

# EDUCATION FOR WHAT? MEANINGFUL AND EQUITABLE LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

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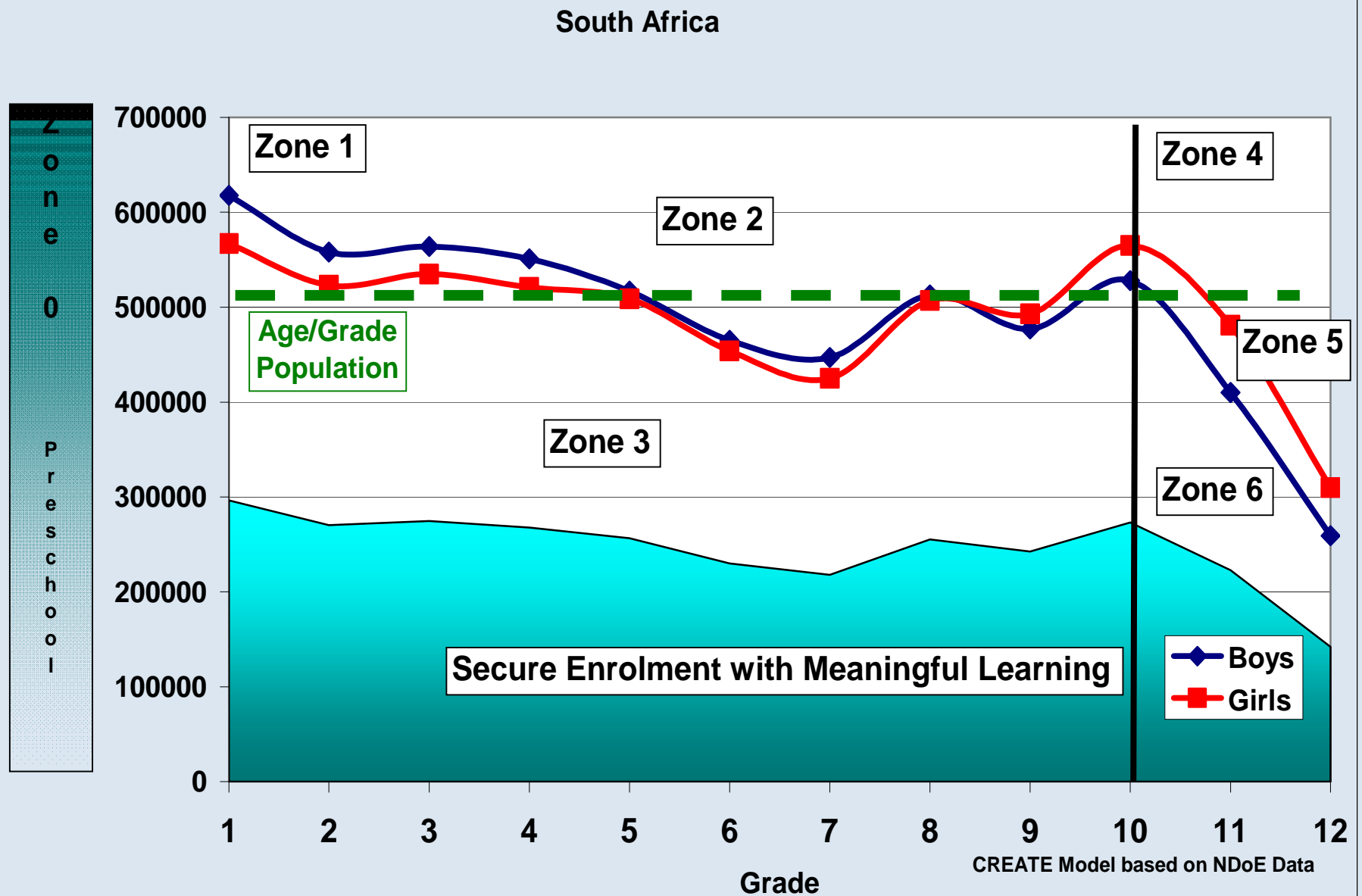
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# RELEVANCE OF SA EDUCATION POLICY TO ACCESS

