

**Is there value in research –based policy making?**

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# Policy Making Framework and Research

- **Policy cycle:**

- Problem definition and agenda setting
- Formal decision making
- Implementation
- Evaluation

- **Research is critical –**

- Provides scientific basis for findings which can be tested
- Provides new knowledge
- Properly conducted, it reduces biases and increases level of validity and reliability

**The basic education sector policy goal**

# improving learning outcomes

A fundamental challenge ...

## **Basic Education Sector Delivery Agreement**

*“... the need is fairly straightforward as far as the basic education sector is concerned. Our children and youth need to be better prepared by their schools to read, write, think critically and solve numerical problems. These skills are the foundations on which further studies, job satisfaction, productivity and meaningful citizenship are based”*

... which the Action Plan to 2019 is designed to address

- 27 goals, with clear indicators and targets
- Clearly defined outputs and activities to be achieved by 2019
- At the top of this list of priorities are improvement goals for primary literacy and numeracy
- Sound planning and effective implementation will be critical if the targets are to be achieved

# dealing with root causes

## root causes across the sector

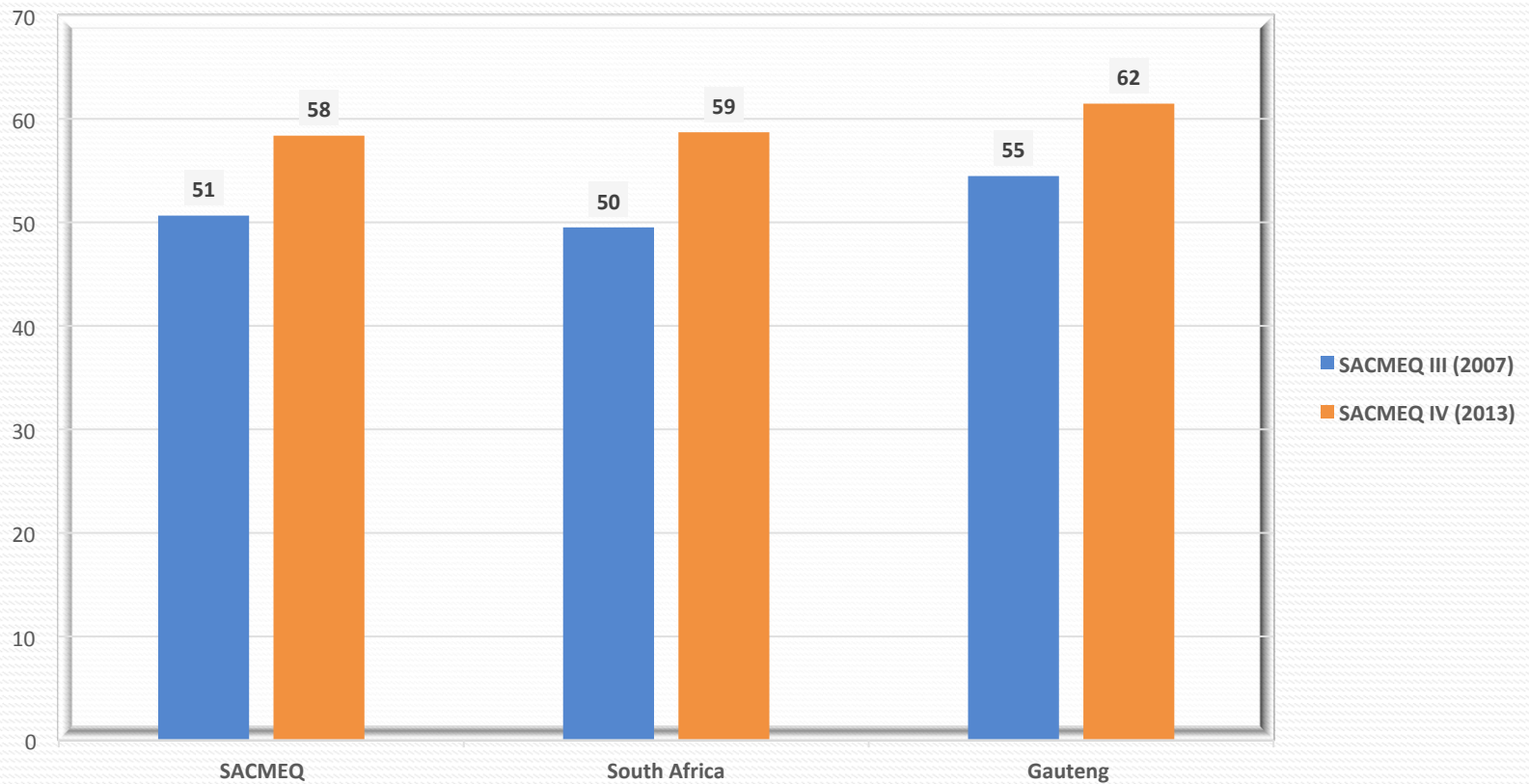
- Despite various assessment reports, little evidence of dealing with their implications for learner achievement
- Limited strategic focus on literacy and numeracy
- Diverse and un-sustained activities across the sector
- Ineffective and inefficient utilisation of available resources
- Very poor levels of monitoring and data management
- Models and strategies that work rarely sustained or replicated
- Inadequate leadership and drive from all levels

