Background Paper
Transforming the Education Workforce

Primary Research on the Design of District-Level, School-Facing Roles in Ghana

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Introduction

The Education Workforce Initiative (EWI) commissioned Education Development Trust to conduct new primary research in Ghana to review the school-facing education workforce at the district level, in light of Ghana's new Education Sector Plan (ESP). This was to feed into the research and thought leadership for the _Transforming the Education Workforce_ report. The research used an organisation design approach to shed new light on current workforce effectiveness and to offer fresh thinking on future design.

An organisation design approach starts by looking at the desired strategic outcomes of an organisation or a system, and works backwards to ask: what workforce infrastructure and core capacities must be in place in order to deliver this strategy?

Analytical framework

The research looks at five dimensions of workforce capacity and considers what must be in place to deliver on the ESP. These five dimensions are:

- **Structures, roles, functions** – what is the focus of roles at the district level, which functions are being undertaken and how well do these deliver quality, inclusive education? How effective and efficient are structures in supporting this?
- **Capabilities and skills** – what are the core skills of individuals and teams, and how do these support the ESP and school outcomes?
- **Governance** – who makes decisions and how are they made? How does information and data flow to feed decision-making?
- **Accountability** – how are role-holders incentivized and held to account for outcomes? What management oversight and reporting lines are in place to support this? What authority do role-holders have in their roles?
- **Culture and ways of working** – what values and behaviours underpin ways of working? How does this support effective working and school outcomes?

Drawing on best international practice and the work of key theorists in organisation design such as Andrew Campbell, these five workforce dimensions provided the analytical framework for the research. The research was undertaken in November and December 2018 in two districts in the Ashanti region: Kumasi Metropolitan as an urban district, and Ejura Sekyedumase as a rural district. The research included interviews, workshops and focus groups with Ministry officials, district level officers and headteachers.

The role of the district

The Ministry of Education (MoE), its implementing arm, the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the 254 districts in the Ghanaian education system play an instrumental role in the delivery of education in the country. The district is responsible for the implementation of the Ministry of Education policies and the delivery of quality education in the district. This role includes functions such as: supervising teaching, management and financing of schools, providing support to schools, distributing funds to basic schools and collaborating with the local authority (i.e. District Assembly). As such, district offices are a key mechanism for the MoE to achieve the three main objectives of its new ESP:

- Objective 1: Improved equitable access to and participation in inclusive quality education at all levels
- Objective 2: Improved quality of teaching and learning and STEM at all levels
- Objective 3: Sustainable and efficient management, financing and accountability of education service delivery
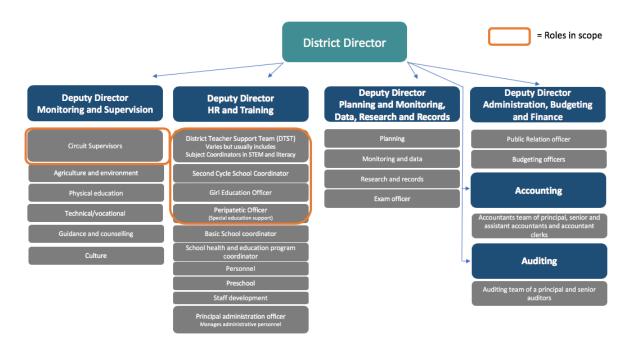
Current state
Current roles and organogram

The district offices, which are led by District Directors, have four primary departments – 1) Monitoring and Supervision; 2) Human Resources and training; 3) Planning and Monitoring, Data, Research and Records and 4) Administration, Budgeting and Finance, as well as an auditing and accounting function.

Roles in scope for this research were school facing middle tier roles: roles which monitor, support and supervise schools. These include: Circuit Supervisor, Second Cycle School Co-ordinator, various Subject Co-ordinators in the District Teacher Support Team, Girls' Education Officer (GEO) and Peripatetic Officer (Special Educational Needs (SEN) support to schools). These roles sit under the departments of Monitoring and Supervision and HR and Training.

Note: Districts typically employ around 60 staff at full complement, however most districts do not have all positions filled. About 23 of these are administrative roles (e.g. drivers, secretaries, cleaners). The reporting lines of some roles vary across districts e.g. support roles can sit under either Monitoring or the HR function.

Analysis of current state

We provide below an analysis of the current middle tier school-facing workforce design, against the five dimensions of workforce capacity in the analytical framework.