- Increased access with compulsory education (up to Grade 9 )
- Greater efficiency through legal and policy regulations eg age grade norms
- Overview of education system in SA –high GERs and NERs , 95% public, 12million, primary and secondary, 2% private and R127 billion education expenditure representing 5.3% of GDP.
- Financing equitable access to education
- Finance equity mechanisms (ESS, means testing SFNS, post-provisioning)
- Constraints
- Redistributive thrust but equalisation rather than redress by per capita expenditure
- Research shows difficult to link resources to school quality in terms of LERs, teacher quality and improving learning outcomes
- Competition from other social sectors and delivery issues including decentralisation



# Zones of Exclusion in South Africa – is access a problem?



### Slide 3

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- MS7** Motala, Shireen, 14/11/2010
- MS8** Motala, Shireen, 14/11/2010
- MS9** Motala, Shireen, 14/11/2010
- MS10** Motala, Shireen, 14/11/2010

# RELEVANCE OF ACCESS TO SA EDUCATION

- **BUT:**

Education Access is more than simply structural access or “bums on seats”. Meaningful access to schools includes high attendance rates, systematic progression, transition from primary to secondary and meaningful learning i.e. achieving learning outcomes that confirm basic skills are being mastered.

**Defined this way, access is the central problem**

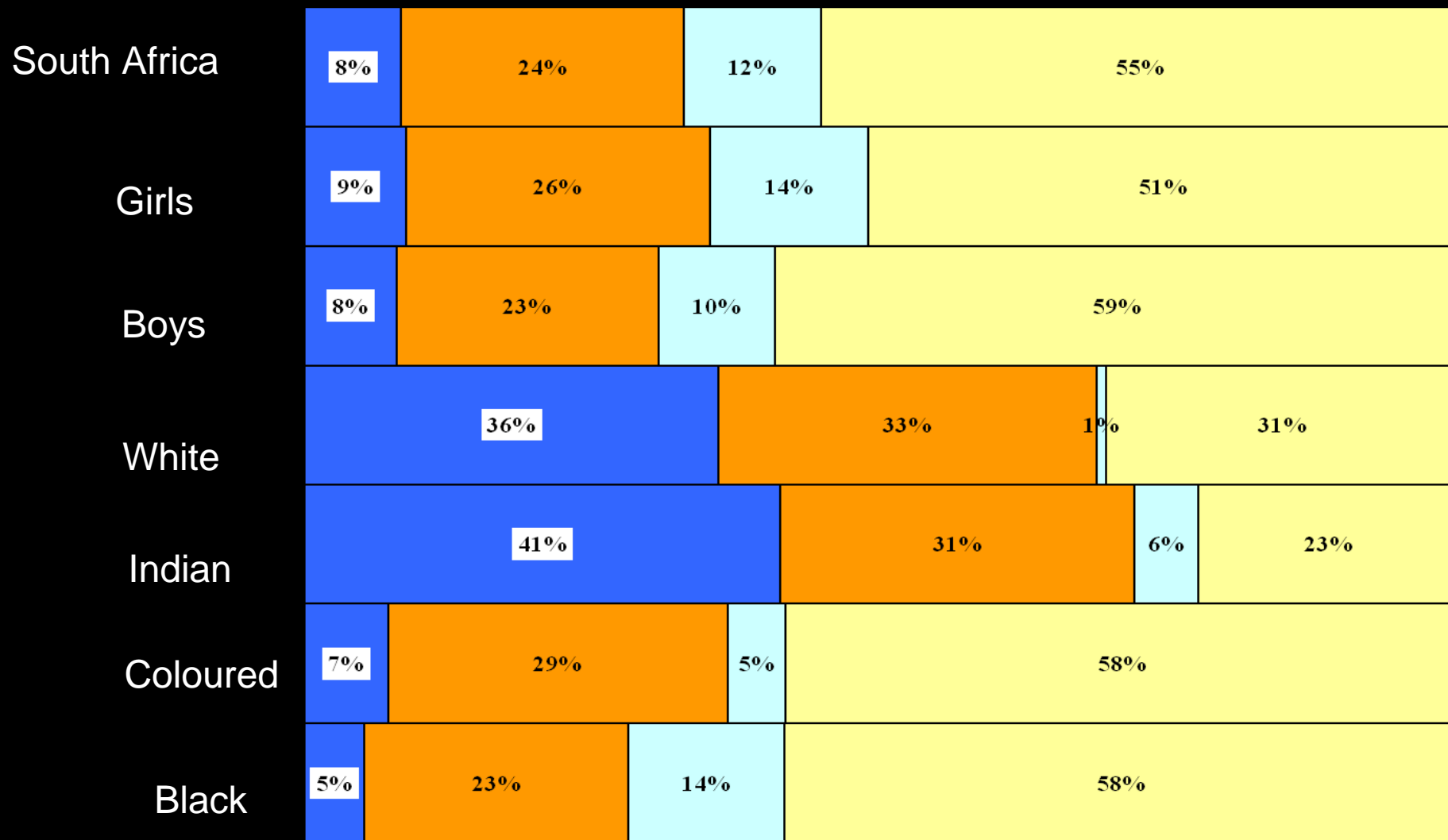
And while everyone is focused on **OUTCOMES**, we need a far more rigorous approach to starting points – **ACCESS**.

