaching & Learning Resources (TLR)		1:3	No textbook in new curriculum	Unattained
BECE Performance		More than 50% score 50% in all core subjects	N/A	N/A
School buildings	KG	336	795	Exceeded
	Primary	324	700	Exceeded
	JHS	437	864	Exceeded

[22] Achievement is based on 2019/20 EMIS. Indicator data is unavailable in 2020/21 EMIS
[23] Based on 2018 NEA Scores
[24] Ibid
[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid
[27] 2019/20 EMIS data
[28] Ibid
[29] Ibid

Electricity in Schools		No Targets	60%[30]	N/A
Water Supply in Schools		No Targets	75%[31]	N/A
Urinal		No Targets	69%[32]	N/A
Toilet facilities		No Targets	74%[33]	N/A
ICT Facilities in Schools *(% primary schools with computers and internetforteaching)*	Primary	40%	N/A	N/A
	JHS	60%	N/A	N/A
Financing, Financial Management, and Accountability		No indicators	N/A	N/A
Capitation Grant Disbursement and Use		No indicators	N/A	N/A

The modest gains made in infrastructure comes with further infrastructure needs, perhaps due to the low medium-term infrastructure targets, the increasing demand for public basic education as population grows, especially in urban areas, and the need to expand access to JHS to improve primary-JHS transition and JHS completion. The need for a reliable source of financing for basic education infrastructure, as the GETFund continues to prove incapable of being responsive due to its capping and partial securitization, is a conversation that must take place between the MoE and the Ministry of Finance with utmost priority.

The transition from primary to JHS and JHS completion continues to be a challenge, recording negative growth, and raising issues about the effectiveness of transition and retention strategies and their implementation. The 25 percent disparity between the number of primary schools and JHS is a key factor.

[30] 2019/20 EMIS
[31] Ibid
[32] Ibid
[33] Ibid

Similar attainment gaps exist in KG Net Enrolment, a situation which requires prioritizing the implementation of the early childhood policy, by ensuring public nurseries are sufficiently available in underserved communities to promote right age of enrolment in basic schools.

English and Math proficiency targets remained unattained by 2018. It is however, expected that the improvement in teacher quality recorded since 2018 would impact on the attainment of proficiency outcomes in the 2021 NEA results.

The development of the Standard Based Curriculum and its assessment framework were significant achievements in the realm of quality. Nevertheless, the delays in the deployment of textbooks, two years after the roll-out of the primary school curriculum coupled with the delayed implementation of the JHS curriculum are setbacks to quality teaching, learning and learning outcomes.

Traditional issues, including delayed release of the Capitation Grant continue to hamper school management, even though the learning grant from GALOP provides a cushioning mechanism for low performing schools. GALOP, a key funding mechanism for the ESMTDP continues to make an impact on teacher capacity, accountability, and school management due to assured and regular funding for activities. It is important for the Ministry of Education to develop a system that incorporates the lessons learned from GALOP into policy, particularly effective financing for the Capitation Grant to avoid indefinite delays. Noteworthy is the urbanization of progress in many of the indicators, against rural and deprived districts. This is because, the key driver of inequality in the education system, which is the criteria for deploying education resources and the quality of their management across urban and rural areas, continues to inure to the advantage of urban districts to the detriment of rural areas.The MoE must re-strategize by adopting an affirmative approach aimed at bridging the gap between urban and rural/deprived schools, including but not restricted to a purposive institutional, policy, budgetary, management, and operational framework for managing and supervising basic education delivery in the 75 GES-classified deprived districts. Affirmative action is critical to achieving the goal of the ESP 2018-2030 and education SDGs in both deprived and endowed districts by 2030.

Recommendations

The following recommendations meant to improve the equitable attainment of key targets of the ESMTDP 2022-2025 are made for the consideration of the MoE. They include systemic and policy actions all geared towards achieving the overall outcome of the ESP 2018-2030 and reducing the education input and outcome disparity between deprived and endowed districts.

Systemic

1. The MoE should develop a Purposive Institutional and Policy Framework for Education in Deprived Districts that adopts an affirmative approach to equity within the context of their peculiarities. The framework must include specific protocols for resource allocation to deprived districts, peculiar teacher incentives and timetable for teaching and learning, a school infrastructure plan that incorporates teachers' accommodation, customized teaching supervision and a monitoring system.

2. The EMIS should be expanded to capture data on all medium-term indicators at the school level. These include ICT facilities, refurbished schools, SMCs, PAs, BECE scores among others. Also, data on infrastructure must differentiate between additional classrooms and new school buildings constructed.

3. The EMIS should undertake separate analysis of indicators in endowed districts to enable an analysis of the attainment of targets across national, endowed, and deprived districts and their variations annually for policy action.

Policy

4. A responsive basic education infrastructure plan must be developed, taking into cognizance the need to reduce distance commuted to school, urban population growth, high class sizes in urban areas, primary schools without JHS and KGs.

5. The MoE must initiate discussions with the Ministry of Finance on uncapping of the GETFund to free resources for education infrastructure development,

especially at the basic level.

6. An evaluation of the outcomes of the BSTEM pilot should be carried out and subjected to stakeholder review to determine if it is an effective strategy for teaching STEM in basic schools, based on which MoE should take a decision.

7. The MoE, in collaboration with the Regional Coordinating Councils, should innovatively engage corporate and religious bodies to leverage opportunities for a harmonized funding of the procurement and distribution of school furniture nationwide.