1. Roles, functions and structures

> **Key messages:**
> - There is a clear education delivery chain: stakeholders are clear about core functions and roles at district level, reporting lines, and how role-holders should interface with schools.
> - There is good overall capacity at district level, with a typical cadre of about seven Circuit Supervisors, depending on the size of the district, one Girls' Education Officer, and typically two-four roles providing support and training to schools focused mainly on subject specific areas.
> - The current roles and functions are designed to ensure education service delivery i.e. to secure school and teacher compliance with policies and to monitor the provision of basic services; roles are not designed to systemically raise teaching and school quality standards.
> - There is potential to re-focus the Girls' Education Officer for more impact.
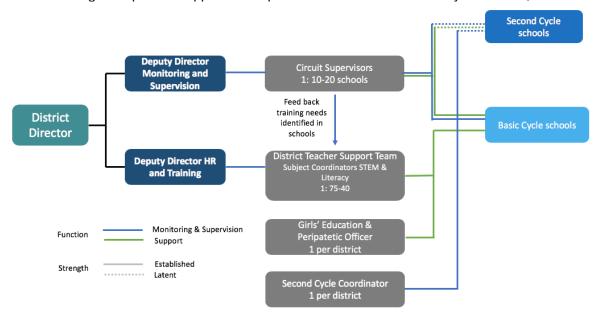
There is role clarity across the system

Key strengths include overall role clarity of the district across the system: from high-ranking Ministry officials through to headteachers there is a shared understanding that the district office's role is to implement education policies and deliver high quality education in the district through supervising, monitoring and supporting schools.

The school-facing roles provide support and supervision to basic and second cycle schools, as follows:

Roles are generally very clear in scope and well understood by all stakeholders, with clear reporting lines. One exception is the Second Cycle Coordinator, who has a dual reporting line to the HR Deputy Director, as well as the Regional Second Cycle Coordinator. In addition, their mandate overlaps somewhat with the Circuit Supervisors, who also have second cycle schools in their circuits, meaning that the Second Cycle Coordinators is also required to coordinate with the Circuit Supervisors. This poses a challenge as they report to different Deputy Directors. What further contributes to the latent supervision and support the districts provides Second Cycle Schools is that Circuit Supervisors rarely visit Second Cycle Schools and Second Cycle Coordinator are frequently over looked by secondary headteachers who tend to liaise directly with the Deputy Director of HR or with the District Director.

The roles supporting inclusive education - the GEO and Peripatetic Officer - are also less clearly defined in terms of scope and performance criteria. Participants described how the lack of role definition leads these officers to take on additional tasks, unrelated to supporting inclusive education. The GEO role is focused on monitoring girl friendly infrastructure and basic conditions, such as sanitary conditions for girls, and working with the community but is usually focused less on looking at systemic barriers to girls' participation, learning and progress. Participants report that the GEO role is systematically underfunded and depends on resources from NGOs. In addition, as their roles are less clear, their role scope and focus vary significantly between districts. However, there is a strong demand for these roles in the system: their importance was discussed by headteachers and Circuit Supervisors who expressed a desire for more district officers with inclusive education expertise, and the ability to connect schools with health and social services:

> *[We'd like] more specialists at the District Office. There is supposed to be some at the District Office but some headteachers have never seen them.*

> *[We'd want] more visits by the SEN officer to schools […] more collaboration with the Ghana Health Service, social welfare dept, guidance and counselling and better community sensitisation.*

'Roles are currently focused on delivering services and ensuring policy compliance'

The roles are currently designed to undertake monitoring of education service delivery, and ensure compliance with policies:

Core functions and roles scope

District Director	Circuit Supervisor	DTST Subject Co-ordinator	GEO	Second Cycle Co-ordinator
• Ensuring policies are implemented • Reporting to region • Administrative authorisation • Coordinating with the District Assembly (DA) • Teacher & headteacher transfer & promotion	• Compliance focused monitoring & supervision of schools • Collecting data (enrolment, teacher attendance, use of instructional hours) • Organizing workshops & in-service training based on requests	• Provide subject specialist training on science, maths & technology to schools based on the request of the Circuit Supervisor & headteachers	• Monitor infrastructure and girls' participation through consultation with community & headteachers • Responding to girls' education barriers such as early pregnancy and linking with sexual health services • Monitoring safeguarding of girls in schools	• Oversight of Second Cycle schools • Compliance focused monitoring