- Focus of today is on inclusion and exclusion in SA education :
- - patterns of participation with the particular focus on repetition, dropout, and overagedness
- - meaningful access to learning
- - fee free schools, equity and access.

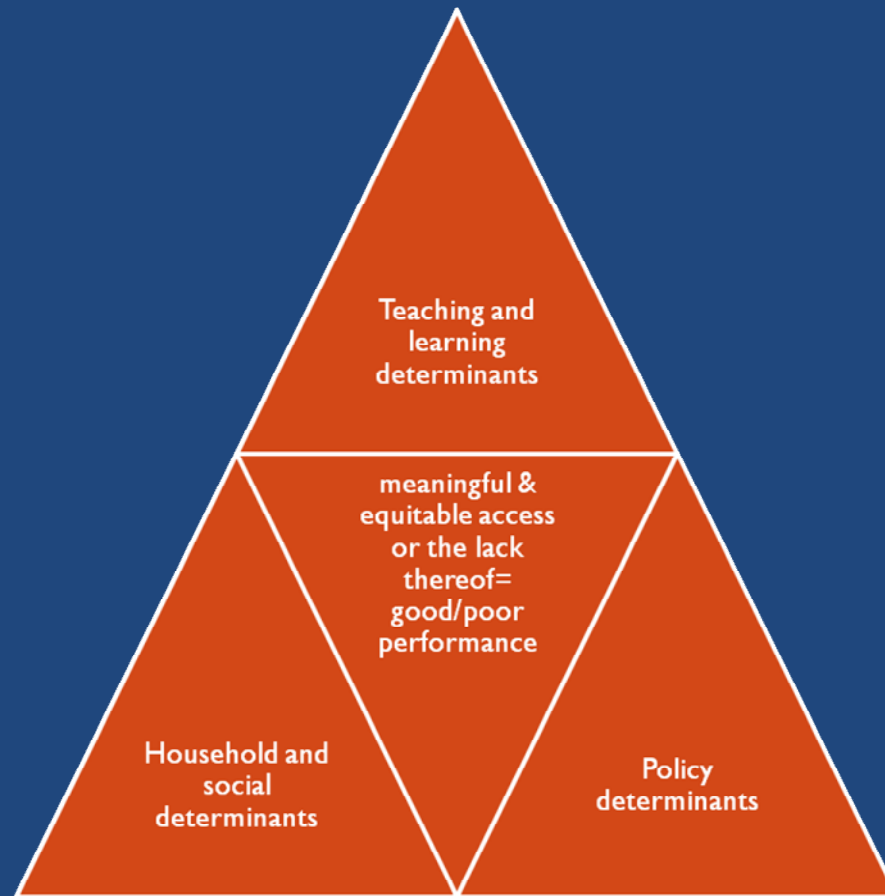


# Matric Attainment by Social Group 2007

■ University endorsement  
 ■ Other passes  
 ■ Fail matric  
 ■ Did not reach matric



