No 4: Evaluation of Promotion Policy Requirements in Namibian Schools

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Acronyms and abbreviations

EMIS   Educational Management and Information System
ETSIP   Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
HoOD   Head of Department
LoLT   Language of Learning and Teaching
LRC   Learners’ Representative Council
MBESC   Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture
MoE   Ministry of Education
NANTU   Namibia National Teachers Union
NIED   National Institute for Educational Development
OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PQA   Programme Quality Assurance
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the study

This study aimed at evaluating the promotion requirements for Namibian schools. Its focal point was to find out the views of education stakeholders on the promotion requirements and gauge their opinions on whether there was a need to review the promotion requirements and develop an articulated promotion policy document. Furthermore, the study examines the impact of grade or phase repetition and transfer of learners to the next grade without attaining basic competencies of the grade on learners’ performances and the provision of learners support as a ground base of promotion requirement in schools.

The research questions

1. What are the learners’ transfer and repetition situations in grades 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 in schools in 2009?
2. How does learners’ transfer to the next grade without meeting minimum requirements for promotion impacts on the performance?
3. How does grade repetition impacts on learners’ performance?
4. How are the promotion requirements guidelines carried out in schools?
5. What are the reasons of high failure rates in schools?
6. What are the views of education stakeholders on the learners’ promotion requirements in schools?
7. Are there differences on opinions among the education stakeholders on the promotion requirements in schools?

Research design and methodology

This study design was based on complementary approaches of qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The study was conducted in all 13 educational regions. The data were collected through focus group meetings, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and survey questionnaires. The unit of analysis of the study included trade unions, education directors, school inspectors, principals, head of departments, learners, parents, and traditional leaders.

Research findings

- It was evident according to the stakeholders’ narratives, the survey data, observations, and document analysis from the sampled schools that learners who were transferred without attaining the basic competencies for the grade accumulated the learning backlogs and failed at the exit points specifically grades 10 and 12. Furthermore, grade or phase repetition slight impacts on learners’ performances compared to transferring of learners to the next grade without attaining basic competencies.

- The majority of the stakeholders, if not all, found the promotion requirements ineffective. They believed that learners who were transferred were not compelled to work hard as they were aware of
the fact that the requirements clearly stated that a learner can only repeat once in a phase after which he/she qualifies for transfer to the next grade up to the end of the phase. As such learners could not see the differences between those promoted or transferred.

- A fraction of the educational officials found nothing wrong with the promotion requirements, especially on transferring learners to the next grade and repetition of grade. They strongly believed that, if all learners were supported as stipulated in the promotion requirements, transfer and repetition of learners would have been reduced.

- The provision of learning support was hindered by among others, overcrowded classrooms, lack of knowledge of teachers to offer learning support, overloaded teachers, time and space.

- Assessment outcomes that are used to make judgement on the promotion, repetition or transferring of learners to the next grade are inconsistent. Schools differed on their assessment approaches and the standard of testing instruments. Teachers lacked the skills in developing standard assessment instruments to test the attainment of the basic competencies.

- There were opinions in favour of grade repetition versus repeating once in a phase. This opinion was based on the ground that grade repetition compared to repeating once in a phase was more effective since it enforces learners to work hard in order to be promoted to the next grade.

- It was evident that there were inconsistencies on how learners were graded and later promoted, transferred or repeated. The grading and pass requirements for each phase level differed. There were differences between the mark ranges, grade descriptors and promotion requirements.

- There was an outcry on the promotion requirements and grading for grade 1-4. The C symbol required in Mathematics and English, if used as medium of instruction was too high, specifically to learners in remote schools and the learners who were not good in Mathematics would be disadvantaged since they would obviously fail to meet the basic requirements for promotion to the next grade.

- It was evident that the point grading scale used in grades 1-4 was not mathematically correct. A learner who got 2.7 to 3.6 was regarded as attaining 3 points out of 5 and rewarded C symbol, while a learner who got 3.7 to 4.6 was regarded having 4 points and awarded B symbol. They wanted to see the true mathematical rule of rounding off applied.

- There was dissatisfaction about the mark ranges between grades in grades 5-7. This was based on the fact that, within a C symbol for example, some learners got a very weak C equivalent to 45% meanwhile others got a stronger C symbol equivalent to 64%. The gap between the two C symbols was too wide.

- There were strong demands to revise the pass requirements and grading system for grades 8 and 9 and impose the point system. The basis of the argument was that selection of learners to senior secondary and tertiary institutions was based on point system in addition to a C or D in English as a medium of instruction.
• Concerns were raised from the education officials and especially learners about prescribed 9 promotion subjects at junior secondary phase compared to 6 subjects at senior secondary phase. They recommended scaling down the subject at junior secondary phase to 6.

• It was found that the majority of the education officials and other stakeholders felt that the promotion requirements at grade 11 were too loose. The educational officials specifically the school based officials felt strongly that the promotion requirements for grade 12 to apply to grade 11 and impose the point system as a requirement to proceed to grade 12.

• Education officials and other participants felt that teachers lacked the learning support skills necessary for assisting learners in their respective classes. They conceived that teachers needed training to be able to render learning support in classes.

• There was a general feeling among participants that Mother Tongue Instruction in the lower grades needed to change. They associated learners’ poor performance to low language proficiency among learners. There were evident support and preference on the use of English as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from grade 1 in all schools.

• It was evident that teachers did not receive enough support from the management of the school, and the inspectorate, specifically the advisory services. Whilst principals claimed that they did not have enough time to monitor and support teachers as required because of the teaching load.

• There were evidences that many schools especially in rural areas did not have sufficient classrooms, essential physical facilities such as libraries, laboratories and technical facilities. Schools that had libraries, they were not sufficiently stocked. In some situations, libraries were just ‘white elephants’, not used by learners. Most of the schools did not have decent houses for teachers, and the majority of the schools, if not all, experienced a shortage of textbooks and other necessary teaching and learning resources.

• It was found that parents were not fully involved in the education of their children leave alone understanding the promotion requirements processes. Though parents were called to schools and platforms set to enable parents to participate in school activities, parents failed to use such platforms effectively.

• There were testimonial evidences that poor learners’ performance and failure at Upper Primary Phase in schools was attributed to poor background that is laid at the Lower Primary Phase. The quality of learners that join the Upper Primary Phase was poor. The majority of them could not read or write.

• There was a strong outcry on introducing vocational schools and centres throughout the country, and entry to such schools should start as soon as learners acquired sufficient numeracy and literacy skills.

• It was found that the high failure rate in schools was attributed to lack of commitment among teachers. Teachers did not devote time to teaching because they were into other money-making ventures.
Learners’ poor performance was attributed to learners’ indiscipline in schools. This was attributed to uncontrollable factors such as absence of alternative punishment, child-led homes, home environments, alcohol and drug abuse, sugar daddy/mummy relationships, poverty, mushrooming of shebeens in some places and parents who did not show interest in their children’s education.

**Policy recommendations**

- Develop a coherent promotion requirements document.
- Learners who failed to meet the minimum requirements for promotion to the next grade for the second time should attain certain pass requirements to be transferred to the next grade. Transferred learners should attain a minimum of 21 points.
- Ensure that promotion requirements guidelines reach all schools in good time.
- Define the borderline concept by setting up definite guidelines to schools in order to avoid different practices carried out in schools regarding learners who are regarded as borderline and promoted to the next grade.
- Teachers should be sensitised on the role of cumulative record cards and other progress reports in promoting learners to the next grade.
- Learners should be promoted on the basis of attainment of the basic competencies. If not, learners should repeat a grade rather than once per phase level as stipulated in the promotion requirement guidelines. Grade repetition should be coupled with systematic, professional and consistent learning support inputs.
- Synchronise the grading system with percentages in the assessment policy document, promotion requirements and the National Broad Curriculum throughout the phases.
- Coordinate and monitor assessment policy implementation in schools.
- Develop appropriate assessment tools based on the learning objectives and competencies in order to produce reliable and effective assessment outcomes.
- Synchronise the symbols with percentages in all phases on the assessment policy document, promotion requirements and National Curriculum for Basic Education throughout the phases.
- Remove discrepancies on the passing requirements between upper primary and junior secondary in order to synchronise the promotion requirements throughout the system.
- Revise the pass requirements for English and Mathematics at lower, upper primary and junior secondary school promotion requirements.
- In raising the passing requirements for Mathematics and English, especially English, consider schools in rural areas that use mother instruction for the first three years of schooling and the impact such a requirement may have on the learners’ promotion.
- Apply the mathematics principles in grading learners at lower primary.
- Review the marks ranges at Upper Primary Phase so that percentages of C which is 45%-64% do not differ from C at Junior Secondary which is 60%-69%. In essence the C at Upper Primary is weaker compared to C at Junior Secondary Phase.
- Reduce the number of promotional subjects in grades 8 and 9 to 6 subjects only.
- Introduce tangible passing requirements at grade 8 and 9 to tally with the 23 point pass requirements at grade 10 as well as the requirements set at primary phase level.
- Introduce a point system earlier (at upper primary) since this is the yard stick for passing at grade 10 and 12 and the requirement for entry to tertiary institutions.
- Reconsider the 23 points minimum passing requirements at grade 10 in raising the standard of learners’ performance in order to be in consistence with what was happening in schools especially the well performing schools. A minimum requirement of 27 point is set in some schools in oppose to 23 points.
• Determine the implications of the two year course curriculum for senior secondary phase (grade 11 and 12) on the outcome of the grade 12 National Examinations.
• Teachers should be trained on how to offer learning support to repeaters and those transferred to the next grade.
• More teachers be employed and more classrooms built to alleviate the problem of overcrowded classrooms as it affects the quality of teaching and learning.
• English should be used as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from grade 1.
• Principals should be relieved of their teaching loads to have enough time to monitor all school activities.
• All schools be well resourced with libraries and emphasis should be placed on the full utilisation of such facilities.
• Schools should strengthen or set mechanisms for increasing parental involvement.
• Acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills should be strengthened in the lower primary grades.
• Vocational schools and centres should be introduced throughout the country and entry to such schools should start earlier, as soon as learners acquire sufficient numeracy and literacy skills.
PART ONE

Introduction and background of the study
SECTION ONE

The background on learners’ promotion, transfer to the next grade and repetition of grades in schools

1.1 Introduction

1. A number of studies singled out serious problems of the Namibian educational system, especially those related to learners’ low performance compared to other African countries. Comparing Namibia to other countries specifically Southern African countries, the following research evidences are apparent: higher levels of school failure and school dropout, lower levels of literacy and numerical skills and poor results in tests as well as in performance at secondary education (SACMEQ II, 2004). In its attempt to improve learners’ performance, the government approved and implemented a number of educational programs. One of such programs is a 15 year strategic plan 2005/6–2020 – ‘Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP)’. The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) is a comprehensive plan to reform the education and training sector in Namibia. The principle aim of this program is to improve the education system basing on Ministries’ strategic goals of access, quality, efficiency and equity.

2. In view of the state of education system as stipulated above, a major concern among the public is that after 20 years of independence, the country is still faced with challenges of providing quality education for all. The education outputs are not desirable compared to the financial and human resources investment (MoE, 2008).

3. Critics on the undesirable output of the education system and poor learners’ performance are centred among many factors on the existing promotion requirements. The current promotion requirements for Namibian schools seem not to deliver as expected. The crux of the matter among others is the transfer of learners who have not attained the basic competencies due to the fact that they cannot repeat after having repeated once in a phase. Though the promotion requirements strongly recommend the provision of learning support to learners specifically those with learning backlogs, not much is known on the learning support practices in schools. Thus, querying the effectiveness and relevance of the existing promotion requirements.

1.2 The meaning of essential terminologies for this investigation

4. To help the readers to understand the context of the study the definitions of key concepts which underpin the focus of the study are provided below:

5. Learner promotion: This concept refers to the practice of promoting learners who have met the minimum basic competencies to the next grade (MoE: 2009).
6. **Social promotion:** Steiner (1986:1) defines social promotion as a system “in which children are passed to the next grade with their age peers, receiving remedial academic help when necessary. Among the reasons for this policy change was the concern of social scientists that retention might be damaging to children’s social and emotional development. This is done based on the view that grade retention might be damaging to children’s social and emotional development.

7. **Automatic promotion:** Ndahutse (2008:8) defines automatic promotion as “the act of allowing these same children to continue to the next year of study with the rest of their peer group despite not having met the minimum required standards.

8. **Grade repetition:** Ndahutse (2008:8) defines repetition as “the practice of making children who have not fully mastered the curriculum and thus do not reach certain academic standards repeat the year while the peers are promoted to the next year of study.

9. **Learning support:** Adelman and Taylor in Nwanna (2006: 42) define learning support as “the intervening help given to enhance a learner’s capabilities in learning”. Furthermore, the European Parents’ School Association puts another layer of meaning to the concept “Assistance provided by the school for pupils with difficulties, mainly in primary, on the advice of the class teacher and with the consent of the parents”.

### 1.3 Forms of repetition

10. **Grade repetition occurs in five major forms depending on the source and the reason to repeat.**

- **Voluntary repetition by learner:** This happens when a learner wants to continue schooling but does not have access to a school that offers the next grade. Here learners are forced by the prevailing situations to remain active in school as it happens in many remote areas in developing countries.

- **Voluntary repetition caused by family:** This is another form of voluntary repetition influenced by the perception of the family that a learner did not learn much in the previous year and is therefore compelled to repeat the grade. This form of retention is common in most part of developing countries in areas where attendance is sporadic due to the fact that children spend much of their time working rather than attending school.

- **Repetition influenced by language barrier:** It occurs in areas where the language used at school differs from the language most learners use at home. Repeating early grades may enable the affected learners to gain fluency in the language of instruction so that they can begin to learn efficiently. Grade repetition for this reason is usually family-initiated in developing countries but school-imposed in developed countries.

- **Examination oriented repetition:** This form of repetition usually occurs at higher grade level and is practised by countries that require learners to pass examination to qualify for secondary or post-secondary education. Learners who fail to qualify must either drop out of school and enter the work place, pursue vocational training or prepare to retake examination or/and repeating the grade.

- **Involuntary repetition:** This form of repetition is primarily initiated by the school rather than learners themselves nor their families. It is commonly practiced in developing countries where
school attendance is mandatory until some point in the adolescent years. Here schools sometimes require or at least strongly advise learners to repeat the grade.

**1.4 Views on the role of learning support in improving the quality of teaching and learning**

11. A number of studies reviewed show that grade repetition has a negative impact on learners’ progress. Repeating a grade has negative effects, while automatic promotion appears not to be a solution to academic difficulties experienced by low achieving learners. When children perform below average in school, educators and parents may believe that the best cause is for them to repeat a grade. Research however shows that this choice is often a mistake. Many learners who have difficulties in learning or have learning disabilities would benefit from special services, not retention. Different child support systems would help learners to succeed in their education instead of promoting grade repetition.

*Cooperative/ peer tutoring*

12. This is explained in Nwanna’ study (2006) as a “student –mediated learning process focusing on cooperation and collaboration where a learner is responsible for his own learning as well as helping other learners” (60). Some of the advantages mentioned are the use the use of language. Learners understand each other’s problems than teachers as they are at the same developmental stage and help is rendered when most needed.

*Instructional learning support*

13. Instructional learning supports such as use of pictures, visual displays, use of animation, use of knowledge maps and use of maps are also identified. Play activities were also identified especially for lower primary learners.

*Early Prevention and Intervention*

14. This focuses on prevention and early intervention rather than waiting until signs of failure and frustration have set in. One of such early interventions is to provide preschool and kindergarten programmes for poor and marginalised learners who are most at risk for school failure. The other approach is to build fluency in the language of instruction for learners who do not speak it (Brophy, 2006).

*Parental Involvement*

15. The author advises schools to form partnerships with parents by maintaining close communication, inviting them to visit the classroom, and providing them with instructional materials to use in tutoring children at home. Keeping learners with the same teachers for consecutive school years enhances close relationships with learners and their families (Brophy, 2006).

*Positive Classroom climates*

16. This refers to the creation of positive classroom climates and the cultivation of supportive personal relationships with struggling learners. The learners, he says, should see their teachers and parents as
collaborating resource people who work together to help them succeed and who appreciate their efforts and progress even if they lag behind most of their classmates (Brophy, 2006).

**Provision of smaller classes**

17. This entails the provision of smaller classes for learners who are at the risk of failing, especially when they are not mastering basic literacy skills (Brophy, 2006).

**Close monitoring of low-achievers**

18. Advised closely monitor low-achievers’ participation in lessons and work on assignments. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that learners understand what to do. Furthermore, teachers should check on the learners from time to time and intervene if necessary. If need be, he says, extra in-class individualised or small group instruction should be arranged. This he says could involve a volunteer (fellow teacher or community member) to assist (Brophy, 2006).

**Additional learning opportunities**

19. This necessitates the provision of additional learning opportunities through extended day or extended year school schedules, holiday or Saturday school programmes, or tutoring outside of regular school hours to low achievers (Brophy, 2006).

**Empower teachers with expertise in remediation and special education**

20. Teachers should be educated to enable them to understand and meet special needs, and give them access to resource persons with expertise in remediation and special education. Such special help should be rendered within the regular classroom hours rather than sending them for what he terms ‘pull-out instruction’ (Brophy, 2006).

**Assessment as an ongoing component of the curriculum**

21. Research advises that teachers be educated to view and implement assessment as an ongoing component of the curriculum, designed to evaluate the effectiveness of their own instruction and track continuous progress in their students’ learning. He further on says that, teachers should assess not only through tests but through monitoring students’ participation in lessons and performance on assignments, and use this information to identify learning gaps or misconceptions. The role of assessment is to identify and follow up on unmet basic competencies, not just to document failure and move on (Brophy, 2006).