The core role functions are therefore not currently well configured to deliver the Ghana ESP. For example, Circuit Supervisors told us that a typical week includes the following activities:

> *Checking school enrolment figures, teacher attendance, regularity and teacher use of instructional hours, inspecting head teachers' record keeping practices, supervision of teachers through observations, validating teacher and pupil work load through inspection of learner exercises and organizing workshops and INSETs. (Circuit Supervisor, Focus Group Discussion)*

Circuit Supervisors also spend much of their time on administrative tasks (e.g. data entry). This focus leaves little time for important, learning focused tasks, such as providing targeted support to weaker schools, fostering collaboration and coaching school leaders. As a result, the functions of support and collaboration are underdeveloped. The international evidence suggests that these administrative and compliance activities do not drive school improvement (De Grauwe, 2009; Eddy-Spicer et al, 2006). Historical analysis of the Ghana system (such as an analysis from the World Development Report, 2004) suggests that the role focus has changed little in the last 15 years, to reflect Ghana's new focus on school quality:

Frequency of Head-Teacher and Circuit Supervisor Activities

	Sits in on class		Looks at a sample of students' work		Looks at lesson plans		Discusses lesson plans		Discusses career development	
	Head-teacher	Circuit supervisor	Head-teacher	Circuit supervisor	Head-teacher	Circuit supervisor	Head-teacher	Circuit supervisor	Head-teacher	Circuit supervisor
Never	10.6	58.6	8.2	56.4	2.3	48.7	10.9	58.3	42.8	72.6
Less than weekly	28.1	38.4	39.4	41.6	2.4	49.2	43.4	40.3	48.7a	22.0a
At least weekly	49.4	2.5	46.4	1.7	95.4	2.2	45.7	1.5	8.5a	5.5a
Daily	11.9	0.4	6.0	0.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Schools sampled	3,013	3,120	3,009	3,119	3,011	3,121	3,007	3,097	3,005	3,114

Source: World Bank (2004)

A good example of innovation, where a solution to this problem had been identified, was in Ejura Sekyedumase district, where a local company had provided software to help with timetabling and other administrative functions, which has the potential to free time to focus on areas that drive school improvement.

A second challenge is the limited scope for Subject Co-ordinators in the District Teacher Support Team to provide pro-active and targeted support to schools. Subject Co-ordinators currently provide in-service training to teachers based on needs analyses by Circuit Supervisors. This represents a good feedback loop

from Circuit Supervisors into training design, but headteachers in our research study expressed a strong desire for more accessible and impactful subject specific support. An innovative example of support was discussed in one research district, where Circuit Supervisors had identified an outstanding headteacher and given him a role in informally supporting new headteachers in order to learn and share best practices. Identifying and harnessing local best practice at the headteacher or teacher level is a promising strategy that would benefit the system more widely.

2. Capabilities and skills

Key messages:
- School-facing district roles have strong contextual understanding and strong informal collaboration skills: they look to each other for collegiate support and problem solving
- Role holders do not yet have strong skills in quality improvement, such as data literacy, diagnosis of quality issues, setting improvement targets and coaching

District officers have a strong contextual understanding, can navigate informal and formal ways of working and their monitoring and reporting skills are strong. However, there are still a capacity gap in areas that are significant for school improvement, such as teaching and learning focused supervision and school support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, facilitating collaboration). Building school facing district officers' capabilities in these areas is crucial for the district to implement the ESP. Weak skills in this area, especially for Second Cycle Co-ordinators, weakens their authority in the eyes of secondary school heads and therefore reduces their ability to drive improvement. The majority of district officers have limited job-specific training and professional development opportunities.

> *Headmasters rather prefer staying at post as headmasters because they view promotion from head master to District Director as a demotion (Head teacher focus group)*

3. Governance and decision-making

Key messages:
- There are significant bottlenecks in decision-making: one District Director estimated that they spent up to 60% of their time on sign-off activities
- Informal 'bottom up' feedback loops exist from school supervision activities, into planning Continuous Professional Development for teachers: this is not yet systematic, and information is not aggregated to shape strategic priorities
- Districts do not yet formally have a role in shaping the teacher training curriculum at the Colleges of Education, which increases the strain on the district as they need to retrain new teachers