# Research Approach



# CREATE SA RESEARCH APPROACH 2008-2010: focusing on meaningful & equitable access

- Approach : Disaggregated analysis with particular focus on the poor and rural.
- Data included
  - 1500 learner profile cards,
  - 200 parent surveys, MS2
  - 900 numeracy tests in Grades 4 and 6
  - Day in the life school and class based observations in 9 schools and focus-group interviews with learners,
  - Analysis of learners classwork books in numeracy,
  - 16 school case studies (GT & EC) on the implementation of fee free schooling.
  - Longitudinal analysis of grade 4 learners investigating SES and learner outcomes.
  - Statistical analysis from census data including profiling learner drop-outs
  - Provincial analysis on language and access





## Slide 7

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### MS2

Generic and aggregating manner in which we understand access is hopelessly irrelevant in SA where inequality is so pervasive. We need analysis of access by poor and rural - otherwise we'll never understand the nature of the problem

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## FINDINGS – PARTICIPATION TRENDS

- Community Survey (2007) surveying 386 000 learners noted exclusion and dropout is limited - related disability, fragile household structure, deep poverty and lack of access to social grants.
- Delayed progression (repetition and drop-out, drop-in) an early predictor of dropout and academic success. MS3
- Under age learners enrolled in Gr 1 (used as preschool provision ) and over-agedness related to underperformance.
- Poorer children and boys more likely to repeat, repetition deferred to later years when more summative assessment takes place and repetition does not mean remediation.
- Gender parity masks gendered access patterns: poorer girls stay in school longer but perform worst.



**Slide 8**

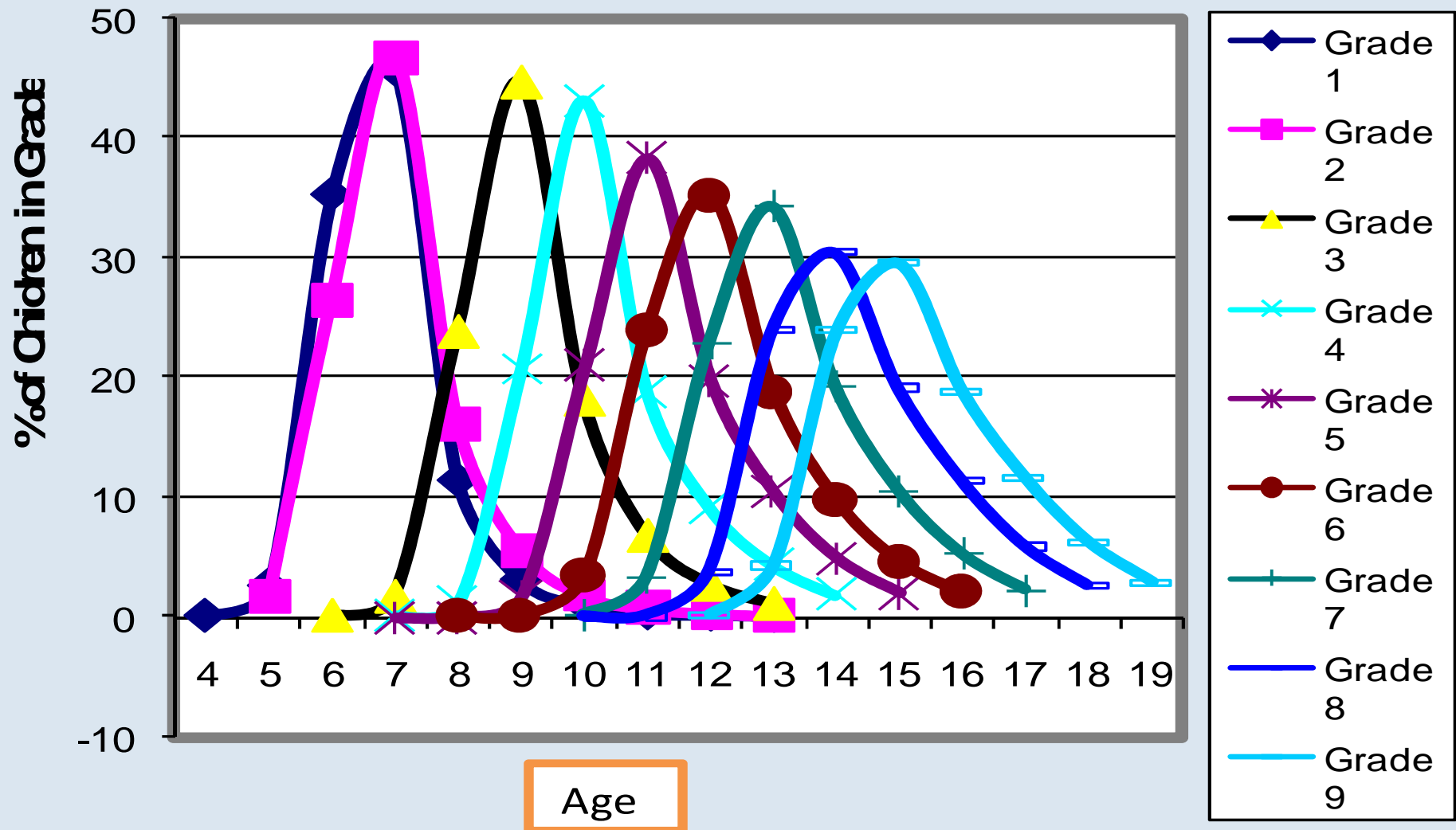
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**MS3**