**Enhancing professional development for teachers**

22. This offers teachers the knowledge and skills they need to teach a wider range of learners. They need an in-depth understanding of the subject matter, learners’ diverse approaches to learning and knowledge of multiple teaching strategies. He argues “Teacher expertise has been found to be the most significant determinant of student success, accounting for as much as 40 percent of the difference in overall student performance. Students who have highly effective teachers three years in a row score as much as 50 percentile points higher on achievement tests than those who have ineffective teachers for three years in a row” (Darling-Hammond, 1998:2).
23. In order to effectively achieve this, he says schools must provide mentors for novice teachers, provide systematic supports for ongoing professional development, provide opportunities to plan, learn effective teaching strategies, examine curriculum, and observe effective teaching practices and to give and receive coaching.

Redesigning school structures to support more intensive learning

24. By this he means to keep the same teachers with the same learners for extended periods of time instead of learners moving from one teacher to another. He supports multi-grade classrooms in which learners stay with the same teacher and a cohort of peers for more than one year. Such structures eliminate some behavioural problems and improve achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Design the extra help around each student’s individual needs.

25. Once the learner’s problem is identified, individualised extra help should be rendered. If classroom teachers do not have much time to render such extra help, adult volunteers or peer tutors from classmates can help, as long as such volunteers are given clear instructions and closely monitored by expert teachers. Involving children in solutions can create the best chance for success.

1.5 The Namibian promotion requirements guidelines: promotion, repetition, transfer and learning support

26. It was assumed earlier in the background that the promotion requirements might contribute to the undesirable performance of learners in Namibian schools. Hence, it is important to lay down what the promotion requirements stipulate on promotion, repetition, transfer and learning support.

1.5.1 The Namibian promotion requirements, repetition and transfer

27. It is anticipated learners will progress through Grades 1-9 without repetition. Only in cases where the class teacher (Grades 1-4) or teaching team (Grades 5-9) in consultation with the principal and head of department is absolutely convinced that a learner would definitely not benefit from progressing to the next grade, should a learner repeat a grade. A promotion committee of the school should discuss borderline cases. Parents/guardians must be kept fully informed why it is necessary for their child to repeat a grade. What will be done by the school to ensure that they achieve the necessary competencies? And what can be done at home to support the learner?

28. No learner shall repeat more than once in any of the Primary and Junior Secondary phases. A learner, who does not comply with the minimum promotion requirements for the second time, must be transferred to the next grade (MoE, 2009: 35).

1.5.2 Promotion requirements and grading at the Primary Level

29. A learner in Grades 1-4 shall be promoted if he/she has obtained a
a) C grade or better in the language used as the medium of learning, including at least a C grade in the Reading component
b) C grade or better in Mathematics
c) D grade or better in each of the remaining 5 subjects.

Table 1 Grading grades 1 to 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies exceptionally well.</strong> The learner is outstanding in all areas of competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies well.</strong> The learner is highly proficient in most areas of competency, e.g. demonstrating rapid mastery of some competencies, or being able to apply competencies to unknown situations or contexts, or demonstrating new insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies.</strong> The learner has mastered the competencies satisfactorily in unknown situations and contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Achieved the minimum number of Basic Competencies to be considered competent.</strong> The learner may not have achieved all the competencies, or may sometimes need help, but has sufficient competency to go on to the next grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Not achieved the majority of Basic Competencies.</strong> The learner has not been able to reach a minimum level of competency, even with extensive help from the teacher, and is in need of learning support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. It further states that a learner in Grades 5, 6 and 7 should be promoted if he or she obtained
a) C grade or better in English and Mathematics
b) D grade or better in each of the remaining 4 subjects

Table 2 Grading grades 5 to 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Mark range</th>
<th>Grade Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80+</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies exceptionally well.</strong> The learner is outstanding in all areas of competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>65-79%</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies well.</strong> The learner is highly proficient in most areas of competency, e.g. demonstrating rapid mastery of some competencies, or being able to apply competencies to unknown situations or contexts, or demonstrating new insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>45-64%</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies well.</strong> The learner has mastered the competencies satisfactorily in unknown situations and contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>30-44%</td>
<td><strong>Achieved the minimum number of Basic Competencies to be considered competent.</strong> The learner may not have achieved all the competencies, or may sometimes need help, but has sufficient competency to go on to the next grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0-29%</td>
<td><strong>Not achieved the majority of Basic Competencies.</strong> The learner has not been able to reach a minimum level of competency, even with extensive help from the teacher, and is in need of learning support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
31. On the transfer of learners in Namibian schools, the promotion requirements stipulate:

A learner, who does not comply with the minimum promotion requirements for the second time, must be transferred to the next grade. It further stipulates that: A learner, who has reached the age of 16 years and is still in the primary phase, must be transferred to the next grade at the end of the year (Circular 6 of 2009).

1.5.3 Promotion, repetition and transfer at Junior Secondary Level

32. Promotion in the Junior Secondary phase, Grades 8 to 9 is different from the lower primary phase. A learner should have obtained
a) E grades or better in 6 subjects including English and Mathematics.
b) F grades or better in the remaining 3 subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Mark range</th>
<th>Grade Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80+</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies exceptionally well.</strong> The learner is outstanding in all areas of competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td><strong>Achieved Basic Competencies very well.</strong> The learner is highly proficient in most areas of competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>Achieved Basic Competencies well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>Achieved Basic Competencies satisfactorily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>Achieved a sufficient number of Basic Competencies to exceed the minimum competency level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>30-39%</td>
<td>Achieved the Basic Competencies needed to be considered competent. The learner needs learning support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>20-29%</td>
<td>Achieved the minimum number of Basic Competencies worthy of a grade. The learner needs learning support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>0-19%</td>
<td>Did not achieve the minimum level of competence. The learner needs learning support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. When it comes to grade 10 learners repeating the grade, the Pilot Curriculum Guide of the Ministry of Basic Education (2009) states that:

‘‘Grade 10 can only be repeated through non-formal education, unless a learner is under the age of 17 or if there are exceptional reasons, such as illness, with the permission of the Regional Director’’.
1.5.4 Promotion, repetition and transfer at Senior Secondary Level

34. Learners whose school-based Grade 11 examination results, class attendance and devotion to school work during the year have been satisfactory, should be promoted to Grade 12 as this is a two-year course:

A learner who achieves less than 40% in a higher level subject in Grade 11 should be persuaded to continue with the subject on an Ordinary level in Grade 12.

35. However, Grade 11 learners who have shown lack of commitment to studies coupled with limited progress and poor performance (unsuccessful in 3 or more subjects), or unacceptable patterns of behaviour, and / or absenteeism (20 or more days), may on the recommendation of the school management and school board be refused readmission to senior secondary education by the Permanent Secretary (Circular 6, of 2009).

1.5.5 The promotion requirements and learning support

36. Research has shown that there are many different intervention strategies that could be given as learning support. The Namibian promotion requirements make compensatory teaching compulsory. All struggling learners who are held back or transferred should receive compulsory compensatory teaching. The promotion requirements stipulate that:

*In some cases where learners do not achieve the basic competencies, repetition might be part of the solution. However, it must be emphasised that making a learner repeat a grade will be of no benefit unless the learner receives compensatory teaching. When compensatory teaching is organised for learners who repeat a grade, they would normally not experience any further backlogs within that phase (MoE, 2007:42).*

37. It further states in circular 6 of 2009 that: Learners who do not progress to the next Grade must receive counseling to help them understand their situation and must receive learning support focusing on the competencies which they did not achieve. A learner, who does not comply with the minimum promotion requirements for the second time, must be transferred to the next grade. Transferred learners should receive learning support in the next grade in those subjects in which they could not achieve the competencies required.

1.5.6 The organisation of compensatory teaching in schools

38. As per Circular No.6 of 2006, compensatory teaching is mandatory. The goal is to ensure that all learners with learning backlogs, and especially repeaters and transferred learners get the necessary assistance to eliminate a possible lack of background knowledge, to develop the necessary skills and competencies and to ensure that they are promoted to the next year. Clear guidelines are set for schools on how to implement learning support:
39. The principal and class teachers / subject teachers must compile a complete profile of each learner to include specific academic needs and shortcomings in specific subjects as well as behaviour. When backlogs are discovered, compensatory teaching should be administered as part of everyday teaching and thus be portrayed in lesson plans. Special emphasis should be put on reading, writing and spelling skills in English, on Mathematics, homework, study skills, a positive self-esteem, skills to write examinations and interpret questions and a positive attitude towards life.

40. With this information, the principal is responsible to do proper planning for an additional programme of compensatory teaching by the teachers in the afternoons. It is also possible to use the regional school counsellors or other expertise in the community to assist the school in a compensatory teaching programme. Inspectors should advise principals of schools with double sessions how to deal with compensatory teaching.

41. The number of learners in these afternoon classes should be limited to a maximum of 10-15. The smaller class sizes will ensure that each learner receives individual attention.

42. Thorough monitoring of the work done by these learners should be done and each learner and his / her parents should get continuous individual feedback on his / her progress. Parents form an integral part of the programme.

43. When a learner is not willing to cooperate, the principal must compile a report, discuss it with the parents and ask their assistance in motivating their child to cooperate. If this fails, the principal must report the case to the inspector at regional office. In cases where parents are reluctant to cooperate, the principal must take up the matter with the parents and similarly report to the inspector if the matter is not resolved.

44. Compensatory teaching is compulsory, either in class as part of everyday teaching or in the afternoon. The principal and involved teachers should take full responsibility for the successful implementation of this programme.

45. Inspectors and advisory teachers should take full accountability for assisting principals and teachers in the successful implementation of this policy (MoE, 2006).
SECTION TWO

The current status of promotion, transfer and repetition in Namibian schools

2. Introduction

46. The promotion, repetition, and drop-out rates in Namibia are reported in the EMIS report annually. These rates show the progression of learners between 2007 and 2008. The grades in the tables and figures are the grades, for learners’ attendance in 2008. The Grade 1 promotion rate, for example, indicates the percentage of all learners enrolled in Grade 1 in 2007, who were promoted and continued schooling in Grade 2 in 2008. Grade 12 was not included in the table because all Grade 12 learners left school at the end of 2007. Re-entrants were counted as repeaters (EMIS, 2008).

Table 4 Promotion, repetition and school-leaving / dropout rates in grades 1-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Promotion rates</th>
<th>Repetition rates</th>
<th>School-leaving rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. As table 4 shows, the majority of the learners left school at the junior secondary, grades 8, 9 and 10. The highest school-leaving rate of 24.8% was reported after the Junior Secondary Certificate examination (Grade 10). The Grade 10 promotion rate of 53.0% was, thus, much lower than the promotion rates in
other grades. Repetition was also noticeably high in grade 5 and grade 8, at 23.9% and 25.3% respectively.

48. The Grade 7 promotion rate is the transition rate from primary to junior secondary education. This transition rate was 77.1% between 2007 and 2008. It should be noted that the school-leaving rates in grades 8 and 9 were higher than that in Grade 7, indicating that a higher percentage of learners made the transition from primary to secondary than between the first grades of secondary education.

49. The total repetition rate of 17.6% is high compared to other countries, especially in developed countries reporting between 1-5% (Brophy, 2008). However, it is worth noting that most of such countries practise automatic promotion. If repetition becomes mandatory, the percentage rises to 10% or more (Brophy, 2006).

![Figure 1 Promotion rates of female and male learners](image)

**Figure 1** Promotion rates of female and male learners

50. Figure 1 displays the promotion rates of female and male learners. As the figure indicates, females had higher promotion rates up to Grade 8, including grade 10. The opposite was true for grades 9 and 11.
Figure 2 Repetition rates of female and male learners

51. Figure 2 is slightly the reverse of the previous figure. Fewer female learners repeated up to grade 8, but this includes grade 9 as well. This pattern changes in grades 10 and 11 as more female learners repeated than male learners.

2.1 The possible assumptions for pursuing this study

1. The prevailing promotion requirements in schools create backlog in learning.
2. Learners who experience failure in schools repeat or transferred to next grade and consequently fail achieving basic competencies.
3. The lack of effective learning support in schools has negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning thus the promotion of learners in schools.
4. Policy makers, practitioners, trade unions, student unions and the public in general view the present promotion requirements as an agent for promoting a society with low numeracy and literacy skills.

2.2 The existing problem on the promotion of learners in schools

52. The Namibian schools are faced with a problem of high grade repetition and transferring of learners to the next grade without achieving the basic competencies for the grade. Reasons leading to such a trend vary. Among other reasons could be the existing promotion requirements for Namibian schools. Some of the concerns about the promotion requirements could be the fact that learners who fail a grade for the second time in a phase level cannot be allowed to repeat again. Such learners are transferred to the next grade according to the promotion requirement stipulations. It is such that learners experiencing learning backlogs are left on their own without provision of learning support. Similarly, learners who repeat a grade and do not receive learning support are equally at risk of failing again or being transferred without having achieved the basic competencies for the grade.
2.3 The research questions

1. What are the learners’ transfer and repetition situations in grades 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 in schools in 2009?
2. How does learners’ transfer to the next grade without meeting minimum requirements for promotion impacts on the performance?
3. How does grade repetition impact on learners’ performance?
4. How are the promotion requirements guidelines carried out in schools?
5. What are the reasons of high failure rates in schools?
6. What are the views of education stakeholders on the learners’ promotion requirements in schools?
7. Are there differences on opinions among the education stakeholders on the promotion requirements in schools?
SECTION THREE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

3. Conceptualising the learners’ assessment and promotion practices in schools

53. To be able to study and understand the complexities of the assessment, learning support and promotion practices in schools, it is important to conceptualise holistically, the link between policy formulation, policy making and policy implementation. Equally crucial to this study, is the exploration of influences that different agencies on policy making and implementation and the recipients thereof may have on the modes of assessment, learning support and promotion of learners in schools. Figure 3 attempts to conceptualise this link and further describes in details the units of analysis for this study and the role they play in the promotion practices in schools.
Figure 3 Conceptual model of assessment and promotion of learners in schools

54. The links of agents and recipients of the assessment and promotion practices in schools can be divided into four parts namely: policy makers, policy formulation and decision makers, intervening bodies such as the trade unions and policy implementers. Below is the exploration of the anticipated roles of these agencies and their link thereof. It should be noted that the promotion of learners in schools follows the top – down approach.

3.1 Policy making

55. Policy is enacted as a law if tabled and passed by The National Assembly and the house of referral - The National Council. Initially the ministry responsible for policy formulation and decision making indulges into interactive, communicative and consultative processes using the local experts within the ministry and external experts where necessary to draft policies. Commonly, the task force formed by the ministry works hand in hand with the expert in collecting supportive information to support the policy development. On the other hand, policy making exerts influence from local authorities and traditional leaders. In actual sense, local authorities particularly traditional leaders are close to the people and thus represent direct opinions of their members. Thus policy making, complex as it may seem, is a political phenomenon.
3.2 Intervening bodies

56. The promotion requirements of learners in schools in Namibia lack coherence due to the lack of policy to direct consistently and standardised promotion practices in schools in spite of the existence of the promotion requirements guidelines. This has led into an outcry among the unions responsible for education and learners’ wellbeing. Critics on the present promotion practices in schools echoed the need for reviewing the guidelines in order to understand the impact of repetition and transferring of learners through the schooling system without attaining the basic competencies. The effect of this intervention takes effects at the policy formulation and decision making level.

57. Unions represent the opinion of the working class who are directly or indirectly affected by policies and regulation governing institutions. At the same time, unions bargain for the rights of their members. The extent to which unions contribute to policy formulation is not well perceived. It is obvious unions provide an open platform that allows members to table opinions regarding their concerns and well being. By the virtue of being the bargaining bodies with possible influences to policy formulation, they exert a lot of influences in policy making.

3.3 Policy formulation and decision making

58. Policy formulation and decision making is destined to the ministry. Programs are better implemented when they are clear and have enforced directives. At present, as articulated in the previous section, there are promotion requirements guidelines in schools in Namibia that enforce the promotion practices in schools. The extent to which assessment, learning support and promotion guidelines in schools are practiced in is not well known.

3.4 Policy Implementation

59. Promotion requirements guidelines are implemented in schools. In practice, teachers conduct the assessment of learners throughout the year. The Continuous Assessment (CA) coupled with the end of the year marks are entered into the promotion schedules. This process is guided by the HoDs and the Principals. The promotion schedules checked and approved by the inspectors are normally a benchmark for making decisions on repetition of grade, transferring or promoting learners to the next grade. Not much is known about the use of supporting documents and learning support in schools. Parents in many cases are contacted specifically if the child has to repeat a grade. Parents don’t have much say since the child’s results dictate the decision. The extent of involvement of the LRC’s in the promotion of learners is not well known.
SECTION FOUR
Research design and methodology

4. The population and sampling methods for this study

60. There have been outcries on the promotion of learners in schools with crude utterances that ‘automatic promotion’ of learners promotes failure of learners in schools. More particular concerns were raised on the effectiveness of the promotion requirements and its impact on the education system by educators, politicians, trade unionists and the general members of the public. In order to understand the promotion of learners in schools and possibly develop the promotion requirements, one ought to understand the assessment process and learning support in schools. A concise assessment of learners in schools and supporting of those with backlog would curb the grade repetition and promote high academic gains. Given this background, a careful selection of methods to capture the nitty-gritty of this sensitive issue was eminent. This study design was based on qualitative and quantitative approaches which complement to each other. The data were collected through focus group meetings, interviews, document analysis, survey data and casual discussions specifically with traditional leaders and politicians.