8. Distance covered to school is the primary cause of dropouts at the basic level, especially in deprived communities. The MoE must roll out an intervention to ensure every primary school pupil has reasonable access to a JHS.

9. The process for absorbing JHS established by non-state actors into the GES system must be decentralized by the GES.

10. The MoE must re-engage the issue of teacher accommodation and its relevance to their deployment and retention in deprived districts. The role of local authorities and communities is crucial.

11. The MoE must prioritize ongoing efforts to operationalize the rural allowance for teachers with a specific road map indicating timelines for action.

12. The MoE/GES must roll out a deliberate policy to enable the GES to redistribute existing teachers that are surplus to labour requirements to schools in need, based on a National Teacher Rationalization Policy.

13. The GES must publish teacher postings and transfer lists on their website to enable Civil Society to track compliance and promote transparency.

14. The MoE/GES must review the financing framework for the Capitation Grant and model it on a more regular and predictable funding source.

15. GES must collaborate with partners to develop a framework and strengthen the capacity of PAs to demand accountability.

16. The MoE/GES must FastTrack the procurement of textbooks for primary schools and JHS to ensure all primary schools and KGs have textbooks in the new curriculum in the 2021/22 academic year, with JHS textbooks ready in the 2022/23 academic year.

17. The MoE must adopt a transparent system for regular procurement, distribution, and replacement of textbooks in basic schools, in line with the GES' textbook policy and adopt a policy not to roll-out future curricula until textbooks are ready.

18. The GES must formalize and regulate the conduct of extra classes which is now a norm than an exception, despite its formal ban.

19. The MoE must explore Corporate Social Responsibility partnerships to finance and develop basic education infrastructure.

20. Basic education infrastructure targets under the next ESMTDP should be increased to realistic levels, considering the existing wide gap in basic school infrastructure, particularly between primary and JHS.

21. The procurement of school infrastructure must strictly follow an approved school design by MoE which incorporates single sex toilet facilities, urinals, electricity, and water connectivity.

22. Development Partners must support actions to build awareness, stimulate participation and social accountability amongst multi-stakeholders, including Parliament, local government, and Civil Society on the next medium-term plan.

23. The MoE must develop a framework to mainstream the outcomes of interventions like GALOP into policy, ensuring sustainability and impact beyond the project's lifeline. This includes mechanisms to ensure the timely release of learning grants to schools and teacher accountability systems.

APPENDICES

List of Sampled Schools

Nabdam District

1. Pelungu Primary School
2. Kong-Daborin Primary School
3. Piitanga Primary School
4. Dasabligo Primary School

Bongo District

5. Beo Sapooro Primary School
6. Atampintin Primary School
7. Bongo D/A Primary School
8. Dua-Kantia Primary School

Obuasi East District

9. Owusu Sempa Basic School
10. Odumasi Basic School
11. Jimiso Primary & JHS
12. Akrofuom Methodist Basic School

Tain District

13. Nsawkaw Methodist JHS
14. Attakrom D/A Primary School
15. Nkonakwaaja D/A JHS
16. Tainso R/C Primary & JHS

Ledzokuku Municipal

17. Teshie Salem Primary A/KG & JHS Teshie

18. Teshie Hedor R/C Basic School
19. Teshie Krobo Basic School
20. Teshie Anglican 'B' Basic School

Tatale Sanguli District

21. Sheni D/A JHS
22. Kohiyii D/A Primary School
23. Natchama R/C Primary School
24. Nuri Islamic JHS

Ejisu District

25. Timeabu Primary & JHS
26. Besease MA Primary/JHS
27. Kyerekrom MA JHS
28. Fumesua MA Primary/JHS

Ga West Municipal

29. St. Peter's Anglican 3 Basic School
30. Nii Otto Kwame III M/A Basic School
31. Sarpeiman M/A Basic School
32. Amasaman M/A 4 Basic School

Ga East

33. Haatso Calvary Presby Basic School
34. Kwabenya-Atomic M/A Basic School
35. Abokobi Presby Basic School
36. Ashongman Presby Basic School

Sefwi Akontombra District

37. Aseikrom D/A Basic School
38. Asanteman WD/A Basic School
39. Kojobikrom Basic School
40. Yawkrom D/A Basic School

La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal

41. REDCO M/A 1 Basic School
42. Nkwantanang M/A 5 Primary School
43. WASS Experimental 1A Basic School
44. Pantang Hospital 2 Basic School

Adenta Municipal

44. Mercy Islamic Primary School
45. Holy Rosary Basic School
46. AdMA Model Basic School
47. ICODEHS Basic School

Ejura/Sekyedumase District

48. Kasei St. Peter's Basic School
49. Nkwanta Basic School
50. Kropo Basic School
51. Nyinasi Basic School

Zabzugu District

52. Chakpulugu Primary School
53. Friends of the Earth Primary School
54. Kpaligibini DA Basic School

55. Gor-Kukani DA Basic School

Nkwanta South Municipal

56. Adom Model Basic School
57. Pusupu MA Basic School
58. Kenyatta MA Basic School
59. Kechiebi Asuogya MA Basic School

Appendix II

List of Districts for District-Level Report Validation

1. Ejura/Sekyedumase
2. Nabdam
3. Bongo
4. Ejisu
5. Tain

Appendix III

List of Regions for Regional-Level Report Validation

1. Northern Region
2. Ashanti Region
3. Volta Region