Repetition deferred to later years when grade progression subject to summative assessment.

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# AGE-GRADE ENROLMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA 2008



## Meaningful Access

- Lack of curriculum coverage, content emphasis and curriculum pacing (Venkat) <sup>MS4</sup>
- Absence of independent reading and writing. Dependence on rote learning (Letatsi)
- Numeracy tests show limited prior knowledge and illustrate cognitive deficits (Pereira and du Toit) <sup>MS5</sup>
- “No education, slow education and miseducation” <sup>MS6</sup>



## Slide 10

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**MS4**

5 sums in 3 days

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**MS5**

Cognitive deficits - children don't have foundational knowledge

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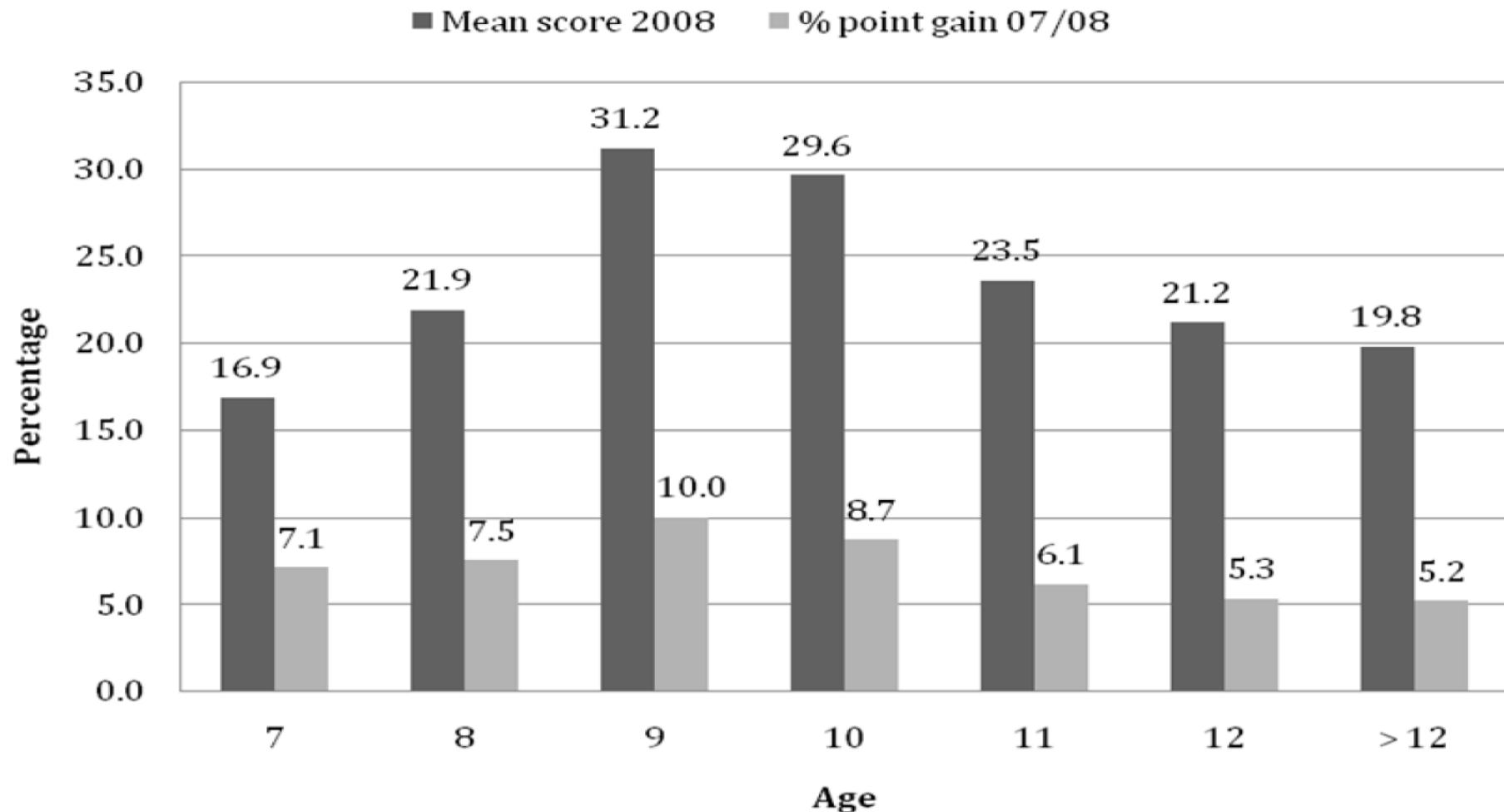
**MS6**