4.1 Population and units of analysis

61. Policies are dynamic instruments for guiding implementation of programmes. Henceforth, developing policy on promotion of learners in schools requires concerted efforts of a number of stakeholders in education. Figure 1 illustrates the involvement of these stakeholders in education and particularly in formulating policies pertaining to promotion of learners in schools. Having considered the link and involvement of these stakeholders as a point of departure, the population of this study included trade unions, student unions, education directors, school inspectors, principals, head of departments, learners, parents, and traditional leaders. Interviews and document analysis were conducted at the national, regional, circuit, and school levels. A more concise description of the unit of analysis and planned population for this study given below:

NANTU executive at national level
TUN executive at national level
Incumbent directors of the region
Councillors serving in the political regions
Inspectors of education in the regions
Advisory teachers in the regions
The traditional leaders where the selected circuit falls
Cluster centre principals in the selected circuits
School board members of the selected neighbouring schools which are close to the circuit office
The HODs at the schools nearby the circuit office
The teachers serving at the selected schools
Learners’ representative council in selected schools

4.2 Sampling

62. The study was conducted in all 13 educational regions. Four circuits were randomly selected in each region. In regions with less than four circuits, all circuits were included in the study. An area and purposeful sampling technique was applied in the regions where there were more than four circuits based on the geographical location of the circuit. Kavango, for instance, was the biggest region with 11 circuits. Four circuits were selected, one from east, one from west and two circuits in the central part of the region.

63. In the four northern regions, the former circuits after the split of the regions were purposefully selected. This was done to capture how promotion practises were dealt with within specific circuits. The selection of schools was done based on a proximate convenience sampling technique. At least one school closer to the selected circuit office was selected.

67. Although all circuits in Karas region took part in the study, there was no meeting for the cluster centre principals. Instead, the school principal in one cluster was invited for the focus group discussion. All the planned meetings took place at the cluster centre schools instead of utilising the circuit office which was far from the schools. This was the case of Keetmanshoop. The parents, cluster teachers and HoD of the selected cluster took part in the discussions and interviews. This was done to avoid the participants from travelling long distances to the region or to the places where they normally gathered for meetings. The same criteria were applied in Omaheke, Kunene, Hardap and Otjozondjupa regions.

4.3 Data collection methods

4.3.1 Data collection instruments

68. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis specifically, EMIS, promotion schedules, summary attendance registers, and cumulative record cards. The proceedings of the interviews and discussions were recorded. Field notes were taken during these processes. The following were the list of activities conducted at the region, circuits and sampled schools:

The regional activities

Interview with the regional education officers (reo)/ regional education management
Focus group discussion with inspectors of education
Focus group discussion with the advisory teachers
Focus group discussion/ interview with the regional council

Circuit based activities
Interview with the traditional leader(s) at the village nearby the selected circuit
Focus group discussion with the school board members of the schools nearby the circuit
Focus group discussion with the cluster centre principals
Focus group discussion with members of the examination committee at the circuit and HODs of the selected schools
Focus group discussion with Learners’ Representative Council from the selected school nearby the circuit
Collection of promotion schedules, summary attendance registers and cumulative record cards from the sampled schools

69. The focus group discussions with the national bodies such as the NANTU top management took place in Windhoek. The interviews for regional education officers (REOs), regional school counsellors, as well as the planned meetings for inspectors of education and advisory teachers took place at the regional office. Where possible, the meetings for cluster centre principal (CCP) took place at the common place where the inspector of education regularly meets with cluster centre principals. The circuit based activities in each circuit took place at the selected school next to the circuit office. The focus group discussions with the parents, learners and members of the examination committee took place at the selected school. The interview with traditional leaders took place at their respective homesteads or traditional offices in the village or selected school. Tsumkwe was regarded as a circuit due to its remoteness and historical disadvantages.

4.3.2 Research instruments

70. The following instruments were designed and used to collect data for this study.

Survey instrument for education officials
Interview schedule for the regional council members
Interview schedule for the regional education officers (directors)
Interview schedule for the regional counsellors
Interview schedule for the inspectors of education
Interview schedule for the advisory teachers
Interview schedule for the traditional leaders
Interview schedule for the CCP
Interview schedule for the parents’ representatives
Interview schedule for the HODs
Interview schedule for the LRCs

Interview schedules

71. The REOs and the traditional leaders were interviewed. These interviews aimed to collect the information regarding the participants’ view on promotion in Namibian schools.

Interview with the regional education officers (REOs)/ regional education management
Interview with the traditional leader(s) at the village nearby the selected circuit

Focus group discussions

32
72. Various instruments were developed for focus group discussions with different groups of participants. The aim was to gather information regarding views and understanding on promotion practices in Namibian schools.

Focus group discussion with inspectors of education
Focus group discussion with the advisory teachers
Focus group discussion with the regional council
Focus group discussion with the school board members of the schools nearby the circuit
Focus group discussion with the cluster centre principals
Focus group discussion with HODs of the selected schools
Focus group discussion with learners’ representative council from the selected school nearby the circuit
Collection of promotion schedules and cumulative record cards from the sampled schools.

Document analysis

73. Various documents such as promotion schedules (from sampled schools), EMIS (2009), summary registers and guidelines for promotion and other national and international documents regarding promotion were studied. This was done to give more information on how the promotion is currently done.

4.3.3 Data analysis

74. The recorded data were transcribed and narratives were used to support the quantitative data. The collected numerical data were entered, cleaned and analysed. Through this analysis, the data collected in different forms were triangulated. The following quantitative statistical analysis was conducted: percentage and T test.
PART TWO

Presentation of the findings of the study
SECTION FIVE

Implementation of promotion requirements and practices in schools

5.1 Introduction

75. This section therefore presents the findings from the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

5.2 Promotion practices in schools

76. Part of this study attempted to find out the promotion practices in schools, with special emphasis on the implementation of the promotion requirement stipulations. It was found that promotion practices differed at different levels: regional, circuit, cluster and school. This section therefore presents promotion practices and implementations of the promotion requirements in schools.

5.2.1 Availability and implementation of promotion requirements

77. It was evident that not all schools had the up to date promotion requirement documents specifically the latest circular FORM /ED: 6/2009 which replaced FORM/ED: 7/2006 for implementation on the 1st of January 2010. Much worse, some schools were not aware of the latest circular. In schools where it was available and discussed, the new circular raised concerns over the manner it addressed the promotion of learners and more specifically, borderline cases.

78. While the majority of the education officials saw weakness, some of them, though only a fraction, expressed satisfaction. Some officials felt that there was nothing wrong with the promotion requirements, especially on transferring learners to the next grade and repetition of grade. Accordingly, as supposedly, if all learners were supported as the promotion requirements document stipulated, transfer and repetition of learners would have been reduced:

“The problem of the policy is its implementation in the schools. The little that I know is that, the understanding of the is that, you don’t want to keep a lot of learners in a specific grade, due to space. When you implement the, the policy has two aspects, the automatic transfer of learners and the support. Now if you do these two in isolation, the policy becomes ineffective and for the last couple of years, that component of learning support had not been coming forth. And therefore, learners are being transferred automatically and learners had not been getting the support. One aspect is to reinforce the issue of support, if you do that you will definitely achieve what the policy is trying to achieve. If you do it in isolation, you are bound to fail, because those learners are not supported” (Regional School Counsellor).
5.2.2 Administration of promotion schedules

79. In some regions especially the northern regions, promotion schedules are filled at the end of each term. The promotion schedules are thereafter sent to the circuit inspector in order to give a ruling on the decision taken by the teacher, head of department and the principal on the promotion status of the learners. As a rule, judgement on promotion, transfer and repetition is supposed to be done at the end of the year. The practice of completing the promotion schedules at the end of each term and forward them to the circuit inspectors was not comprehended.

80. It was noted that some circuit inspectors did not check, sign and return a copy of the promotion schedules to schools. As such schools did not have records on learners’ progress. This practice dented the promotion practices in schools.

5.2.3 Functional promotion committees

81. Some schools had functional promotion committees comprised of the teacher, the head of department and the principal. While in some schools, promotion functions were carried in isolation and the principal made final decisions at the school level.

82. Due to distance between the schools and the circuit offices, inspectors who would have been members of the promotion committees made the ruling of the child progression in a grade, with little background knowledge about the child, in a complete isolation. This practice puts the two stakeholders in conflict especially where there were differences on opinions about the learner’s promotion status.

5.2.4 Record keeping on learner performance

83. Data on learner performance such as cumulative record cards, progress report cards, and promotion schedules are kept in schools to facilitate the provision of learning support as well as determination of who should be promoted to the next grade. It was found that many schools did not take record keeping seriously. Very few schools updated the cumulative record cards. The majority had the child’s name and photo or just a name and little information making it difficult for receiving teachers to know about the learner’s learning difficulties.

84. Secondary schools complained that when learners were promoted to grade 8, cumulative record cards were not sent to the schools making it impossible to have the learners’ background and help those with learning backlogs in specific areas. While this sounds to be an excuse on the side of secondary schools, it also raises concerns. It was evident that secondary schools did not request such information from the previous schools instead they blamed primary schools for not fulfilling their obligation thus failing to change the status quo:

“If the cumulative card used in the schools were utilised properly to inform the teachers or to give teachers the information about learners so that teachers can assist them ....When parents move from one
place to the other and move their children to the schools where they are relocating is also a problem (Advisory teacher).

85. Furthermore, few schools provided cumulative record cards to learners who were transferred to other schools leave alone demanding for cumulative and progress reports from the transferred schools. Cumulative record cards and other data on performance link teachers and schools over the performance and holistic growth of the learners. Lack of which, made teachers fail to plan learners’ interventions based on the information from the cumulative record cards in particular and progress reports in general:

“There is normally no communication between the school where the learner is coming from and the school where the learner is going and this makes it difficult for teachers to give these learners necessary support since they do not know their background……In many cases learners are transferred without any information about them (Advisory teacher).

5.2.5 Implementation of promotion requirements

86. The implementation of promotion requirements in schools varied. Some schools carried out the requirements fully, meanwhile others, for one reason or other deviated and devised internal promotion requirements. In most cases, the schools that deviated, did this because they found the promotion requirements too low or they did not support the idea of transferring learners.

87. Schools set targets for learners and raised the promotion requirements or retained learners irrespective of the stipulations of the promotion requirements. It was proved that some schools deviated from the promotion requirement stipulations because of lack of reference of the promotion requirements guidelines:

Some schools have set higher standards of attainment for grade 8 and 9 learners. A point system of 27 point is set to enable learners to cope with grade 10 requirements. The 23 points passing requirements prohibit learners from finding places in good senior secondary schools where the selection targets learners who scored 27 points and above (Principal).

“Basically that is what we do here if the learner did not master the skill he has to repeat that grade, we don’t just automatically transfer” (Teacher).

“The whole community including the teachers does not understand the contents of this promotion requirements, so this is a challenge. There are a lot of misunderstandings about the policy, the policy is not clear” (HOD).

88. It was observed that schools concealed the truth about implementation of promotion practices. In some schools, it became clear especially through learners that there were deviations from promotion requirement stipulations, but the implementers such as teachers, refuted it.

5.2.6 Inconsistencies in grading and assessment domains

89. The outcome of the assessment of learners leads to grade promotion, transfer or repetition. There were arguments that the basic competencies for the subject in a grade were set by most competent learners in a
class. As such, should those learners be average achievers in a high achieving school, the remaining learners will fall quite behind the required standard of achievement. This implies that there were misconceptions between criteria versus norm reference assessment domains:

“The basic competencies are set by the best performing learners in the classroom or in the subject. If the standard of the school, the class or subject delivery is low then the rest of the learners in the class will fall below the set standard” (Inspector).

“In some schools, A does not mean 80 – 100%, but it is determined by the performance of the learners in the class. If the best learner gets 50% that is considered as A. So this lowers the standard” (Director).

90. It was found that schools differed on how they assessed and awarded grades to learners. Education officials claimed that a learner can be highly graded or meeting promotion requirements in one school, but may not attain such standards in another school. This raised doubts on the reliability and validity of the assessment tools and practices. Some of the participants shared the following sentiments:

“Assessment outcomes that are used to make judgement on the promotion, repetition or transferring of learners to the next grade is inconsistent. Schools differ on their assessment approaches and the standard of the testing instruments” (Principal).

“An ‘A’ symbol in a school could be equivalent to ‘C’ or ‘D’ symbol in another school” (Principal).

“Teachers lack the skills in developing standardised assessment instruments to test the attainment of the basic competencies” (Inspector).

“The background of learners that we receive from some schools, especially grade 8, is weak compared to other learners from other schools. There is no uniformity in assessment; it is very difficult to help such learners” (Teacher).

“When tests are set by teachers, they are not challenging, so learners get Cs, but when the region sets an examination paper, learners fail, so assessment needs to be looked at” (Inspector).

91. Some participants were dissatisfied with the validity and reliability of the tests, activities and tasks designed for Continuous Assessment (CA) purposes. Their main concern was the disparity between CA marks and examination or end of term tests. Learners scored good marks in CA than in formal tests and examinations:

“CA must not contribute a lot of marks towards the final because it does not really in one way or another it does not reflect the true identity of that learner because you give the homework the learner copies from another person .... it should contribute very less percentages toward the final mark so that at least you can get the truth of an individual, when they pass we know that they passed because they know, and not because of the CA” (Teacher).

5.2.7 Dissatisfaction on the promotion of grade 11 learners

92. Apart from dissatisfactions due to vague promotion requirements at grade 11, there were noticeable interferences on the practices and process from the inspectors. School based officials argued that, though
the promotion requirements were vague, if they were followed as stipulated, the situation would be different, as some of the grade 11 learners who failed to meet the promotion requirements would have repeated.

93. There were evidences that in some cases inspectors’ verifications on the promotion judgement and the ruling differed from teachers’ and the principals’ judgements. As such, such learners were transferred to grade 12:

“Yes, the requirement is there that those learners who did not do well should not go to grade 12, but inspectors always instruct schools to allow all grade 11 learners to go to grade 12, in such a situation, you have no choice” (Principal).

This practice was contrary to the promotion requirements, particularly in grade 11:

“Learners whose school-based Grade 11 examination results, class attendance and devotion to school work during the year have been satisfactory, should be promoted to Grade 12” (Circular 6, of 2009)

94. Implying that if a learner did not meet the basic requirements for promotion to the next grade, that learner should repeat: Teachers were concerned about the rhetoric actions of the decisions of the inspectors, public perception and parents reactions on repetition in general:

“The policy sometimes is not followed for example the conditions that are attached to an “Automatic Promotion” in Grade 11. No learner repeats grade 11 even if they misbehave or being absent from school. Nothing is done; all learners go to grade 12” (Advisory teacher).

“The policy does not play a big role, it has to do with the management of the school, you will find that you want a grade 11 learner to pass all six subjects to go to grade 12, but this thing does not happen, the community becomes involved, as there are some schools that do not stick to the policy where a learner should meet the minimum requirements before promoted to grade 12, parents will move the learner to that school, because they consider grade 12 as automatic promotion and blame your school for repeating learners” (Teacher).

5.2.8 Provision of learning support in schools

95. Learning support to learners who were ruled to be transferred to the next grade without meeting the promotion requirements or repeated a grade was not in practice in most of the schools specifically rural compared to urban and semi urban schools. In some of the schools where it was practised, it was mostly in the form of compensatory teaching.

96. Compensatory teaching was conducted in the form of revision of the lesson in totality without alterations to the whole class group. This practice was contrary to the stipulations of the promotion requirements which entail the identification of learners with academic needs and shortcomings, and assist them accordingly in smaller groups of 10 -15 learners.
97. Reasons to why learning support was not practised varied. Profoundly, teachers lacked knowledge on offering learning support techniques. Teachers needed training to able to render learning support. The Ministry of Education was blamed for introducing new ideas such as learning support without or building the capacity of the implementers - the teachers. Apart from lack of training among teachers, there were demands for special classes and special teachers to each school:

"Teachers need proper training on how to do remedial teaching, compensatory and learning support. The term must be explained to the teacher to understand...Management must be well trained to implement the policy...Special education must get support in teacher education....We should have teachers that specialised in special education to assist learners with learning difficulties accordingly” (Advisory teacher).

“The knowledge and skills needed to support learners were lacking. There was need for training to empower teachers” (Principal).

“What we observe in other countries, you will see that they don’t have support in the afternoon, they do have extra two or three additional teachers who are trying to help those learners, who are certified in helping those ones who are struggling. And if this is the case, I think then we will not talk about automatic promotion, definitely no automatic promotion” (NANTU).

“...although our teachers are trained and professionally qualified, I don’t believe that we all have skills and strategies on how to help learners with learning difficulties, most of the teachers have got difficulties in using different strategies. (Teacher) “.

“How much are our teachers trained to provide such support? If you cannot provide that support, then you must not implement automatic promotion” (Regional School Counsellor).

98. Learning support is essential in enabling transferred learners and those repeating grades meet the requirements for promotion to the next grade. To be able to execute the promotion requirement provision, the availability of classrooms was inevitable.

99. There was evident lack of infrastructure in schools for provision of learning support. Over-crowded classrooms were not suitable for conducting learning support leave alone compensatory teaching.

“Provision of learning support was hindered by overcrowded classrooms, too many administrative tasks done by teachers, the platoon system, and what they termed a ‘hidden curriculum’” (Principal).

100. Teachers’ workload hindered the provision on learning support. Teachers had increased administration activities requiring each teacher to compile and keep up to date files such as subject, preparation, administration, question paper and resource files among others:

“I agree one might also argue it that these days administration work has been becoming too demanding, too much administrative work simply because of ESTIP, now at the end of the day you don’t really have enough time to spend to those who are let me say below average those who are supposed to be given that
opportunity in the afternoon or attention in the afternoon because we are also rushing for administrative work not only management level but even teachers also” (Teacher).

101. Schools were coupled with routine activities after school and ‘the hidden curriculum’. There were concerns about these activities versus assisting struggling learners acquiring basic competencies essential for promotion to the next grade. Unscheduled activities or what most teachers referred to as the ‘hidden curriculum’ in schools took much time apart from teaching and leaving little time to implement promotion requirement stipulations particularly learning support:

‘the teachers are more occupied just on the with additional activities because the activities are too much for them so now instead of the teacher to carry out compensatory teaching you might find the teacher has other extra mural activities and then there is no time really to take out compensatory teaching to those learners that is one of the challenges that I have seen in our schools’ (Teacher).