## NPC diagnostic comments:

*“...historical disadvantages continue to have an adverse effect ... This is particularly true in education...”*

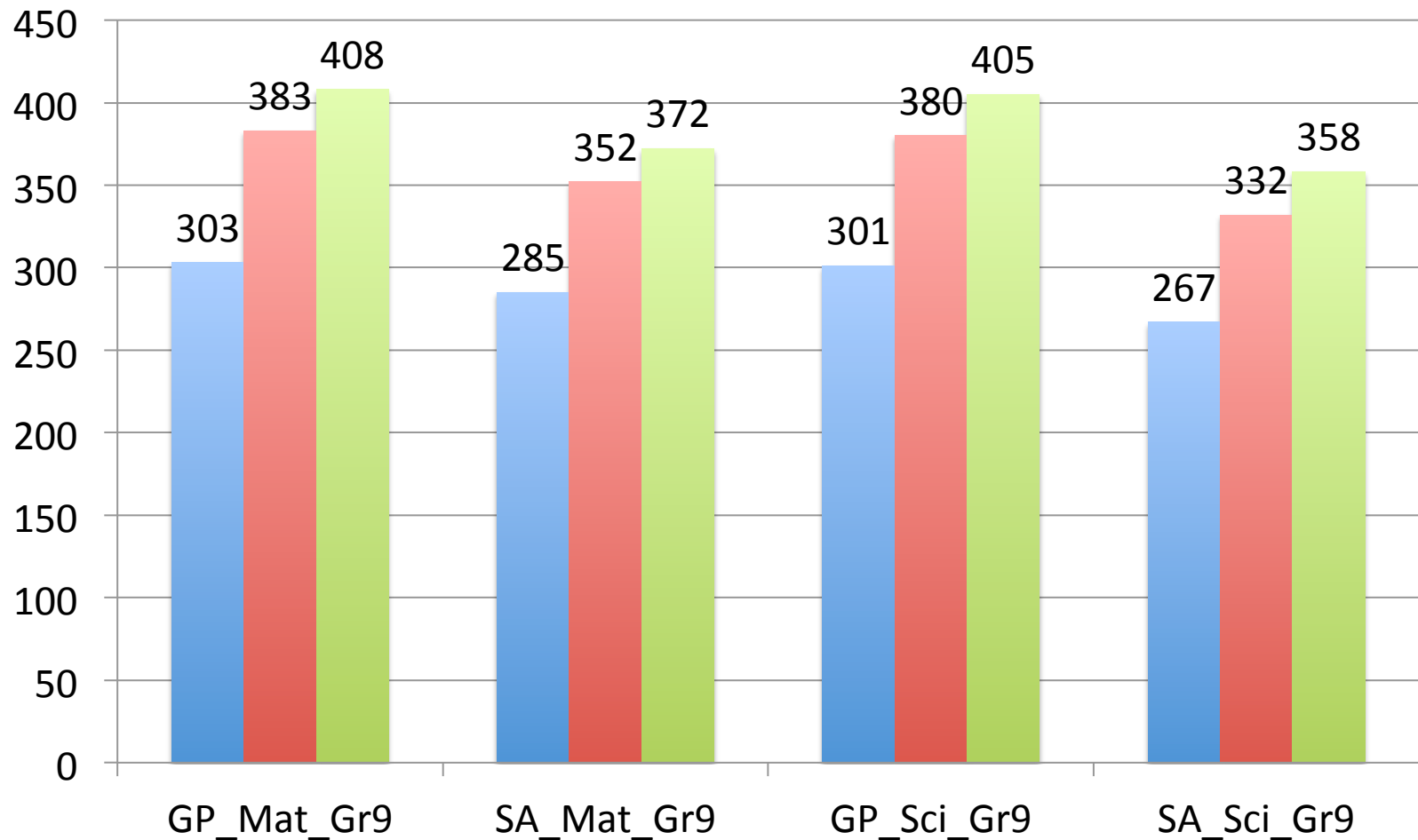
# SACMEQ

## SACMEQ Results- Mathematics

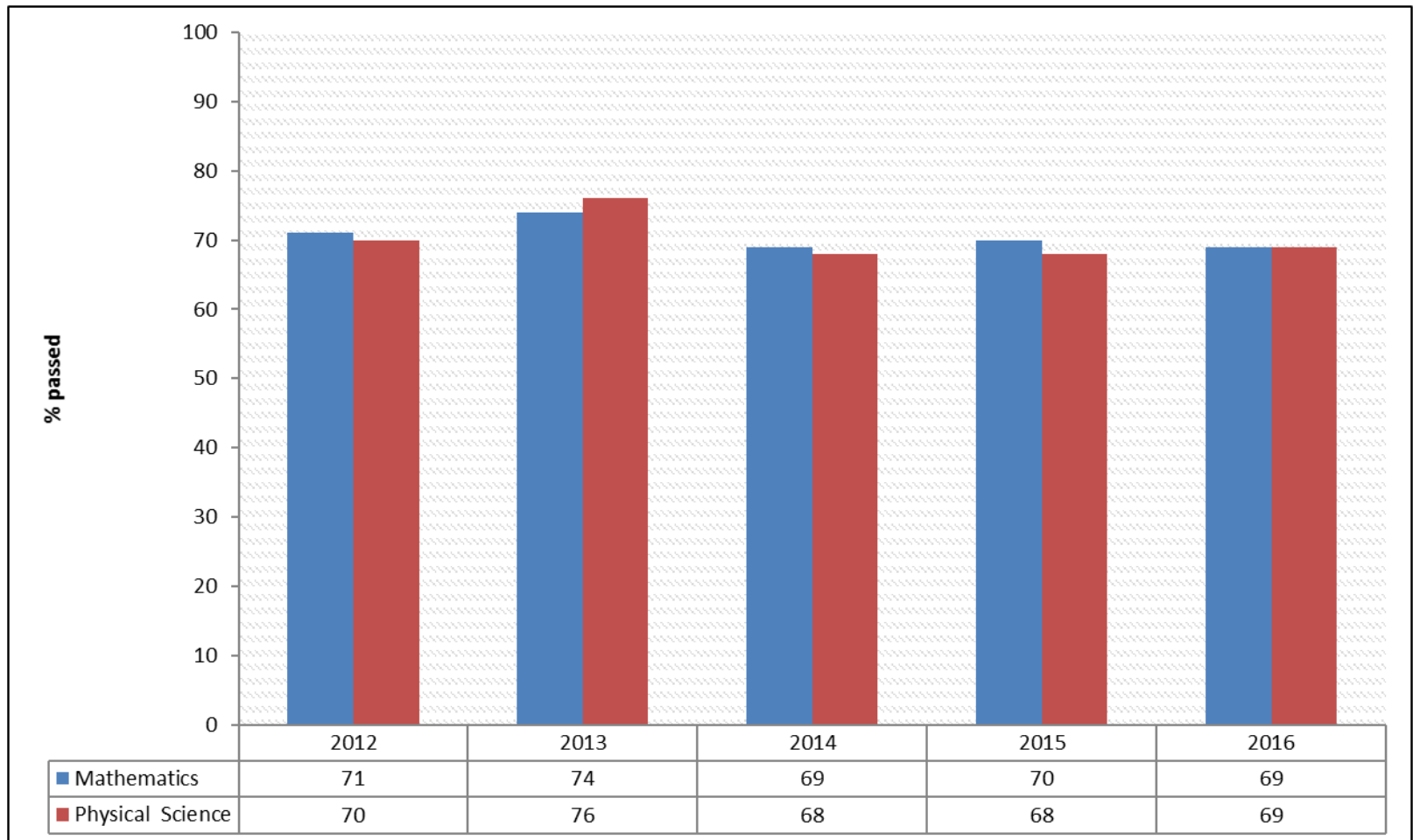


# TIMSS – GRADE 9 PERFORMANCE

## GAUTENG TIMSS - 2002 TO 2015

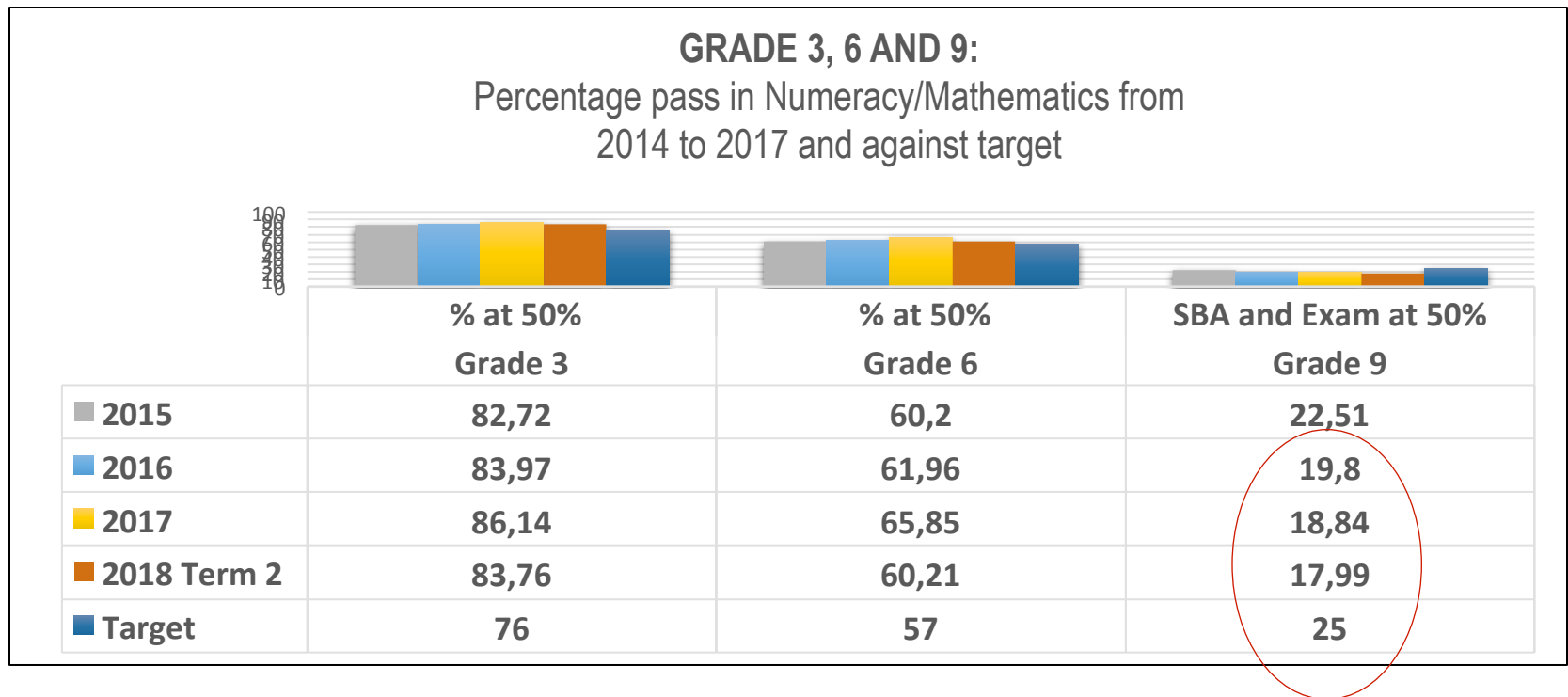


## Grade 12 learners who wrote Maths and Science and passed





# Improving learner performance - Gr 3, 6, 9 - NUMERACY/MATHS



- The Grade 3 data is based on SBA only as learners in the foundation phase do not write formal examinations
- Trend shows challenge regarding performance in Grade 9 Mathematics.
- This is also a pattern observed across all provinces.

# Where are the gaps?

- Is there lack of causal relationship between research information and policy imperatives?
- Lack of translation of research results into practical policy implementation