There were a few examples of good teaching but in the main ....

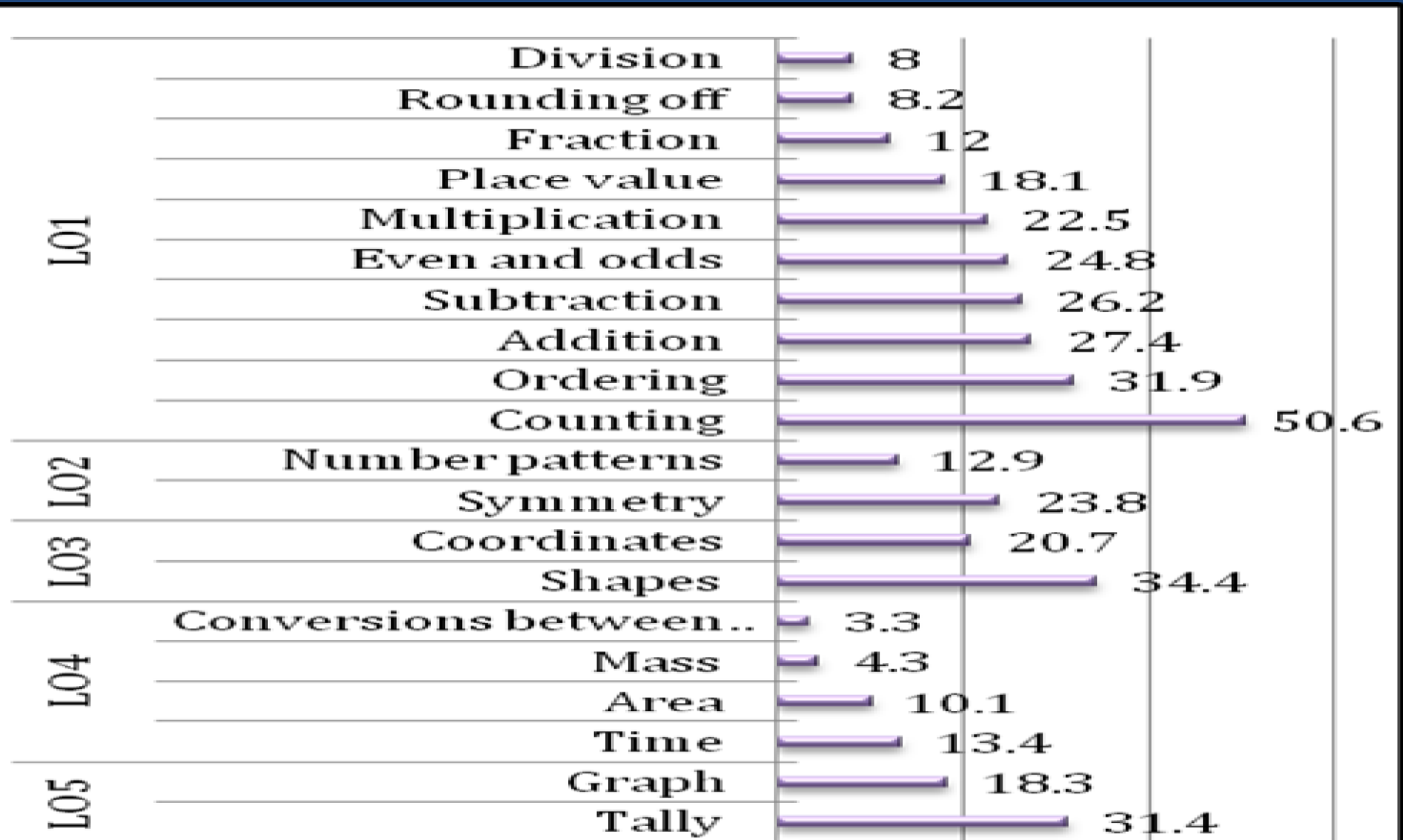
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## Age and literacy Test Average Grade 4