102. The conditions of work on top of high teacher-learner ratio and staff norms made the provision of learning support difficult to implement:

“It is true because you will find that in some classes, specifically in the rural areas there are a lot of learners, classes that are overcrowded, so it is very, very difficult for a teacher to handle 62 learners in one class and with those 62 learners, there are no materials like textbooks, it is very, very difficult. May be you are the only one who is having that textbook in class, so imagine now if you want to teach these learners, how are they going to pass, you have to give individual support to each and every learner, individual attention to each and every learner, every time” (NANTU).

103. Rendering learning support after schools was hindered by the proximity between learners’ homes and schools particularly in rural schools. Learners had to travel long distances to and from school. It was not realistic to keep them after school:

104. Platoon schools faced difficulties implementing learning support activities after school due to time constraints and space. This differed with the concept of provision of learning support that ought to be given during school hours not necessarily in the afternoon.
SECTION SIX

The effects of grade transfer and repetition on the learners’ performances

6. Number of learners who repeated grades and those transferred to next grades in 2009

105. Schools in Namibia keep data on learner performance. Among such data are the statistics on the number of learners who were promoted, repeated and transferred to the next grade. It is expected that such statistics should help schools track down the performance of each learner in the school and primarily know which learners failed to meet basic requirements for promotion and requiring learning support. Statistics on the number of learners who were transferred to the next grade at the end of 2008 and the performance at the end of 2009 were analysed to find out the effect of transferring learners to the next grade and repetition of grade had on their performance. These data came from the sampled grades 3, 4 and 6 in primary schools and grades 8-10 in secondary schools of the sampled schools.

![Pie chart showing the number of learners transferred and promoted in primary grades 3, 4, and 6 in 2009]

Figure 4 The number of primary learners transferred in grade 3, 4 and 6 in the sampled schools in 2009

106. As figure 4 shows, out of the total number of 384 learners who were transferred in the primary phase, only 95 (25%) of learners were promoted and the majority of the learners did not meet the minimum basic competencies, and hence they were transferred. The t-test indicated no significant differences between learners who were transferred and passed. In general, the performance of transferred learners was too low.
Figure 5  Number of learners transferred in 2009 in grades 8, 9, and 10 the sampled schools

107. Figure 5 compares the total number of secondary school learners in the sampled schools who were transferred to those who were promoted. As the figure shows, secondary schools experienced a higher numbers of transferred cases compared to primary schools. As evidenced in figure 5, out of 817 learners transferred to grades 8-10 in 2009, only 259 (32%) passed at the end of 2009. The difference between learners who were transferred and those passed were significant ($t=4.1$, $df=11$, $p=.002$). The mean differences of 68 for transferred learners and 22 for those who passed as well as standard deviation of 67 and 41 respectively showed that transferring learners to the next grade had no effect on the performance.

Figure 6  Learners transferred and passed in primary schools in sampled schools and grades in 2009 by regions
108. Figure 6 shows the percentage of learners who were promoted after being transferred to next grades in 2009 in the sampled schools in the regions. As indicated in this figure, situations in the regions differed. At primary phase, though not that impressive, two regions Caprivi and Erongo demonstrated a better performance of 42% and 46% respectively. The remaining regions did not feature well in performance since the pass rate of the learners who were transferred lay between 0 and 28%.

![Secondary Transfer & promoted](image)

**Figure 7 Learners transferred and passed in sampled secondary school grade 8, 9 and 10 in 2009 by regions**

109. The performance of regions in the secondary phase varied. Better performance was observed in Ohangwena and Hardap with a pass percentage of 67% and 42% respectively. The remaining regions recorded a pass rate between 0 and 4%. Kunene and Erongo did not have any transfer cases at this phase level. Sampled schools in Omaheke did not present data on transfer cases at this phase level.

6.1 Number of learners who repeated a grade in all phase levels in 2009 in sampled schools

110. In the previous section, it became very clear that learners who were transferred did not perform well. The majority were not promoted, implying that they were again transferred. This section presents findings on the performance of repeaters in sampled schools and attempts to compare the performance of those who repeated and passed.
111. As seen in figure 8, a high number of learners repeated in the secondary phase. About 1476 learners in sampled secondary schools repeated in 2009. Out of this number only 521 (35%) of the learners passed. The mean for repeaters was 123 and standard deviation was 69. The mean for those who passed was 43 and standard deviation was 28. The differences were significant \( t=6, \text{df}=11, p=.000 \).

112. Figure 9 shows that out of 396 learners who repeated in the primary phase, 261 (66%) learners passed. The mean for the repeaters was 30 and the mean for those who passed was 20. The differences were significant.
between repeaters and those passed were significant (t= 3.1, df=12, p=.009). These findings imply that repetition has got slight impact on the performance.

![Figure 10 Percentage of primary learners in grade 3, 4 and 6 who repeated a grade and promoted in 2009 by regions](image)

113. Figure 10 shows the percentage of learners who repeated and passed at the end of 2009 in the sampled primary schools in the regions. The performance of the repeaters varied. It was important noting that all the regions except Erongo (50%), recorded below 50% pass rates. However, the pass rates in all regions were much better compared to secondary schools whereby some schools recorded promotion rates as low as 2%.
The performance of regions in the secondary phase as shown in figure 11 was not that impressive. The promotion rates of the learners in the majority of the regions were below 50% except for Caprivi (50%) and Omaheke (50%).

Overall, better pass rates were observed among repeaters compared to transferred learners, although the margin was too close especially in the secondary phase, very clear differences were recorded in the primary phase on which many learners who repeated passed compared to those who were transferred.
7. Views on the promotion requirements for schools

116. It is expected that all Namibian schools implement or promote learners according to promotion requirement stipulations. Hence, this section aimed at finding out if such requirements were fully carried out, and if there was a need to revise them. The results presented in this section are based on views of education officials, influences of school location, teaching experience and the different phases teachers were teaching, and the extent to which these predictor variables might influence the officials’ perceptions on promotion requirements.

7.1 Views of the education officials on promotion requirements in schools

117. This section explores views held by the education officials (directors, deputy directors, advisory teachers, regional school counsellors, principals, heads of departments and teachers) on the promotion requirements in schools.

Figure 12 Views of the education officials on promotion requirements in schools
118. Figure 12 portrays views of the education officials on promotion requirements. It was amazing noting that only 25% of the directors and 46% of the deputy directors in the regions agreed that the present ‘promotion requirements contributed to high failure rates’.

119. The degree of agreement on this concern among the remaining officials ranged between 60% and 84%. These views were in contrast with the general dissatisfaction of other stakeholders on the relevance and effectiveness of the promotion requirements in promoting the education system and curbing learners’ failure rate in schools:

“The pass requirement of symbol ‘C’ in English do not favour schools in rural areas that use mother tongue as medium of instruction. Failing a child who attains for example symbol ‘D’ in English at grade 4 or at the beginning of upper primary is unfair since this child started learning in English for only a year or two” (Principal).

“...just compare a learner who is taught in English in grade 1 and compare him to a person who is taught in Oshiwambo, Otjiherero from grade 1 to grade 4, do you think if you can bring them together and you bring them for assessment and if you assess them the one who is taught in English from grade 1 plus the other one who is taught in Oshiwambo or other languages, then you give them a test do you think that you will be able to get the same marks? You will not but according to this policy they are saying a learner should be promoted only if he or she gets a D upwards and we are talking of our learners that cannot even say no or morning up to this age” (Teacher).

‘In lower grades standards/requirements are very high – in upper grades (UP, JS, SS) it is lowered. Why? There is no consistency. If it is a C-symbol, let it be a C-symbol all way to Grade 11. Learners are required to pass with 17 points in LP and UP; but suddenly 23 points in Grade 10 – Grade 11, and 25 points to pass Grade 12 (25pts in five subjects to go to University). .. This is a concern! The one with 23 points is not accepted at UNAM/Polytechnic, but pass requirement is lower in school” (Regional Councillor).

“The passing requirement for grade 8 and 9 are too low compared to passing requirement for grade 10. If symbols of passing requirements for grade 8 and 9 are converted into points system they sum to 17 points while a learner is supposed to have 23 points to be able to proceed to grade 11. The gap is too wide” (Principal).

“The transfer may have/affect their future lives not to succeed. They may not study harder (e.g. Grade 11) as they know they will be transferred (to Grade 12). Even though it is a 2-year course, they could be made to repeat Grade 11 if they did not meet half of the competencies required” (Deputy Director).

“It is true you cannot expect a learner to achieve the basic competency of the next grade once he is still struggling with the other one, there is a gap that needs to be completed, that needs to be filled now that would create more high rate failure to the next grade, that’s why our learners are failing so much, the policy needs to be revised” (Teacher).
120. The principals (44%), teachers (46%) and HoDs (40%) who are implementers of the requirements disagreed that the present ‘promotion requirements were effective’ compared to the remaining officials at supervisory level. In spite of the differences regarding the effectiveness of the requirements among the educators, the majority agreed with the statement that the ‘promotion requirements should be revised’ (81% on average agreed). During the interviews officials pointed out a number of sections that should be revisited:

“There are confusions on symbol allocation at lower primary. For example a learner who got 2.7 to 3.6 (3 points) out of 5 got a C, while one who got 3.7 to 4.6 (4 points) got a B. They wanted to see the true mathematical rule of rounding-off applied” (Principal).

"Ask little in Grades 8 and 9, (less than 23 points) and suddenly we ask high requirements at Grade 10 (i.e. 23 points). It is the same phase and should have the same requirements (i.e. 23 points from Grade 8-10)…. Standard should be raised or balanced from Grades 1-12” (Deputy Director).

“The passing requirements for upper primary are equally higher comparing to grade 8 and 9. Therefore, the demands for performance are higher at upper primary but relaxed at grade 8 and 9” (Principal).

“The passing requirement for grade 8 and 9 are relaxed in way that at upper primary (5-7) learners are require to pass with ‘C’ in English and mathematics and ‘D’ or better in the remaining 4 subjects while at grade 8 and 9 a symbol ‘E’ or better in 6 subjects including English and Mathematics and ‘F’ in the remaining subject is suffice for promotion of learners to the next grade” (Principal).

“The point system should be introduced from upper primary to senior secondary. The system should be synchronised in such a way that a symbols used in all phases should mean the same or carry the same value” (Teacher).

121. The average score of 61% on the implementation of the promotion requirements in schools showed that not all schools fully carried out the promotion requirements as stipulated in the promotion requirement document. More concerns were portrayed by advisory teachers (49% agreed) and regional school counsellors (43% agreed).

7.2 Teachers’ views on promotion requirements by school location

122. The views of education officials teaching in urban, semi-urban and rural schools were also analysed. Figure 13 presents such findings.
The results presented in figure 13 show that on average, 72% of the teachers in the three locations agreed with the statement that promotion requirements in Namibian schools contributed to high failure rates compared to the 17% who disagreed.

In abiding to the promotion requirement practices in schools, promotion requirements were expected to be followed and implemented in schools. The results showed that 61% of teachers agreed with the statement that ‘promotion requirements were being followed in schools’. There were slight differences among teachers in the three locations where teachers from urban schools indicated that ‘promotion requirements are being carried fully’ compared to teachers from the remaining school locations.

The effectiveness of the promotion requirements had been questioned by stakeholders. It was not amazing noting that teachers in urban schools disagreed (86%) with the statement that the ‘existing promotion requirements were effective’ compared to rural (38%) and semi urban schools (43%). Perhaps teachers in these schools did not look at it critically or were unaware of the current criticisms about the requirements. The views of teachers in rural and semi urban areas were in sharp contrast to previous views on the notion that ‘promotion requirements contributed to high failure rate’.

The responses on the revision of the existing promotion requirements were overwhelming since 82% of the teachers agreed while 10% of the remaining teachers in the three locations disagreed.
7.3 The influence of phases teachers teach on promotion requirements

127. Figure 14 shows that, the teachers’ views on whether the promotion requirements for Namibian schools contributed to the high failure rate across phase levels did not differ much. Three quarters (75%) of the teachers in lower primary to senior secondary attributed the high failure rates to the current promotion requirements.

![Figure 14 Teachers' opinions on promotion requirements by phase levels](image)

128. Regarding the statement examining the extent of the implementation of the promotion requirements, more than half (61%) of the teachers across the phases, felt that the requirements were fully carried out in schools. Slight differences were noted specifically on the responses of teachers teaching at lower primary phases (67%), combined schools (59%) and senior secondary (58%). These results implied that not all phases in schools fully implemented the promotion requirements guidelines.

129. The teachers’ responses on the ‘effectiveness of the promotion requirements’ were spread across all three phases. Less than half (40%) of the teachers across the phases disagreed that the promotion requirements were effective compared to 33% of the teacher who agreed. More than a third of the teachers in lower primary (38%), combined schools (30%) and senior secondary (30%) agreed that the promotion requirements were effective. The responses of teachers who agreed were slightly lower compared to teachers who disagreed to the notion.

130. About three quarters of the teachers (75%) across the phases wanted the promotion requirements to be revised, with a significant contribution from senior secondary teachers (81%) compared to lower primary (68%) and combined schools (77%). It was possible that the discontents were on the promotion requirements for grade 11 which the majority of the teachers at this phase level indicated that they were too vague.
7.4 The influence of teaching experience on teachers’ views on the promotion requirements

131. Figure 15 shows, the teachers’ views on whether the ‘promotion requirements for Namibian schools were contributing to the high failure rate’. There were slightly different patterns of teachers’ responses across the categories. On average 73% agreed, 17% disagreed and a small percentage of 8% were not sure. It is worth noting that the highest percentage of those who agreed to the statement was recorded by teachers who had taught for 16 years and above.

![Figure 15 Teachers’ views on the promotion, repetition and transfer of learners by teaching experience](image)

132. On whether the ‘requirements of the promotion guidelines were fully carried out in schools’. More than half of the teachers (61%) supported the statement. These responses were a bit low compared to the rating of the previous statement. On average, 17% of the teachers disagreed with the statement and 17% were not sure. Furthermore, the responses of teachers who had taught for 16 and above and 6 to 10 (63%) were slightly higher.

133. There were slight changes on responses on the statement ‘the existing promotion requirements were effective’. Across all categories, 42% of the teachers disagreed with the statement. Although the margin between those who agreed and the other group was not that wide, it is worth noting that there were slight differences. The majority felt that the promotion requirements were not effective.

134. More than three quarters of the teachers (82%) in this study across the four categories felt that there was a need to revise the promotion requirements. More specific, were teachers who had taught for 6-10 years. This outcome showed dissatisfaction among teachers regarding the promotion requirements. One could relate this to the responses on ‘promotion requirement as a contributing factor to high failure rate’.
SECTION EIGHT

Impact of transferring learners to the next grade without achieving basic competencies for the grade

8. Views on the transfer of learners without achieving basic competencies for the grade

135. The promotion requirements for Namibian schools stated that learners should be transferred to the next grade after failing once in a phase. Hence, this section aimed at finding out if transferring learners had positive or negative effects on performance. The influence of four predictor variables namely the position of education officials, location of the school, the phases that teachers were teaching and teaching experience was investigated.

8.1 Views held by education officials on the effectiveness of learners’ transfer on their performance

136. This section aims at assessing views on the transferring of learners without achieving basic competencies for the grade and its effect on their performance from the point of view of education officials responsible for monitoring and implementation of the promotion requirements.
Figure 16 Effectiveness of transfer of learners to the next grade by officials’ work position

137. Figure 16 portrays this notion. An average score of 79% of the officials agreed with the statement that transferring of learners to the next grade negatively affects their performance. In comparing the groups, 80% and above of the advisory teachers, regional school counsellors, principals, HODs and teachers agreed that transferring of learners affects their performance. The directors, deputy directors and inspectors in the regions scored an average of 50-60% indicating perhaps that this would not be the only factor or the same factors in all situations. These results were in contrast to views held by some officials who disagreed and or were not sure.

138. The responses on whether ‘learners who were transferred faced challenges in later grade’ showed that 83% of the officials on average agreed while the remaining 17% were not sure or disagreed about this notion despite the speculation that learners who were transferred faced challenges in achieving basic competencies.

139. The education officials’ responses on the last statement, learners who are transferred and not likely to achieve the basic competencies in the next grades, received an average percentage of 64% and only 14% disagreed. The higher rating was from the teachers (83%). This is not surprising, because teachers are working with such learners and know the effects of transferring learners more than directors (50% agreeing) and the remaining half either disagreed or were not sure.

140. It was argued that the promotion requirements specifically transferring of learners without meeting the minimum requirements for promotion contributed to high failure rate at Grade 10. Furthermore, the high failure rate raised the unemployment:
“Transferring of learners without achieving the basic competencies contribute to high failure rate at grade 10 which is the exit point. It also contributes to unemployment” (Principal).

“I do not support the policy of transferring learners because they are not assisted in the next Grade and do not benefit anything in the next grade and especially if they keep on being transferred up to Grade 10 this is obvious that they will never pass Grade 10” (Advisory teacher).

“definitely when you look at that learner you are just transferring the problem to grade 7 and some of this grade 7 subjects they are writing external examination, the learner will not perform so the learner will stay in grade 7 for two years and then the learner is transferred to grade 8 and the system goes on like that up to grade 10 at the end grade 10 does not transfer learners to grade 11 and then this learner will be forced to go in the streets because somewhere somehow its wrong therefore they should just stay in the class even if it’s for five years” (Teacher).