Decision-making at district level tends to be centralised and hierarchical: low level decisions usually require sign-off from the District Director and research participants reported bottlenecks in the system. The District Directors spend a significant amount of time on administrative tasks, such as promotion related paper work. Ministry officials suggested that this kind of administrative bottleneck was to blame for preventing districts from discharging their decentralized school support and supervision functions:

> *[District offices have been] an appendage to HR functions at GES HQ.*

> *Decentralization isn't working as it should.*

District Directors agreed with this sentiment and expressed frustration that their time is mainly consumed by administrative tasks and they struggle to find time for strategic decision making. One District Director estimated 60% of their time was spent reading, allocating and signing off reports. This poses a challenge for them to play a strategic leadership role in improving teaching and learning and limits their oversight of what is happening in their district.

Fractured relationships and tensions with the District Assembly (DA), who are responsible for providing infrastructure for schools, inputting into the district annual plan and ensuring the district office delivers quality education, can also cause issues with governance and decision-making. Ministry officials suggested that '…when decentralisation works, it works well here' but that, in many instances, the District Director and District Assembly '…are quarrelling and don't work together well therefore progress stagnates'.

A good feedback loop exists from school supervision into planning Continuous Professional Development: Circuit Supervisors use their school visits to undertake informal needs analysis and pass on requests to Co-ordinators or provide related in-service training themselves. However, this feedback loop is not yet systematic and usually relies on individual Circuit Supervisors proactively identifying a need or being asked by a headteacher to provide specific in-service training. A more systemic and strategic needs analysis of schools would better deliver the ESP objectives of improving teaching and learning.

Districts do not yet formally have a role in shaping the teacher training curriculum at the Colleges of Education, which increases the strain on the district as they need to retrain new teachers:

> *The training at the college level is at variance with reality on the ground. (District Directors)*

4. Accountability

> **Key messages:**
> - Community accountability and intrinsic motivation are important influences on Circuit Supervisor performance
> - Formal accountability and reward systems are weak for district level roles – in terms of oversight of impact
> - The district has limited power to incentivize school performance or enforce punitive action for underperforming schools
> - Lack of resources undermines district professionals' status and authority

School facing district roles have clear management reporting lines and accountabilities. Reporting to line managers on activities is frequent and detailed*:*

> *CSs are expected to write weekly reports, which are summarised into monthly reports and sent to the Head of Supervision. CSs also do annual performance appraisals at the DO. (Circuit Supervisor focus group)*

However, participants across all stakeholder groups explained that formal accountability mechanisms for performance and quality at district level are weak, in terms of visibility of impact at MoE level, rewards (such as promotion opportunities), and punitive measures for poor performance:

> *MoE rarely, if ever sees performance reports from district level. (Ministry official)*

> *Incentives – A Circuit Supervisors' reward is in heaven. We do not get rewarded for good work at the moment. We get our salary and that's it. (Circuit Supervisor focus group discussion)*

Participants consistently described the effects of community accountability and of their own moral and personal motivation to do a good job:

> *Teachers and community members also hold CSs to account for student performance in SPAM. The district does also as they have a circuit performance list which includes the performance of individual schools. If your school underperforms then you have to explain why to your boss and also to the community. (Circuit Supervisor focus group discussion)*

In terms of authority and status, several factors can sometimes interplay to undermine the authority of district staff. Several interviewees, both Senior High School headteachers and Ministry officials, told us that district staff resort to asking schools to pay for their resources and transport fuel. Others explained that district level staff are on the same pay grades and rank as headteachers and at times even lower (mostly in comparison to heads of second cycle schools), which can undermine their authority and credibility.

Lack of resources effectively reduces districts to HR managers who do not prioritise learning outcomes, with better resourcing and upskilling this can be changed. Some district officials depend on headteachers to provide resources, fuel etc for them to do their work. What kind of supervision/evaluation can you then realistically do of that head teacher (HT)?' (Ministry official)

The district has limited power to incentivize school performance or enforce punitive action for underperforming schools. As a result, underperforming teachers and headteachers are usually redeployed across the district (e.g. moved to a smaller school or to teach a younger class). Data is collected systematically but mostly focuses on enrolment data. At times it is done in duplication and is not standardised or easily accessible, which adds to the administrative work load of the district. There is also a deficit in data regarding learning outcomes which makes it difficult to track progress before pupils complete standardized tests such at the BECE and the WASSCE.