Note: the correct age for Grade 4 is 9 or 10. This chart is from Taylor et al. (2010), the authors caution that the sample size of 7 and 8 year olds is too small to draw significant conclusions.



# Numeracy Test Averages by learning Outcomes – Grade 4





# Findings

- Other worrying factors related to meaningful access:
  - Corporal punishment widespread
  - Toilets and buildings infrastructure in poor condition
  - Very few playgrounds
  - Care in schools not related to meaningful learning
- But school going is highly valued by parents



# Equity and Access

In South Africa, schools are divided into 5 groups (quintiles) Quintile 1 is the poorest, and quintile 5 is the richest. The table below shows the proportion of the school's costs that the government contributes, and the amount in Rands per learner.

Schools in Quintile 1 receive 100% of their costs from the government, whereas those in Quintile 5 must raise 78% from fees or other sources.

	A	2007		2008		2009	
		B	C	B	C	B	C
NQ1	30.0	R 738	100%	R 775	100%	R 807	100%
NQ2	27.5	R 677	100%	R 711	100%	R 740	100%
NQ3	22,5	R 554	100%	R 581	100%	R 695	100%
NQ4	15.0	R 369	67%	R 388	67%	R 404	67%
NQ5	5.0	R 123	22%	R 129	22%	R 134	22%
Overall	100.0	R 492	89%	R 517	89%	R 538	89%
No fee threshold		R 554		R 581		R 605	

## Findings – Fee Free Schools and Equity

- 60 % Fee-free schooling has made some improvement to vertical equity.
- Shift to section 21 and devolved governance has increased funding at school level.
- BUT still there are questions on whether level of resourcing is adequate to improve quality in disadvantaged schools.
- Societal inequalities reflected in vastly differentiated public schooling system.



# Emerging Policy messages and conclusions

## From physical access to access to what?

- Proposition 1: Overcoming silent exclusion is the imperative – improving pedagogy and teacher content knowledge .
- Proposition 2: a renewed emphasis on access – the current focus on outcomes fails to recognise the source of the problem.
- Proposition 3: Need to improve the infrastructure of schools – environments must support children's rights.
- Proposition 4 : Accountability is the gap and dysfunctionality needs strong intervention.
- Propostion 5 : Social compact to promote inclusion and meaningful learning must address the social outcomes of education.