141. The knowledge about the promotion requirements specifically on transfer of learners who failed once in a grade to the next grade without meeting the requirements for promotion does not motivate learners to work hard. Such learners have a tendency of dodging school work, demonstrate poor school attendance and work, avoid working at home especially during the cultivation time. The term wheelbarrow implied an easy way of going through the schooling system without putting efforts to achieve the basic competencies. Very few learners see the differences between those who were transferred or promoted to the next grade because both proceed to the next grade:

“A learner who is transferred doesn’t know everything. It will have effects on his study; he knows that they will be wheel barrowed. Learners don’t care, they don’t know why they are there, and they are making troubles. They are happy, because they will be transferred. Cultivation time they will come to school because they don’t want to do cultivation. In September when there is no cultivation they don’t come to school and they will be transferred. They know that they will be wheel barrowed. They are just happy. Grades 8-9 don’t put effort because they will be transferred (Learner).

“Yes they know the difference between promotion and transfer, they know especially the secondary learners even the primary learners, they say we are just promoted, they even have a say that now you are being transported with a wheelbarrow that is what they say, you will not pass you will just be transported with a wheelbarrow” (Teacher).

Learners do not see the differences between those who are promoted to the next grade due to good performance and those who are transferred to the next grade due to poor performance” (Principal).

142. A set of standards of 20 points to be achieved in order to transfer learners who failed to achieve minimum basic competencies for the grade. Such a parameter should be regarded as a borderline consideration for transfer to the next grade:

“A set standard of achievement of basic competencies should be set to determine learners who should be transferred. For example a learner should have a minimum of 20 points to be regarded as a border line case and thus considered for transfer” (Principal).

“Otherwise transferring of learners to the next grade should be abolished” (Principal).
143. It was strongly felt that transfer as a requirement should be abolished. It was argued that learners who failed to meet the minimum requirements for promotion will not benefit when transferred to the next grade. It was felt that learners who did not meet basic requirements of promotion should be held back. Repetition was also strongly supported by parents, learners and members of the community in general:

“They should be held back. If transferred you cannot benefit from the next grade. The best is to be held back. ….. If transferred, and I did not pass I will not understand subject content in the next grade in the same way I did in the previous grade. It is better to be held back and repeat a grade. …If you are transferred, you will not think and behave like someone who failed, but will pretend like someone who was promoted” (Learner).

“They children will stop working on their schoolwork, because they say, I don’t care about my school because I will be transferred when I fail to the next grade, let me say when they go to high school they will struggle” (Learner).

“They must know the problem of the learner. If they don’t solve the problem of the learner, the problem will be transferred with him to the other side, then you are not doing anything, you are not doing justice to the learner, you are just teaching him that we will just push him but he is not getting anything, he is not learning anything” (Community activist).

8.2 Views held by rural, urban and semi-urban school teachers on transferring of learners to the next grade and their performance

144. Figure 17 shows that on average 82% of the teachers in rural, urban and semi urban schools agreed that transferring of learners to the next grade affected their performance compared to 12% who disagreed and 6% who were not sure. There was no marked influence on the responses arising from the location of the schools.

145. It was speculated that ‘learners transferred without achieving the basic competencies of the grade faced challenges in the next grade’. These speculations were supported by on average, 81% of the teachers who agreed with the notion compared to 13% who disagreed and 6% who were not sure about the notion.
Figure 17 Views held by rural, urban and semi-urban school teachers on transferring of learners to the next grade

146. The basic assumptions among teachers in the three school locations were that transferred learners were not likely to achieve the basic competencies. The responses of the teachers in the three locations showed that 79% agreed while less than a quarter disagreed or were not sure.

8.3 Views held by teachers in different phase levels on learner transfer

147. The purpose of this section was to compare if teachers teaching different phase levels would differ on opinions pertaining to the effects of transferring learners to the next grade without achieving the basic competencies.
As shown in figure 18, the majority (82%) of the teachers across all phase levels strongly felt that transferring learners had negative effect on their performance especially in later grades. There were no noticeable differences between lower primary, combined schools and senior secondary teachers on the effects of transferring learners irrespective of the phase levels teachers taught.

Regarding the claim that ‘learners who were transferred had more challenges in achieving basic competencies in the later grades’, 81% of the teachers in lower primary, 86% in combined schools and 79% in senior secondary supported the statement. These results concurred well with the claims that these learners were being ‘wheel barrowed’ through the system and ended up failing at grade 10.

Responses on the statements ‘Learners who were transferred were not likely to achieve the basic competencies in the next grade’ showed slight variations between teachers in lower primary (82%), combined schools (84%) and senior secondary (73%) teachers. These indicated that teachers did not support transferring of learners to the next grade without achieving the basic competencies for the grade.
8.4 Teachers’ views on learner transfer by teaching experience

151. This section intended to explore the extent to which teachers with different teaching experience would differ on opinions pertaining to the effects of transferring learners to the next grade without achieving the basic competencies.

![Figure 19 Teachers' views on the effects of transfer on the learners’ by teaching experience](image)

152. As indicated in figure 19, ‘transferring learners to the next grade had a negative effect on learners’ performance’. Three quarters of the teachers agreed (81%) with the statement. Only 13% of the teachers across the categories disagreed.

153. Teachers were asked to give their opinions if they felt that ‘learners who were transferred had more challenges in achieving basic competencies in the later grades’. Being aware of the challenges that transferred learners were facing in schools, 82% of the teachers supported the statement compared to a small fraction (12%) who disagreed and 5% who were not sure. In comparing the group responses, 90% of the teachers with 6-10 years teaching experience supported the statement compared to the remaining groups that had an average of 80%.

154. It was obvious that teachers in this study did not support the idea of transferring learners to the next grade. Their responses on the statement ‘learners who were transferred were not likely to achieve the basic competencies in the next grade’ showed that they did not support transfer. On average, 79% of the
teachers agreed. On the other hand, only 15% of the teachers disagreed and 6% were not sure. Teachers who had taught for 6-10 years (85%) rated the notion slightly higher than the rest of the groups.
9. Introduction

155. The promotion requirements for Namibian schools stated that learners should be transferred to the next grade after failing once in a phase. This section aims at gauging views on whether they wanted learners to repeat or not from the perspectives of education officials, influences of school location, teaching experience and the different phases teachers were teaching, and the extent to which such predictor variables might influence their perceptions.

9.1 Views held by the education officials towards the repetition of grades

146. This section aims at finding out education officials’ views on the effects of repeating grades. Two factors were set, and the views from all variables are presented.

![Educators views on repetition of learners to next grade](image)

**Figure 20 Educators views on repetition of learners to next grade**

157. Figure 20 illustrates the views of the education officials in the regions on the repetition of grades. On average, three quarters of the officials in the regions (65%) agreed that learners should repeat until they mastered the basic competencies, a view contrary to the promotion requirements. This conception was slightly opposed by the majority of the deputy directors in the regions.
158. On average, 76% of the educators agreed that repetition of grades would likely improve performance or attainment of basic competencies. As was the case with the first statement, less than 50% of the deputy directors agreed.

159. There were strong supports among teachers supporting grade compared to phase repetition as stipulated in the promotion requirements. It makes sense concluding that it was felt that phase repetition would have been a bit late to intervene and remedy the problem:

“Learners should repeat a grade than repeating once in a phase as stipulated in the promotion requirements in order to achieve basic competencies” (Principal).

160. There was no definite time for repetition. Some pointed two times while other indicated indefinite period. Teachers were entrusted in identifying learners’ learning backlogs as early as possible and provide remedy to enable learners to excel to the next grade with few difficulties. The support on repetition as opposing to transfer bore testimony from the point of view of politicians, parents and learners:

“Learners should repeat – but not to be automatically transferred. It depends on how many times to repeat. Teachers should be able to identify well in advance why a child is slow (in the same year) and initiate extra efforts to assist that child. If a child knows the weak points – he/she will be able to compete and do well in the same year and will not repeat. A child should repeat twice per grade – not per phase – given the competition to learn and succeed is in place. After extra efforts, a child will manage on her/his own; will not allow herself/ himself to repeat twice” (Governor).

“I will be happy for my child to repeat, instead of being pulled to the next grade without passing. That child will not have a good future. Let him/her repeat. If transferred, the child will also not be happy because things will be difficult for him or her” (Parent).

“If you repeat the grade then you will learn more, because you think of what the teachers were telling you last year, those that you couldn’t understand ,but if you repeat you will understand more it will help you more to understand then you go to the next grade” (Learner).

9.2 Views held by rural, urban and semi-urban school teachers on repetition of learners and their performance

161. Responses from teachers were classified into three categories, namely: teachers who taught in rural, semi-urban and urban schools. The focus of this section is to find out if teachers from the three categories differed or shared similar views on the effect of learners’ grade repetition and their performances.
162. As figure 21 shows, 85% of the teachers in the three school locations agreed that learners should be allowed to repeat until they mastered the basic competencies while only 12% disagreed and 3% were not sure. These views were in contrast to the existing promotion requirements on repetition where learners were required to repeat once in a phase.

163. An average of 85% of the total responses agreed that learners who repeated were likely to achieve the basic competencies. The promotion requirements required learners who did not achieve basic competencies to be transferred if they already repeated once in that phase level.

9.3 Views held by teachers who taught different phase levels on repetition of learners and their performance

164. Teachers were classified into three categories namely lower primary phase (grades 1-4), upper primary 5-7, combined schools 1-10, and the last category was senior secondary phase (grades 11-12). In this section, the focus is to find out if there were differences in opinion on how they viewed repetition.
165. Concerning the notion that ‘learners who failed should repeat grades until they mastered the basic competencies for the grade’. More than three quarters of the teachers (84%) across the phase levels strongly felt that learners should not be transferred but should repeat until they mastered the basic competencies. In comparison, the proportion of teachers who refuted the statement was too low (12%). The majority of the teachers (88%) in the lower primary supported the statement compared to teachers from the combined (83%) and senior secondary (82%) schools.

166. It was found out in this study that learners would improve in achieving basic competencies when they repeated. Relatively, this was the only factor that had the support of the majority of the teachers across all phase levels (85%), with the higher rating from lower primary teachers (88%). Only 15% of the teachers either disagreed or were not sure.

9.4 Views held by teachers on repetition of learners by teaching experience

167. Teachers were classified into four categories according to the number of teaching experience: 1 -5, 6 -10, 11 – 15 and 16 and above as the last category. The figure that follows interrogates the question ‘will teachers with different teaching experience differ in opinion?’
Due to controversies regarding the promotion requirements specifically the promotion, repetition of grade and transfer of learners to the next grade, teachers’ reaction to repetition was remarkable. On average 83% of the teachers across the four categories, irrespective of their teaching experience, strongly felt that learners should not be transferred to the next grade but should repeat until they mastered the competencies of the previous grade. A small fraction of teachers (4%) were not sure whether the learners should repeat or not. 13% of the teachers disagreed that learners should not repeat.

Regarding the statement that ‘learners would improve in achieving basic competencies when they repeated’. Reacting to this, 83% of teachers across all categories supported the notion. Only 11% did not find this opinion worthwhile, and 7% were not sure. There are possibilities that the teachers who disagreed supported transfer and not repetition.
SECTION TEN

Stakeholders’ views on promotion practices in schools

10. Views on promotion practices in schools

170. This section intends to explore the views of education officials on promotion practices in schools. Promotion practices range from the provision of promotion requirement documents to implementation of the promotion requirements.

10.1 Views of the education officials on the promotion practices in schools

171. On the point that all schools had promotion requirements documents for teachers to use, an average of 65% of the officials agreed that schools had promotion requirements documents compared to 8% who disagreed and the remaining percentage of those who were not sure, indicating that some schools did not have or perhaps did not receive the promotion requirements documents on time.
172. Parents’ input into their children’s school progress was essential so was the promotion through grades. It was thus not surprising that 82% of the officials on average agreed that parents should have an input on decisions regarding the promotion, repetition and transfer of their learners. Thus, an average rating of 83% in agreement on the effective communication on promotion of learners between the school and the parents emphasised the importance of communication and parental participation on their children’s education.

173. Cumulative record cards are essential tools for communicating information about the learner’s holistic development. It was obvious from the responses of the officials on the notion that cumulative record cards, school reports and other documents were used effectively in schools for promoting learners to next grades, though only 41% of the officials agreed. This view was in contrast with the document analysis where few schools had these documents in place and completed.

174. It was interesting noting that 62% of the officials agreed, 20% disagreed that there was a wide gap between promotion requirements and the actual practices in schools. This indicates that the practices differed from school to school.

### 10.2 Views held by teachers in rural, urban and semi-urban on the promotion practices

175. The school location might have an influence on the way teachers implement the promotion requirements. About 63% of the teachers in the three locations agreed to the statement that the ‘promotion requirements were available in schools’. The 14% of teachers in rural schools who disagreed to the statement and the 26% on average of teachers in the three locations who were not sure raised concerns about the lack of promotion requirements in schools.

![Figure 25 Views held by teachers in rural, urban and semi-urban on the promotion practices](image)

176. About three quarters (69%) of the teachers in the three locations supported that ‘parents should have an input on the decision of promotion, repetition and transferring of a child’.
177. As such, teachers agreed that effective communication channels on promotion or non-promotion of learners should exist between the school and the parents.

178. On the effective use of cumulative record cards, school reports, and other documents in schools for promoting learners to the next grade, 64% of the teachers in urban schools agreed to the statement compared to 56% in rural schools and 51% in semi-urban schools. Interestingly, 27% and 30% of the teachers in rural and semi-urban schools disagreed respectively indicating the discrepancies on the importance and use of records as references in promoting learners.

179. In comparing responses pertaining to the requirements and practices, the responses were scattered between the three groups with less than 50% of teachers from urban areas agreeing. This response was equivalent to a total of those who disagreed (27%) and who were not sure (24%). The average response of 51% in agreement was low indicating that there were gaps between promotion requirements and practices in schools specifically in rural and semi-urban schools.

10.3 Opinions held by teachers of different phases on promotion practices in schools

180. In this section, teachers’ views according to the different phase levels are presented. As seen in figure 26, teachers’ responses to ‘schools have promotion requirements guidelines documents for teachers’ use’ revealed that some schools had promotion requirements documents and others did not have. Comparing the group responses, 66% of the teachers in lower primary, 65% in combined schools and 57% in senior secondary agreed with the statement. More than a third of the teachers who were not sure especially at senior secondary schools (35%) was alarming since it indicated that these teachers were not aware of the promotion requirements documents or were not using them effectively for promoting learners to the next grade.
The majority of teachers supported that parents should have an input on the decisions regarding the promotion, repetition and transferring learners to the next grade. Slight differences were noted between lower primary (68% agreed) combined schools (76% agreed) and senior secondary (67% agreed). A proportion of teachers in all phases who disagreed showed that the issue of involving parents in promotion was not fully accepted.

While a remarkable percentage of teachers across the phases disregarded the parents’ input, their responses on the existence of ‘effective communication channels on the promotion and non-promotion of learners between the school and the parents’ differed. In comparing the responses, 86% of the teachers in lower primary, 81% in combined schools and 79% in senior secondary schools supported that ‘effective communication between schools and the parents regarding promotion of learners was essential’.

There were low responses in agreement on the ‘effective use of cumulative record cards, school reports and other documents on learners’ performance’. Close to three quarters of the teachers in lower primary (69%), half (55%) in combined schools and less than half in senior secondary schools supported the statement. The remaining teachers in the phases disagreed or were not sure. This scenario explains why documents such as cumulative record cards were not completed as required or did not exist in some schools.

Teachers expressed their views on the gap between the promotion requirement practices in schools. Teachers’ opinions varied. The lower primary teachers rated 46% while combined schools 53% and senior secondary 49% in favour of the statement. The proportion of teachers in lower primary (29% and 23%), combined schools (27% and 23%) and senior secondary (26% and 23%) who disagreed or were not
sure indicated that there were discernible differences between the promotion requirement practices in schools.

10.4 The influence of teaching experience on teachers’ opinions on promotion practices in schools

185. Teachers’ views on the basis of their teaching experience were explored. As shown in figure 27, their responses to the statement ‘all schools had promotion requirements for teachers to use’ were as follow: on average, 63% of all teachers across all five categories agreed with the statement. There were slight differences on responses between the categories.

![Figure 27 Teachers' views on promotion practices in schools by teaching experience](image)

186. When asked whether ‘parents should have an input on the decision of promotion, repetition and transferring learners’, 72% of teachers across all four categories of teachers supported the statement. No differences were noted between the groups on their responses. On the other hand, 21% of the teachers did not find it necessary involving parents. Based on these findings, it seemed that there were reasons why some teachers did not want parents’ involvement or it could be purely ignorance from the side of some teachers.

187. Teachers were asked to give opinions on whether there were ‘effective communication channels on promotion or non-promotion of learners between the school and the parents’. Surprisingly, more teachers agreed (83%) to the statement compared to the statement regarding ‘parental involvement’.

71
188. Regarding the data kept on learners’ performances and responding to the statement ‘cumulative record cards, school reports and other documents were used effectively in schools for promoting learners to the next grade’. On average, 53% of teachers across the categories agreed that data on learner performance were used effectively while 28% of the teachers disagreed. It was amazing that 18% of the teachers were not sure. This was disturbing because such data should help teachers track the progress of learners as well as identifying learners who needed help. Slight differences were noted between the groups with most experienced teachers supporting the statement compared to the remaining groups. The results thus indicated that the more experienced the teachers were, the more they saw the importance and availability of the learners’ performance data.

189. ‘There was a wide gap between the promotion requirements and the practices in schools’. Half of the teacher (50%) agreed compared to a quarter (26%) who disagreed and 22% who were not sure. Slight differences were noted between the groups indicated that the promotion requirements were carried differently in schools.
SECTION ELEVEN
Perceptions on the learning support practices in schools

11. Education Officials’ perceptions on learning support practices in schools

190. One of the assumptions for this study was ‘the lack of effective learning support in schools has negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning thus the promotion of learners in schools’. The promotion requirements emphasised the provision of learning support to learners who repeated a grade or transferred to the next grade. It was expected that learning support would help learners in achieving the basic competencies. This section intends exploring opinions about this notion.