- Is there adequate interrogation by research of contextual realities of policy implementation

# Research and Policy Development

- Research is seldom free from ideological bias
- All researchers draw on literature that portrays their world as they interpret it
- Policy development must be informed by a range of views that are tested against rigorously tested empirical evidence
- Research findings can become ammunition in adversarial systems of policy making
- We need research that provides policy makers with evidence in areas of strong public interest

**What needs to be done?**

# What needs to be done?

- More research that is evaluative - able to show what worked and why it worked
- Research that can demonstrate the causal relationship between practice and outcomes
- Research that demonstrates what interventions succeed and why

# What needs to be done?

- Need to understand how to translate the findings of research into contextual realities of implementation
- Government wide monitoring systems require more direct conversations between government attempts to M&E and information from partners in research communities
- Need for forums that promote the expressions of a range of diverse views to assist policy makers to navigate contested areas of policy making

# What needs to be done?

- Need for research that provides policy makers with evidence in areas of strong public interest
- A research community that is engaged in public debate and is not limited to itself
- Need for research partnerships with policy makers are needed at every stage of the policy cycle.

# **Towards improving learning outcomes - Points to consider**

- Urgency of challenge of Improving Learning
- Need for trial on scale and significant impact
- Replicable treatment
- Sustainability of the interventions



**Thank you!**