11.1 Education officials’ views on learning support practices in schools

191. As figure 28 shows, 80% of the officials supported this notion while 9% disagreed. Learning support did not exist in schools since an average of 54% of the officials disagreed compared to 29% who agreed.

![Figure 28 Views on learning support practices in schools by officials’ working position](image)

192. Close to a third (30%) of the officials agreed that ‘learners who repeated or transferred received guidance and counselling from regional school counsellors’ while 57% disagreed. What was astonishing was the fact that 100% of the directors agreed with the statement. According to this outcome, all directors in this study agreed that such references were done.
193. It was interesting noting that more than half of the officials at the regional offices contended that teachers did not have knowledge on how to assist learners who could not achieve basic competencies. More than half of principals, teachers and HoDs conceived it differently.

194. It was found that learning support was not carried out effectively in schools. It was not offered in many schools due to overcrowded classes and the work load of the teachers. In some instances, teachers did not know how to go about implementing it:

“I think we also need guidelines concerning some of the kids if he or she is failing he or she will have that believe that this subject is very difficult and he will never achieve in that subject so if there are facilitators for guiding and counselling they will help them just to make them understand that if you did not perform well this time, this term just read hard next term you will do it so I think we need those facilities to or maybe the teachers to be trained for the guidance of the kid so that they can guide and counsel their kids at school” (Teacher).

195. It was evident that teachers expected support from school counsellors on the how to offer learning support to learners who did not meet minimum requirements for promotion. Not much of their expectations were met. This dependency shows that teacher counsellors’ practices were not effective or existing in schools:

“If they repeat its just the teachers that does the counselling, teachers go and talk to them if you are repeating you don’t need to think that you are dull and so forth but the regional school counsellors they are not , some of us we don’t know them but it happens in different regions that they don’t go to the schools although they are suppose to do that work and at different schools but we don’t know them so and we can hardly find them in most, there are some teachers that are trained and they counsel learners, but it will be better if a repeating child and somebody who is transferred will be counselled” (Teacher).

11.2 Views held by teachers in rural, urban and semi-urban schools on learning support practices

196. In order to investigate the differences on the learning support practices attributed by the location of the schools, views of teachers based on different school locations were compared. Figure 29 presents these views.
Figure 29 Views held by teachers in rural, urban and semi urban schools on learning support

197. With regard to views on the statement ‘learning support assists struggling learners to achieve basic competencies’, the majority of the teachers in all three school locations agreed (81% on average). More specifically were teachers from semi-urban (84%) and urban schools (82%).

198. Views were diversified on the notion that ‘learning support existed in schools and was implemented effectively’ since on average 38% agreed, 31% disagreed and 25% of the teachers were not sure. Comparing the school locations, 41% of teachers in rural schools, 36% in urban schools and 39% in semi-urban schools agreed that learning support existed in schools and was effectively implemented.

199. On the same stance, 69% of the teachers in urban areas disagreed that ‘all learners who repeated or were transferred received guidance and counselling from regional school counsellors’. Thus, 52% of the teachers in urban, 50% from rural and 43% from semi-urban schools disagreed that guidance given to repeaters was effective to cope with the stigma associated with repetition. This implied that guidance was not rendered and learners were left alone to cope with the stigma attached to repetition or transfer.

200. On whether ‘teachers have knowledge on how to go about assisting learners who could not achieve basic competencies’, on average, 53% of all teachers from the three locations agreed, 26% disagreed and the remaining 20% were not sure. However, slight differences were observed especially between rural and the other two locations, with a very small margin between urban and semi-urban teachers.

11.3 The influence of phases teachers teach on learning support practices in schools

201. This section aims to find out if phase levels teachers taught had any persuasion on their views on learning support practices in schools.
202. As shown on figure 30, 80% of teachers across all phase conceived that learning support assists struggling learners to achieve the basic competencies. Although there were no remarkable differences between the groups, teachers teaching in the senior secondary classes featured low (76%) compared to the combined and lower primary teachers.

203. The promotion requirements require teachers to render learning support to struggling learners. Hence one of the factors was to find out the existence of learning support as well as the extent to which learning support was effectively implemented in schools. It was clear from the findings that learning support did not exist in some schools because only 42% of the teachers supported the claim. A noticeable low rating was among teachers teaching in senior secondary schools (33%). Teachers in lower primary and combined schools rated 48% and 45% respectively in favour of the statement. The mere fact that more than a third of the teachers disagreed (30%) or were not sure (26%) indicated that learning support was not effectively rendered in schools.

204. Learners who repeated a grade or transferred to the next grade needed guidance and were not referred to regional school counsellors for guidance. Thus it was not surprising that a fraction of the teachers agreed (21%) that such a practice existed compared to 65% of the teachers who disagreed. No striking differences were noted between the groups.

205. Teachers did not find guidance and counselling received from regional school counsellors effective in assisting learners to cope with the stigma associated with repetition (27% agreed and 49% disagreed while 21% were not sure).
206. On whether ‘teachers have knowledge on how to go about assisting learners who could not achieve basic competencies’, 54% of the teachers across the phases felt that teachers had the knowledge, whereas 24% of the teachers disagreed, and 20% remained neutral. This indicated that nearly half of the teachers did not have the knowledge of offering learning support to learners with learning problems in schools.
11.4 The influence of teaching experience on teachers’ responses on learning support practices in schools

207. This section aims to find out if teaching experience had any influence on the teachers’ views on learning support practices in schools.

![Figure 31 Teachers views on learning support practices in schools by teaching experience]

208. Figure 31 shows that 80% of teachers across the categories understood that learning support assisted struggling learners achieving the basic competencies. Slight differences were observed among the different categories. However, teachers who taught between 11-15 years had a slightly higher rate compared to other groups. A fraction of 18% of teachers in total disagreed or was not sure. Although teachers who disagreed were few, it raised concerns about the promotion requirement practices specifically on learning support.

209. In finding out if ‘learning support existed in schools and was effectively implemented’ the teachers’ responses showed a different pattern. A small margin was observed between the teachers who agreed to the statement and those who disagreed or remained neutral. More than a third of the teachers (39%) agreed that learning support existed and was implemented effectively. While, 34% of the teachers disagreed and 25% were not sure. There could be a number of reasons why learning support did not exist. It could be that some schools had limited resources, while some did not see the importance or lacked skills and knowledge on how to provide the service.
210. Learners in the schools who needed guidance and counselling were supposed to be referred to regional school counsellors, but this did not happen in many schools. As a result only 19% of the teachers across the categories agreed that such a practice existed. Whereas, more than half (64%) of the teachers disagreed and 16% were not sure.

211. It was striking that schools that referred learners to the regional school counsellors did not find it effective in assisting learners cope with the stigma associated with repetition. Only 28% of the teachers agreed, 22% were not sure and 49% disagreed.

212. ‘Whether teachers had knowledge on how to go about assisting learners who could not achieve basic competencies’, 50% of the teachers across the categories did not have problems assisting learners while 29% needed assistance and 20% were not sure. Since more than a quarter (29%) of the teachers disagreed with the statement, raises a concern on the implementation of the promotion requirements:

*The issue of the compensatory teaching might differ from school to school in our cases we are very much challenged in terms of classes so at noon my lower primary teachers had to vacate the classes to make room for other group that is coming up in the afternoon so they are not having much classroom available for them, so you forget talking about compensatory they don’t have any room for that (Principal)*
SECTION TWELVE

Reasons for grade and phase repetitions in schools

12. Views on reasons of learners’ repetition of grade

213. Anticipated reasons why learners fail were classified into three categories. The first category were reasons related to teacher factors, followed by reasons related to policy and learner factors, and the last category were reasons related to teaching and learning materials. Hence, this section aims at exploring reasons that contributed to learners’ failure from the point of view of education officials, school location, teaching experience and the different phases teachers taught.

12.1 Education stakeholders’ views on reasons of learners’ repetition of grade due to teachers’ factors

214. Stakeholders views on the reasons for grade or phase repetitions are presented in table 5.

Table 5 Reasons of learners’ repetition of grade due to teachers’ factors

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<thead>
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<th>Statements</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' lack of subject content contribute to low quality of teaching, failure and thus repetition</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism of teachers contribute to lack of teaching input, learners failing and thus repetitions</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
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<td>93</td>
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Directors  25 0 75 0 0 100 0 25 75 0 0 100 0 0 100
Inspector  13 11 76 16 8 76 5 3 92 18 16 66 11 5 84
Deputy directors  9 0 91 0 18 82 0 9 91 0 0 100 0 0 100
Advisory teachers  11 7 80 15 9 75 9 9 78 9 11 78 9 13 78
Regional school counsellors  7 7 86 0 7 93 7 7 86 0 0 100 7 14 79
Principals  16 12 72 17 31 66 16 16 69 16 11 72 19 14 67
HoDs  23 13 63 25 9 66 25 10 64 23 11 65 25 15 59
Teachers  20 15 64 17 13 68 17 12 70 21 11 66 16 13 70
Average  16 8 76 11 12 78 10 11 78 11 8 81 11 9 80
215. The use of different teaching strategies is essential for enhancing learning. Effective teachers apply different teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners in their classrooms. Due to this, 78% of the officials specifically directors, deputy directors, inspectors, advisory teachers and regional school counsellors (rated 80% on average in agreement) conceived that ‘Lack of using different teaching strategies contributed to learners’ failure and thus grade repetition’ compared to school based officials who agreed to an average score of 60%.

216. Equally important, the subject content knowledge is important for effective lesson delivery. Although on average 76% of the officials agreed, it was amazing noting that the average of the school based educators was 60% compared to the office based educators whose average score was 81%. This result indicated that the school based educators perceived their subject content knowledge to be adequate while the supervisors perceived it differently.

217. Teachers’ competence is tested by reviewing the planning of teaching and learning. About three quarters of the officials (80%) agreed to the statement. Lack of planning hampered teaching and learning and thus resulting in learners’ high failure and grade repetition.

218. Despite the arrangement practices in schools when a teacher was absent from work, being absent implied that teaching and learning partially or does not take place at all. Being aware of the circumstances in schools, 100% of the directors, deputy directors, regional school counsellors supported this fact compared to an average of 70% of the remaining officials who equally agreed.

219. The overall average score of 79% implied that teachers ‘absenteeism contributed to lack of teaching input, learners failing and thus grade or phase repetition’.

220. To be able to help learners with specific learning problems, the information about learners’ holistic development should be known by teachers of the next grade or subject teachers. It is cumbersome and difficult helping a learner with academic backlog in absence of background knowledge of the problem. Thus, reacting to the statement ‘lack of knowledge of previous learners’ performance contribute to repetition of learners in schools, 80% of the officials agreed compared to those who disagreed or were not sure that lack of information on learners’ progress hampered teaching. It was yet amazing that school based officials specifically the principals and HoDs though supported this notion, the ratings were not remarkable compared to the remaining officials.

### 12.2 Narrated causes of learners’ grade and phase repetition

221. The majority of the participants, more specifically teachers, complained about the lack of monitoring of teaching and expected assistance from both the management of the schools, the inspectorate and the advisory teachers, in particular the principals and advisory teachers. Principals and the senior staff of schools were blamed for failing to monitor the day to day affairs of the schools, most specifically visiting classrooms and advise teachers accordingly. Similarly, teachers pointed fingers at advisory teachers for not visiting schools and assisting teachers:

“*And the issue of learning support in our schools, we don’t have HODs for, for example we don’t have HODs for languages so basically you are on your own and most of us are new we just came from the
university so in that sense there is not much support that you can get otherwise you are on your own and you wouldn’t even know where to go unless you go to other schools and consult other teachers but at the school level, there is nobody to support you” (Teacher).

“I looked at the number of the advisory services, their subject specialisations do not cover all the subjects so they cannot assist the teachers you can have an advisory teacher for both Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama but somewhere somehow just for an example the help is not obtained by everybody and there are subjects from grade 8 to 12 without advisory teachers and the teachers are going on her own or his own just like that and also the advisory teachers who are available they are waiting to be invited to the school “ (Principal).

“Somewhere here and there I see that the advisory system is also a problem and also is a question how is the inspector doing it? Do you look at the work of the inspectors, what are they doing? Also what must be looked at, the directors of education must also visit the schools and find out if the inspectors are inspecting, so to help these learners let all the system beginning from the director of education to directors, inspectors, subject advisors and even the principal themselves and HoDs, lets ensure that they are all concerned about the passing of learners in our schools and let teachers also enjoy the subject which they are teaching, if there is a problem that they encounter in the subject they must consult the principal who will call the subject advisor to come directly to the school and help the teacher” (Community activist)...  

222. Principals complained of having too much teaching load. The 25% teaching load prescribed to principals was still too much. Principals demanded to be relieved of teaching loads and remain with administrative tasks only. Due to current staffing norms some principals especially in schools with fewer learners had more teaching load than stipulated. This resulted into misplacement of teachers. The misplacement of teachers due to staffing norms and other factors contributed to the rising number of failure in schools since teachers teach subjects they did not specialise in:

“I would say they don’t have, but is a must we should monitor what they do in class, you should check their lesson plans, schemes of work and class visits. But now, if I am in class for 45 minutes, the other teachers might also relax in the staff-room, they know that I am in class” (Principal).

“The teaching load should be reduced, we should have fewer periods in order to monitor, even though we were relieved, but we still have many periods, it is still too much” (Principal).

223. The high failure rate was attributed to lack of essential competencies for learning such as basic literacy and numeracy skills. It was evident that many learners proceeded to the higher grades without having acquired an acceptable level of reading and numeracy skills. The major root to the problem was the absence of pre-primary programs. The officials especially the teachers claimed that detaching preschools from formal education had detrimental effects on teaching and learning. Although teachers acknowledged government efforts to incorporate the preschools in formal education and made it compulsory, according to their perspective the process seemed to be too slow:

“Teachers are not prepared: they ask learners to read for themselves and end up in Grade 2 without knowing how to read – and to Grade 3 without knowing how to read and write” (Regional Councillor).
“Transfer is done at random, some of the learners entering grade 4 or in grade 5-7 cannot read or write. Learning support is not honoured as required in the policy. If a teacher realises that a certain child will not be promoted end of the year, nothing is done to such a child, the child is handed over to the teacher, no support is given, the child will go on without able to read or write” (Director).

224. Some participants, especially parents were quick to point out that there was lack of commitment among teachers. Additionally, they also felt that teachers did not devote time to teaching; they were into other money-making ventures. Teachers attributed the lack of commitment and devoting little attention to teaching due to low salary and lack of fringe benefits within the teaching profession:

“Teachers should know a child very well – no extra efforts are made by teachers to make sure that the child passes. Teachers should identify the problem and solve it before 2nd year of repetition” (Governor).

225. Not all learners are good in academic subjects. As such not all learners would excel well in academic subjects. The short coming of the schooling system falls on the inability to assess learners on different abilities and talents apart from academic. Would this have been the case, no learners would have failed. This conception was strongly held by the informants with emphasis on vocational training, music, art, hand work, dancing among other talents. Capitalising on learners’ potentials, talents and technical skills would have reduced unemployment and failure rate in schools:

“This is a borrowed policy. I have seen countries that are using the similar policy and they have vocational institutions where they send children that are struggling and cannot pass but here we are only transferring learners up to Grade 10 without gaining anything and these learners end up in the street and suffer....... Open up opportunities for learners that are not good academically to do other things like vocational school, train them in the field that they are good at....Practical subjects such as needle work, art, etc must be available to refer learners that are not academic”(Advisory teacher).

226. Teachers blamed the management for learners’ indiscipline, parents for non-involvement, government for lack of resources among others. The management on the other hand blamed teachers for lack of commitment, absenteeism, lack of subject knowledge among others and similarly parents and some other stakeholders pointed fingers at teachers and learners. And learners blamed teachers and parents. In each group interviewed, the blame was shifted:

“Teachers’ subject-knowledge e.g. Grade 1-4 (class- teaching): If a class teacher does not have a good knowledge in some subject, then these subjects are neglected and assessment is done without any achievement of the competencies ...Teaching is not in some schools. Learners are just waiting to write examination...The policy cannot do anything but is the teachers that are doing it....Continuous assessment is not done properly...Institutions that are training teachers must train them properly so that they are acquainted with what they will be facing in the field or in the real classroom situation....The policy itself does not cause failure but I feel it is the teachers that are not teaching and transfer learners without achieving the basic competencies....There is no accountability, nobody is accountable for the failure of learners because the policy says learners must be transferred therefore many teachers are hiding behind the policy. If the learners can be allowed to fail and repeat then teachers can be held accountable for failing this learner” (Advisory teacher).
“We should have enough textbooks, be given more summaries and notes by teachers. All teachers should attend classes and teach... Learners should also attend classes... Learners should put more efforts in their studies” (Learner).

227. The high failure rate specifically in rural schools was attributed to the selection and recruitment of learners especially to secondary schools, and most specifically to grade 11. It was evident that the strength of the good performing schools depended on their screening process for new recruits. As a result, some schools select the ‘cream’ and all ‘rejects’ were always taken up by the remaining schools, making it very hard to bring such learners on par with the other learners:

“The practice at our school, you find that we always receive the worst learners, all learners who were rejected from other schools were all brought to our school, we are forced to take all of them, we accommodate all the rejects” (Principal).

228. Teachers carried the opinion that mother tongue instruction in Lower Primary contributed to learners’ failure, most specifically in rural areas. Due to this, some of the education stakeholders strongly suggested that English be taught from grade 1, and taught by specialised English teachers:

“the policy is not that effective due to the fact that we are at the different part of the country in urban and rural areas, urban learners are exposed to many activities that are in English unlike the ones in the rural areas. Learners in the rural areas are disadvantaged when it comes to mastering terms in the language English. Suppose for instance if I go to the southern part where some kids are taught in Khoe-khoe or in Afrikaans for instance, and they have to be assessed in languages let’s say like in English, you will see that those ones that were taught in a different language, in their mother language, it will be difficult for them to catch up English which is the promotion requirement” (Teacher).

229. There was lack of proficiency in English among learners. Teachers, especially in rural schools found it hard to help learners due to language constraints:

“The background of the learners we receive from some feeder schools in English makes it very difficult for us to achieve the basic competencies; you will find that they are completely different when it comes to understanding English. I don’t know if it the problem of the feeding schools, or the problem is lack of media, they are not exposed to things like magazines, newspapers like those in urban schools, I think it is also playing a major role, in the end you find that it will be very difficult when you are teaching in class for them to understand. Because all the subjects apart from the vernacular language are in English, it is going to be very difficult, you will find that you are teaching the content and the language as well” (Teacher).

12.3 Views held by rural, urban and semi urban school teachers on reasons of grade repetition

230. In agreement to the notion that learners had different learning styles, was the assumption that not all learners may benefit from a single teaching strategy. Thus, 67% of the teachers in the three school locations specifically the rural schools (69%) agreed that lack of using different teaching strategies contributed to learners’ failure and thus grade or phase repetition.
231. Lack of subject content (65% on average agreed) and planning (69% on average agreed) may result in low quality of teaching, learners failing and grade or phase repetition. Marked differences that were noted among the schools specifically in rural schools implied that these problems affected teachers in rural schools (71% agreed) compared to urban (63% agreed) and semi urban schools (62% agreed).

Figure 32 View held by rural, urban and semi urban school teachers on reasons of grade repetition due to teacher factors

232. Most of the teachers in three schools location agreed on average (78% and 74% respectively) that teacher absenteeism and lack of knowledge of learners’ previous performances contributed to grade or phase repetition. Rural (80%) and semi urban (79%) schools being more affected compared to urban (76%) schools. It was difficult for teachers to attend to learners with problems if learners’ learning difficulties were not documented and known by the next teacher.

12.4 The influence of the phase teachers teach on reasons of repetition

233. Table 6 presents reasons for repetition pertaining to how teachers teach. Regarding to the statement ‘that lack of using different teaching strategies contributed to repetition of learners’, 67% of the teachers in lower primary, 67% in combined schools and 61% in senior secondary schools saw the need for adjusting teaching and learning materials. In fact, alternating teaching strategies and adjusting teaching material gives assurance that all learners are accommodated.
234. Repetition of learners in schools was caused by the lack of knowledge on learners’ previous performance. There were no differences in responses across the phase on this notion. However, the fact that fractions of teachers, 19% in lower primary, 21% combined schools and 17% senior secondary disagreed to the statement showed that teachers in some schools did not share information pertaining to learners’ performances with the next teachers to enable them to help those faced with learning backlogs, as a result these learners failed and repeated.

235. Comparing the responses pertaining to planning, 67% of the teachers in lower primary, 71% in combined schools and 67% in senior secondary agreed that lack of planning hampered the quality of teaching and contributed to learners’ failure and grade repetition of learners in schools.

236. Teachers’ absence from school means that teaching does not take place. Although 68% of the teachers in primary schools, 69% in combined schools and 67% in senior secondary schools agreed that absenteeism contributed to repetition; close to a third of the teachers in the phases disagreed. Perhaps absenteeism in some schools or to some of the teachers was regarded as a norm and would not matter much on the effect it would have caused on learners’ performances.

237. Teachers’ views were diversified on the lack of subject content knowledge. At lower primary, 63% of the teacher agreed that lack of subject content contribute to poor teaching, learners’ failure and grade repetition. This notion was also supported by teachers in combined schools (70%) and senior secondary (71%).
12.5 Teaching experience and views on reasons for learners’ repetition

138. Reasons for repetition as a result of how teachers teach did not attract a lot of support from the teachers. It was interesting noting that the distributions of scores across the three rating scales were similar. The agreeing ranged between 68% – 70%, disagreeing 17%-19% and 10% – 13% for not sure. Although the pattern was similar, looking at teachers’ responses to each issue was important. As table 7 shows, 68% of the teachers across the four categories conceived that lack of using different teaching strategies contributed to repetition of learners. It was important that teachers use alternative strategies to accommodate all learners. It was therefore disturbing that 18% of the teachers across the categories disagreed and 13% were not sure.

Table 7 Teachers’ teaching experience and reasons for learners’ repetition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of different teaching strategies contributes to repetition of learners in Namibian schools.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge on previous performance of learners contributes to repetition of learners in Namibian schools.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of thorough planning contributes to repetition of learners in Namibian schools.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism of teachers contributes to repetition of learners in Namibian schools.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' lack of subject content knowledge contributes to repetition of learners in Namibian schools.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=Teaching Experience 1-5   2 = Teaching Experience 6-10   3 = Teaching Experience 11-15   4 = Teaching Experience 16 & above

239. Knowing the learners’ previous performance enables the teachers to render appropriate assistance. The lack of knowledge on previous performance of learners might have contributed to failure and thus repetition. As indicated in table 7, 69% of the teachers who agreed to the statement pointed to the fact that not all teachers saw the need. This concern was further illustrated by 31% of the teachers across the categories that disagreed or were not sure. This could explain why some schools did not keep proper data on learner performance because they did not attach much value to learners’ previous knowledge.

240. In general, teacher supported reasons of repetition as attributed to lack of thorough planning (70% agreed). Conversely, 17% of the teachers did not seem to attach any significance to intensive planning while 12% were not sure that planning was important.
241. The outcome of the teachers’ responses on teachers’ absenteeism showed that 69% of the teachers agreed that absenteeism was a cause of repetition of learners in schools. Noticeable responses (75%) were observed among beginner teachers compared to the remaining groups.

242. Teachers’ lack of subject content knowledge was associated with high failure rate and repetition in Namibian schools. It was therefore surprising that 31% of the teachers who disagreed or were not sure did not conceive this as a problem. Most probably these teachers did not want to dent their reputations. It was equally worrying that 19% of the teachers who taught between 11-15 years were not sure.

12.6 Education Officials’ reasons of grade repetition due to policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

243. A recommended teacher-learner ratio in secondary schools is 1:35. In rural schools classes have high teacher-learner ratios of 1:55 or more. Overcrowded classes are not conducive to teaching and attending to all learners’ learning needs. Thus 81% on average, of the education officials agreed to the statement that ‘over crowded classes contribute to repetition of learners in schools’.

Table 8 Views of education officials on reasons of grade repetition due policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Over crowded classes contribute to repetition of learners in schools</th>
<th>Inclusive education contribute to repetition of learners in schools</th>
<th>Absenteeism of learners contributes to repetition of learners in schools</th>
<th>Disciplinary problems contribute to repetition of learners in schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspectors</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy directors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional school counsellors</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HoDs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

244. Views were spread on the notion that ‘inclusive education contribute to repetition of learners in schools’. Close to half (50%) of the directors, inspectors and deputy directors disagreed while the principals, teachers, HoDs supported the notion. Apart from understanding the policy, practitioners at the school level might have found it difficult to implement. Additional to this concern was the work load they carried out on a daily basis.
The average score of 39% of the officials who agreed on inclusive education as reason for repetition implied that inclusive education was not understood.

It was not surprising noting that an average of 78% of the officials agreed that absenteeism caused grade repetition. A Learner who missed classes so often would have a learning backlog and thus fail to attain the basic competencies.

Pertaining to the statement that ‘disciplinary problems contribute to repetition of learners in schools’, 80% of the officials specifically practitioners supported the statement. It was amazing finding that only 50% of the directors agreed while the rest disagreed or were not sure. Indiscipline was attributed to lack of punishment, child-led homes, home environments, alcohol and drug abuse, sugar daddy relationships, poverty, mushrooming of shebeens in some places and also to some parents who did not show interest in their kids’ education:

“Once again the other problem that we are encountering is discipline, since corporal punishment has been removed, to me there is nothing in place that can discipline the learners or may be to get support from the government that what you do is this and this when a learner is misbehaving, but sometimes parents are expecting from the teachers, sometimes learners are having problems coming from their homes, coming here parents are expecting that this learner should be disciplined by the teachers which is also not good” (NANTU).

“The absence of corporal punishment is affecting discipline in schools; it should be brought back as long as they don’t kill them. In the past we were punished by teachers, we had respect, and this helped us to pay attention in class. As a parent, I want corporal punishment to be back” (Parent).

12.7 Views held by rural, urban and semi urban school teachers on reasons of grade repetition due to policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

The responses in figure 33 show that overcrowded classes affected teaching and thus contributed to failure and repetition of learners in schools. On average 83% of the teachers in three locations agreed. More significantly as the results in figure 33 show, were slight differences in responses of teachers in rural and urban schools.

It was not amazing noting that less that half of the teachers (46%) agreed that inclusive education contributed to grade repetition in schools compared to those who disagreed or were not sure. The responses of teachers in semi urban schools were higher on the disagreement and not sure compared to teachers in rural and urban schools. One should have expected more understanding of the concept of inclusion from teachers in semi urban schools compared specifically to teachers in the rural schools.
Figure 33 Views held by rural, urban and semi urban school teachers on reasons of grade repetition due to policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

250. Absenteeism and discipline impact learning. Thus on average 79% of the teachers in the three school locations who agreed on absenteeism and 83% on discipline was not surprising. Slight differences were noted specifically from teachers in rural schools (80%) who seemed to be more affected.

12.8 Views held by teachers teaching different phases on reasons of grade repetition due to policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

251. As figure 34 shows, the teachers supported ‘overcrowded classrooms contributed to repetition of learners in schools’. According to the results, 89% of the lower primary teachers, 77% of the combined school teachers and 83% of the senior secondary school teachers perceived overcrowded classrooms affecting teaching and contributed to repetition of learners in schools.

252. Likewise, 83% of the teachers in lower primary, 81% combined schools and 80% in senior secondary schools perceived lack of discipline among learners contributed to repetition. It was obvious that learners who were not disciplined lacked concentration in classes.
Figure 34 Views held by teachers teaching different phases on reasons of grade repetition due policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

253. The attribution that learner absenteeism contributed to repetition was supported by teachers in all phases (78% primary, 78% combined schools and 78% senior secondary). This implied that schools were faced with high rate of absenteeism that affected learners’ performance and contributed to learners’ repetition.

254. It was surprising noting that inclusive education partially contributed to repetition of learners in schools. The mere fact that a proportion of teachers who agreed or who were not sure were higher in all phases shows that the concept was not understood in schools.

12.9 Teachers’ teaching experience and views on reasons of grade repetition due to policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors

255. In order to further find out the causes of repetition in Namibian schools, reasons associated with learners were explored.
Among other reasons shown in figure 35 schools were faced with overcrowded classes, learner absenteeism and disciplinary problems. This was evident on teachers’ responses to the three statements regarding overcrowded classrooms (83%), learners’ absenteeism (78%) and disciplinary problems (82%). While the three reasons for repetition were rated highly, inclusive education was the lowest since only 47% supported the statement while 26% of the teachers disagreed and 25% were not sure.

12.10 Reasons of repetition of grades due to lack of teaching and learning materials

Lack of resources specifically teaching materials hampers teaching and learning. Well resourced schools tend to perform better comparing to schools where learners and teachers struggle in using the scarce teaching materials specifically textbooks. It was thus not surprising that 74% of the officials particularly the school based agreed to the statement that ‘Lack of teaching materials contribute to repetition of learners in schools’.

The statement ‘Lack of adjusting teaching and learning materials to suite learners needs contribute to repetition of learners in schools’ was on average supported by 80% of the officials. The outcome of the two aspects clearly indicated that education officials were aware of the importance of teaching and learning materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Lack of teaching materials contribute to repetition of learners in schools</th>
<th>Lack of adjusting teaching and learning materials to suite learners needs contribute to repetition of learners in schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 35 Teachers’ teaching experience and views on reasons of grade repetition due policy deviations and learners’ intra-factors
259. Conditions of schools in rural areas were devastated. Learning was taking place in harsh conditions for both teachers and learners. Most of the schools had no library, much less descent classrooms and houses for teachers. The shortage of textbooks and other necessary teaching and learning resources were evident. While some privileged schools had fully fledged computer laboratories and internet, most of the schools were not updated with emerging technologies that were essentials for teaching and learning. These factors among others contributed to low teaching standard and thus raising failure rates in schools:

“There should be incentives for teachers, road infrastructures for their cars, a house and electricity to motivate them to be at that school and not to look for other jobs somewhere else. With rain, cold, etc. it is an embarrassment for especially female teachers who have or are forced to lift up their clothes in public to cross channels and pools of water on their way to/from schools” (Regional councillor)

“I am also suggesting for the government to build the houses at the schools which are in the villages in the rural areas, teachers don’t go there because they have no where to stay so in our rural areas we are just having the local, local teachers but we also need the foreign teachers because foreign teachers are just in the towns but foreign teachers have some different knowledge...we also need them in the rural areas but we need houses for them because they have no houses to stay” (Teacher).

“Resources e.g. science equipment such as libraries, science laboratories etc. We do not have enough schools, furniture are not enough, boarding schools are few and not all schools have feeding programmes, learners and teachers are walking long distances and learners come with no food to school (Advisory Teacher).

260. Lack of basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation specifically in peripheral areas hampered teaching and learning. It attracts few competent teachers in rural areas:
“the learners that are coming from our homestead villages its also a problem for them to go and study at home, they don’t have electricity and sometimes when they go home they don’t have enough to eat and we expect the learners to come to school to give us 90% it is impossible and they are also living with elderly people” (HOD).

261. Parents were not involved in schools. In exception of fewer schools, schools visited were dissatisfied with the parental involvement in school activities. There were feelings that parents were not concerned about the education of their children. They left the schools to nurture the children’s education and social growth. Some schools claimed that despite putting mechanisms of involving parents such as parents’ meetings, parents’ evenings, involving them in school activities, some parents still turned deaf ears to such calls:

“you know the situation in the rural set up its not motivating as most of our parents only send their kids to schools, to them school is a new concept therefore in order for them to motivate their learners it is really difficult they can hardly do this, only few of them are really serious when it comes to this aspect of motivating, learners are not motivated you can only look at them when they are walking there the way they dress, they way they walk, they way they come to school you can conclude that is this learner lacks motivation” (HOD)

“The parents who are literate should visit classes; they should witness what their kids are doing in class. For me who is illiterate, I can sit in class, but I will not know whether what he/she is reading is correct or not. We parents should visit schools’ (Parent).

“Yes it is because the parents can talk to their children and the children will listen to them, parents will help the children to start to learn and study more in the grade and work more on their schoolwork... The parents will advice them to do good” (Learner).

262. Learners did not receive assistance with their school-work at home compared to school. The low literacy and numeracy skills among the parents especially in rural areas affect the parental involvement in education of their children. Lack of parental involvement in education affects the performance of learners in schools and contributes to failure:

“also a lack of motivation from the parents, most of the parents are illiterate, they cannot assist the learners when they go home with their homework and maybe if they are called to come to school for the fun days to come and see what the learners are doing, some of the parents are even shy to come because they don’t know what’s going to take place at the school. So there is also need for the parents to be educated in some ways so that they understand what the children are doing at school and how to assist them” (Teacher).

“They must report to the parents how the child is doing at school because at home the parents can push the children to do their homework and look after the books. I think the parents they should know, because the parents should tell their child to work harder and go for extra classes to help practise the things she doesn’t understand” (Learner).
Most of the schools did not have libraries, and those that had libraries, they were not sufficiently stocked. However, some situations were even worse whereby, the library is well stocked, but learners did not really make use of the facility for different reasons:

"I don’t know whether all our schools or our Combined schools have libraries, and also what is the use of the libraries?......Yes I remember, when we were at school, these libraries were just like sport. There was a sports teacher, and time for sports. There was a time that a teacher can give you an example of saying, now you have this lesson in the library, 1 hour library time or 30 minutes library time for the learners to go and search those books in the library ...but there is no such thing. Libraries are just like a storeroom where people keep books,, but they are not being used. Like in the olden times, when we attended school there was a library teacher, but now there is nothing like that. The library are not used I don’t know if the child knows the use of the library’" (Community activist).

12.11 Views held by rural, urban and semi urban school teachers on repetition as due to lack of teaching materials

Looking from the responses on the teaching and learning materials in general in figure 36, it was logical assuming that teachers in all three school locations faced shortage of teaching and learning materials (78% on average agreed) or difficulties in adjusting the teaching and learning materials to fit the needs of all learners (72% on average agreed). The lack of teaching materials might be worse in rural schools since above 84% of the teachers supported the statement compared to urban and semi urban schools.

![Figure 36 Views held by rural, urban and semi urban school teachers on reasons on repetition as due to lack of teaching materials](image-url)
12.12 The influence of phases teachers teach on reasons for repetition of learners in schools caused by lack of teaching materials

265. This section focuses on what teachers teaching at different phase levels perceived causes of high repetition rates in schools.

266. There were slight differences of opinions on the claim that lack of teaching materials contributed to repetition of learners in Namibian schools. About three quarters (79%) of the teachers in lower primary, 87% in combined schools and 75% in senior secondary schools agreed that lack of teaching materials hampered teaching and as a result contributed to failure and repetition of learners in schools.

267. Equally, teachers’ views did not differ much on the matter that ‘lack of adjusting teaching and learning materials to suite learners’ needs contributed to repetition of learners’.

12.13 The influence of teaching experience on teachers’ responses on the reasons for repetition of learners in schools caused by lack of teaching and learning materials

268. As seen in figure 38, there were two reasons associated with teaching and learning materials. There were no remarkable differences in opinions between teachers in the four groups in supporting (78%) the statement that the ‘lack of teaching materials contributes to failure rate and repetition of learners’ in schools. There were no remarkable differences between the groups though 80% of the teachers between 1-5 years teaching experience supported the statement compared to the remaining groups who fared at 77%.
269. On average, 74% of the teachers understood that if teaching and learning materials were not adjusted to suite learners’ needs, learners would fail to understand and fail to attain the basic competencies at the end of the year. To be able to meet the diverse needs of the learners adjusting teaching and the materials was inevitable. It was worrying noting that 16% of the teachers on average did not find this necessary and 11% were not sure.
SECTION THIRTEEN
Synopses of the findings and concluding remarks

270. The negative conception on the effectiveness of the promotion requirements emanated from the practice of transferring learners to the next grade without meeting the basic competencies for the grade; commonly termed as ‘automatics promotion’. It was evident according to the stakeholders’ narratives, the survey data, observations, and document analysis from the sampled schools that learners who were transferred without attaining the basic competencies for the grade accumulated the learning backlogs and failed at the exit points specifically grades 10 and 12:

“I think that we are not satisfied or we are not really in support of automatic promotion as it is now the current system in the schools, in the sense that at least we are expecting learners to be promoted based on their competencies and not just necessarily to be promoted for the sake of promotion.... And secondly, when these learners are promoted without achieving the necessary basic competencies for the grade and we know grade 10 is a stumbling block, when they reach grade 10, so those learners will definitely end up in the streets. So what do we do now? So it is like we are sending more children to the streets without having proper education. If we could allow them to repeat until they are well acquainted with everything, then I think we are doing justice to our learners” (NANTU).

271. The ineffectiveness of the promotion requirements was based on the fact that the promotion requirements promoted failure. Learners who were transferred were not compelled to work hard. There were no demands within the requirements that enforced learners to work hard. Learners were aware of the fact that the requirements clearly stated that a learner can only repeat once in a phase after which he qualifies for transfer to the next grade up to the end of the phase. Furthermore, learners did not see the differences between promotion and transfer since both groups of learners proceeded to the next grade. Thus, the performance of learners who were transferred without meeting the basic competencies for promotion to the next grade would not improve academically and the failure rate would increase. Such a system jeopardised the internal efficiency to which the nation envisaged achieving by the year 2030:

“He will be very happy going through there, but the reason why he is moved there he doesn’t understand. What is he going to get? That’s why I say now you transfer a problem to be a problem in another grade. Why do you transfer a person if you know that this problem that I been facing will be the same problem over there?” (Community Activist).

272. While the majority of the education officials saw weaknesses in the policy some though only a fraction, expressed satisfaction. They felt that there was nothing wrong with the policy, especially on transferring learners to the next grade and repetition of grade. Accordingly, if all learners were supported as stipulated in the promotion requirements, transfer and repetition of learners would have been reduced.

273. Nevertheless, the provision of learning support would have been effective if overcrowded classrooms, lack of knowledge of teachers to offer learning support, overloaded teachers, time and space
among others would have been rectified to allow learning support, compensatory teaching and remedial teaching to effect teaching and learning.

274. Assessment outcomes that are used to make judgement on the promotion, repetition or transferring of learners to the next grade are inconsistent. Schools differed on their assessment approaches and the standard of testing instruments. Teachers lacked the skills in developing standard assessment instruments to test the attainment of the basic competencies. Learners were not assessed and promoted on the basis of skills and talents they portrayed. Alternative modes of assessment especially to learners who demonstrated difficulties in attaining basic competencies for the grade were not taken into consideration. As such failure attaining minimum basic requirements succumb learners to repetition or transfer to the next grade. The absence of an articulated statement within the promotion requirements on how learners who failed to meet the minimum requirement for promotion to the next grade could be alternatively assessed contributes to the increasing number of repeaters in the system. The assessment of learners on skills and talents they demonstrated in addition to the academic performance would have decreased the failure rate in schools.

275. Repetition entailed a failure to attain the basic competencies for the grade. According to the promotion requirements, learners were allowed to repeat a grade once in a phase. If a learner failed to attain basic competencies for the grade the second time, transferring was enforced. Teachers had mixed opinions about grade and phase repetition. There were opinions in favour of grade repetition versus repeating once in a phase. This opinion was based on the ground that grade repetition compared to repeating once in a phase was more effective since it enforces learners to work hard in order to be promoted to the next grade. This argument was based on the previous system of education where learners knew only two terms ‘fail’ or ‘pass’. Within that system a learner who failed repeated until he/she passed to proceed to the next grade:

“As a parent, I don’t want my child to be pulled to the next grade without passing. Even as a parent, you will not be happy, your child is only pulled, he/she does not know anything, he/she is transferred without passing. Let them repeat until they pass so that they get a better future” (Parent).

“No because it doesn’t help you because if you are getting transferred from other grades and you fail the last one it doesn’t help you because the work that you are going to do this year is harder than the last one, so it is obvious that you will fail the next grade again” (Learner).

276. There were indications of strong belief that the old system created competition among learners and made them not to accept failure since it was disgracing. Learners had one peculiar motto; ‘to pass’. They were not prepared to remain behind and be in the same class with those who were younger than them specifically their young sisters or brothers.

277. Remarkable dissatisfaction of the promotion requirements was the grading system across the phases. It was evident that there were inconsistencies on how learners were graded and later promoted, transferred or repeated. The grading and pass requirements for each phase level differed. There were differences between the mark ranges, grade descriptors and promotion requirements. More specifically a description of E symbol in one phase may mean different in another phase. Grade E in phase levels 1-4 and 5-7 meant “Not achieved the majority of the Basic Competencies”, whereas in grades 8-9, it meant “Not achieved the majority of the Basic Competencies”, whereas in grades 8-9, it meant that a learner
“Achieved a sufficient number of Basic Competencies to exceed the minimum competency level”. The inconsistency delinks the phases, weakens the teaching and assessment emphasis, and thus affects the effectiveness of the promotion requirements.

278. There was an outcry on the promotion requirements and grading for grade 1-4. The C symbol required in Mathematics and English if used as medium of instruction was too high. The major concern to this requirement was that many learners specifically in remote schools would not meet the requirement. The arguments were based on the fact that a number of learners failed when the requirements for passing at lower primary were low. It was thus obvious according to the officials that the failure rate increased when the new promotion requirements were enforced.

279. The promotion requirement did not consider the diverse learners’ capacity. Not all learners were talented in Mathematics or English. Learners who were not good in Mathematics would be disadvantaged since they would obviously fail to meet the basic requirements for promotion to the next grade. Learners coming from the disadvantaged schools would encounter problems with the C passing requirement for English especially if used as medium of instruction after grade 1-3 where the mother tongue teaching was practiced as well as at grade 4 where mother tongue instruction is phased out.

280. Contrary views were evident. Some officials conceived that the new requirements would raise the standard of education and make it more competitive. The higher passing requirements would have posed challenges to teachers and learners. The higher promotion requirements would have demanded higher standard of teaching, assessment and commitment on the side of the teachers and hard work on the side of the learners.

281. It was evident that the point grading scale used in grades 1-4 was not mathematically correct. A learner who got 2.7 to 3.6 was regarded as attaining 3 points out of 5 and rewarded C symbol, while a learners who got 3.7 to 4.6 was regarded having 4 points and awarded B symbol. They wanted to see the true mathematical rule of rounding off applied.

282. The dissatisfactions about the mark ranges between grades in grades 5-7 was based on the reason that, within a C symbol for example, some learners got a very weak C equivalent to 45% meanwhile others got a stronger C symbol equivalent to 64%. The gap between the two C symbols was too wide.

283. Major concerns were raised on the promotion requirements for grades 8 and 9. The majority were not satisfied with the grading and promotion requirements of the junior secondary phase. Despite raising the number of Es from five to six subjects, and reducing the number of Fs from four to three subjects, there were feelings that the requirements were too low. Turning the minimum promotion requirements into points will add up to 17 points. The minimum passing requirement for grade 10 in points is 23. They viewed this as one of the reasons why many learners failed grade 10 national examinations. The minimum promotion requirements suddenly rose and the majority cannot meet the required standard.

284. There were strong demands to revise the pass requirements and grading system for grades 8 and 9 and impose the point system. The basis of the argument was that selection of learners to senior secondary and tertiary institutions was based on point system in addition to a C or D in English as a medium of instruction.
285. There were concerns from the education officials and especially learners about prescribed 9 promotion subjects at junior secondary phase compared to 6 subjects at senior secondary phase. The number of promotion subjects in grades 8 and 9 were far too many. The recommendation regarding the scaling down of the subject at junior secondary phase to 6 was coupled with the notion that reducing the number of promotion subjects to 6 would give learners opportunities to choose career paths as early as grade 8.

286. There were obvious discontents over the promotion requirements for grade 11. The majority, if not all, felt that the promotion requirements were too loose. The guidelines were silent about the passing requirement at grade 11. The statements on performance, discipline, attendance were not suffice and neither strictly followed in schools. At grade 11 learners were not strictly assessed for promotion. Learners were judged according to certain criteria such as discipline, school attendance among others, demonstration of satisfactory academic performance. In many cases schools did not enforce some of the requirements that prohibited learners from proceeding to grade 12, due to some practices in some regions. They were apparent claims that the inspectors in many instances vetoed the decision of the school to have some grade 11 learners who did not meet promotion conditions to proceed to grade 12 to repeat. The educational officials specifically the school based officials felt strongly that the promotion requirements for grade 12 to apply to grade 11 and impose the point system as a requirement to proceed to grade 12:

“The policy requirements are vague at grade 11 and 12 specifically grade 11. The policy is silent about the passing requirements at grade 11. The statements on performance, discipline, attendance are not adequate and neither strictly followed in schools. As such grade 11 learners relax since there are assured of proceeding to grade 12” (Inspector).

“Automatic promotion” in Grade 11 is promoting laziness; learners are not motivated to study because they know they will go to Grade 12 even if they did not pass” (Advisory teacher)

“Reconsider the two years course work as stipulated in the National Curriculum if we have to affect learners’ performance at grade 12 final examinations” (Principal).

287. Learning support could have been considered as a pillar of promotion requirements should it have been effectively implemented in schools. The provision of learning support to learners that were not performing was met with criticism. Education officials and other participants felt that teachers lacked the learning support skills necessary for assisting learners in their respective classes. They conceived that teachers needed training to be able to render learning support in classes. The officials blamed the ministry for introducing new ideas such as learning support without considering building the capacity of the implementers. Apart from training, there were demands for special classes and special teachers to each school.

288. There was a general feeling among participants that Mother Tongue Instruction in the lower grades needed to change. They associated learners’ poor performance to low language proficiency among learners. There were evident support and preference on the use of English as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from grade 1 in all schools.

289. Teachers did not receive enough support from the management of the school, and the inspectorate, specifically the advisory services. Whilst principals claimed that they did not have enough time to
monitor and support teachers as required because of the teaching load. Lack of monitoring of the teaching and learning process in schools has a detrimental effect on the performance of learners in schools.

290. Many schools especially in rural areas did not have sufficient classrooms, essential physical facilities such as libraries, laboratories and technical facilities. Some schools had libraries, but they were not sufficiently stocked. In some situations, libraries were just ‘white elephants’, not used by learners. The poor teaching conditions that prevailed in some schools attributed to learners’ poor performance and failure. Most of the schools did not have descent classrooms and houses for teachers. The shortage of textbooks and other necessary teaching and learning resources contributed to poor teaching and results.

291. Parents were not fully involved in the education of their children leave alone understanding the promotion requirements processes. Though parents were called to schools and platforms set to enable parents to participate in school activities, parents failed to use such platforms effectively. Failure on the side of the parents to participate in school activities and support their children’s education hampers learners’ progress in schools. Schools in some circumstances had difficulties soliciting parents’ views over matters of the school.

292. There were testimonial evidences that poor learners’ performance and failure at Upper Primary Phase in schools was attributed to poor background that is laid at Lower Primary Phase. The quality of learners that join the Upper Primary Phase was poor. The majority of them could not read or write.

293. The schooling system provides diversification at a late stage of schooling. Vocational education options come late enough to enable learners who could not master academic subjects in early grades to opt for prevocational and later vocation subjects. There was a strong outcry on introducing vocational schools and centres throughout the country, and entry to such schools should start as soon as learners acquired sufficient numeracy and literacy skills:

“... a slow learner in one subject is not stupid; may be good in any other vocational field. Such a child should be moved from Grade 4 to vocational training. There should be a parallel system: formal vs vocational system. Between Grades 1-4, a teacher will be able to identify those slow learners and sent to vocational training in Grades 5-7. ........In this way, there will be no unnecessary repetition and transfers. Vocational training is a way to unemployment alleviation. They become plumbers, electricians, etc with little knowledge of English, no need for a Masters Degree there” (Regional Councillor)

294. The high failure rate in schools was attributed to lack of commitment among teachers. Teachers did not devote time to teaching because they were into other money-making ventures. The low salaries and perhaps lack of fringe benefits lowered the teachers’ morale, and the value of the teaching profession. Many good teachers crossed over to greener pastures leaving the sector in shambles; jeopardising the attempts to transform the nation into a learning nation by the year 2030.

295. Learners’ poor performance was attributed to learners’ indiscipline in schools. There were a lot of uncontrollable factors such as absence of alternative punishment, child-led homes, home environments, alcohol and drug abuse, sugar daddy/mummy relationships, poverty, mushrooming of shebeens in some places and parents who did not show interest in their children’s education.
SECTION FOURTEEN

Policy implications and recommendations

296. Develop a coherent promotion requirements document. The document should explicitly define the purpose, describe the extent of the promotion problem, draw an explicit link between the phases, and describe the link between assessment and promotion, the core role of learning support and core elements of promotion criteria between phases.

297. Learners who failed to meet the minimum requirements for promotion to the next grade for the second time should attain certain pass requirements to be transferred to the next grade. This requirement will pose academic challenges to the learners and compel them to work harder. Transferred learners should attain a minimum of 21 points. Transferring learners should be coupled with systematic and consistent learning support.

298. Ensure that promotion requirements guidelines reach all schools in good time.

299. Define the borderline concept by setting up definite guidelines to schools in order to avoid different practices carried out in schools regarding learners who are regarded as borderline and promoted to the next grade.

300. Teachers should be sensitised on the role of cumulative record cards and other progress reports in promoting learners to the next grade. Cumulative record cards should be used when transferring learners to the next grade or school by providing information about learners’ holistic development and those requiring learning support.

301. Learners should be promoted on the basis of attainment of the basic competencies. If not, learners should repeat a grade rather than once per phase level as stipulated in the promotion requirement guidelines. Grade repetition should be coupled with systematic, professional and consistent learning support inputs.

302. Synchronise the grading system with percentages in the assessment policy document, promotion requirements and the National Broad Curriculum throughout the phases. Tally the norm with criteria reference assessment benchmarks. Provide definite explanation between criteria versus norm reference assessment domains. Develop an alternative assessment mode in order to assess skills and talents that learners’ portray and use them for promoting learners who cannot excel well academically.

303. Coordinate and monitor assessment policy implementation in schools.

304. Develop appropriate assessment tools based on the learning objectives and competencies in order to produce reliable and effective assessment outcomes.
305. Synchronise the symbols with percentages in all phases on the assessment policy document, promotion requirements and National Curriculum for Basic Education throughout the phases.

306. Provide an articulation of the grading system as well as the descriptors for the lower primary with the percentage benchmarks for the upper primary and secondary schools. Remove discrepancies on the passing requirements between upper primary and junior secondary in order to synchronise the promotion requirements throughout the system.

307. Revise the pass requirements for English and Mathematics at lower, upper primary and junior secondary school promotion requirements. The promotion requirements and the National Broad Curriculum should correlate than contradict each other.

308. In raising the passing requirements for Mathematics and English, especially English, consider schools in rural areas that use mother instruction for the first three years of schooling and the impact such a requirement may have on the learners’ promotion.

309. Apply the mathematics principles in grading learners at lower primary.

310. Review the marks ranges at Upper Primary Phase so that percentages of C which is 45%-64% do not differ from C at Junior Secondary which is 60%-69%. In essence the C at Upper Primary is weaker compared to C at Junior Secondary Phase.

311. Reduce the number of promotional subjects in grades 8 and 9 to 6 subjects only.

312. Introduce tangible passing requirements at grade 8 and 9 to tally with the 23 points pass requirements at grade 10 as well as the requirements set at primary phase level. Ensure that standards of performances are not compromised.

313. Introduce a point system earlier (at upper primary) since this is the yard stick for passing at grade 10 and 12 and the requirement for entry to tertiary institutions.

314. Reconsider the 23 points minimum passing requirements at grade 10 in raising the standard of learners’ performance in order to be in consistence with what was happening in schools especially the well performing schools. A minimum requirement of 27 point is set in some schools contrary to 23 points.

315. Determine the implications of the two year course curriculum for senior secondary phase (grade 11 and 12) on the outcome of the grade 12 National Examinations.

316. Teachers should be trained on how to offer learning support to repeaters and those transferred to the next grade. Ensure the provision of systematic, professional and consistent provision of learning support since this is the strong pillar of the promotion requirements.

317. More teachers be employed and more classrooms built to alleviate the problem of overcrowded classrooms as it affects the quality of teaching and learning.

318. English should be used as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from grade 1.
319. Principals should be relieved of their teaching loads to have enough time to monitor all school activities.

320. All schools be well resourced with libraries and emphasis should be placed on the full utilisation of such facilities. Library teachers should be appointed to render necessary services to learners. Teacher houses, classrooms should be constructed to alleviate the plight of teachers and learners especially in rural schools. Ensure that each school have sufficient teaching materials.

321. Schools should strengthen or set mechanisms for increasing parental involvement.

322. Acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills should be strengthened in the lower primary grades.

323. Vocational schools and centres should be introduced throughout the country and entry to such schools should start earlier, as soon as learners acquire sufficient numeracy and literacy skills.
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