5. Culture and ways of working

Key messages:
- Overall, participants frequently reported a strong collaborative culture at district level, good levels of motivation and a collective desire amongst peers to improve education standards. This is a significant workforce asset.
- There is a culture of close management oversight of district officials' activities by managers and Directors: there is an overall lack of trust in lower level officials, characterized by frequent reporting and monitoring of activities.

There is a good sense of teamwork and collaboration. Circuit Supervisors support each other and meet regularly to discuss progress and key challenges they face (Circuit Supervisor).

Where participants identified a lack of motivation, they described this as the result of factors such as: political influence at every level of the system, lack of resources and the system of career progression which is based on tenure rather than performance. Participants commented that these factors led some staff (especially those without clear progression routes such as secondary heads and Circuit Supervisors) to be less motivated to perform.

Though there was a general positivity about the work culture, interviewees also described an overall lack of trust and confidence – from senior staff and potentially from school heads – in the professional motivation and capacity of lower grade district staff. This was characterized by very close management oversight and monitoring of district officials' activities, such as weekly reports, and escalation of low-level decisions to senior staff (see commentary on Governance and Decision-Making). In addition, multiple headteachers mentioned that if the District Director could come more to schools, as well as the Circuit Supervisors, it would help 'keep the teacher in line'.

Target state

Core capabilities for future district professionals
How should the district workforce be re-designed to deliver the ESP priorities? We suggest that workforce re-design focuses on a major shift in the core capabilities of the district workforce. The goal is to re-engineer the workforce to address the challenge articulated by one Ministry official:

The district office is process-centred not outcome-centred (Ministry official)

Current capabilities	Future capabilities
• A workforce designed to manage infrastructure and ensure core service delivery (teacher attendance etc.) • Workforce focuses on ensuring school compliance	• A workforce designed to deliver quality and inclusive education • Professionals focus on building school and teacher capacity • Data is used to empower schools to take school improvement action

• Workforce extracts data for upwards reporting • Senior management capacity focuses on administrative sign off and authorisation • Impact of trainers is limited by weak feedback loops on strategic school training needs	• Senior managers are also instructional leaders, setting the direction for teaching and learning quality • Systemic feedback loops on strategic training needs for schools

Design principles for a self-improving workforce

We outline below key principles which serve as a guiding framework for district workforce re-design in Ghana. These are based on the aspirations articulated by research participants, as well as the wider literature on effective district reform.

The principles recognise that the target state for the workforce needs to look beyond successful delivery of the current ESP outcomes. The workforce should be 'future proof' and have the ability to respond to new reforms in the future. In other words, the workforce should be able to lead a self-improving school system which can learn and adapt, and easily introduce change.

The underpinning principles for such a target state need to address both the formal and informal, structural and cultural ways of working:

Design principle	How this shapes workforce design
Student-centred	The workforce is designed to serve students' interests rather than historical structures and silos. The district workforce is organised around the key drivers of improvement in teaching quality and student learning, such as coaching and use of data.
Strong support and challenge	The district workforce adds value to schools and teachers by providing support and challenge to carry out their roles effectively, rather than by ensuring compliance.
Subsidiarity	District officers only do what schools and teachers do not have the capacity to do themselves. Workforce capacity is being continuously built to empower district and school staff to make decisions, solve problems, take initiative and be innovative in their practice.
Shared ownership of priorities	Instead of the workforce being designed to ensure top down policy compliance, it is designed to build shared ownership of, and accountability for, improvement priorities. This includes consultation with stakeholders on issues and priorities, collective review of performance, and two-way communication on how well new initiatives work on the ground.
Collaboration	Schools are supported to share expertise, so that all teachers benefit from best practice. Knowledge and ideas flow laterally, from school-to-school and in peer networks, not just from districts to schools.
Bright spots - leverage local resources	The workforce is designed to identify, learn from, and scale up existing best practice in the system.
Feedback loops	There is a culture of continuous improvement, and the workforce is designed to review performance, learn from experience, identify emerging needs and adapt to new priorities.

A self-improving system is one that is driven by teachers and headteachers who unleash capacity within schools, and who act as trusted professionals to develop evidence, solve problems and support other schools to learn and improve. However, teachers and headteachers cannot do this alone: research indicates that fast improving education systems around the world have a strong (although not necessarily large) district or middle tier (Leithwood et al, 2013, McAleavy et al., 2018 and Mourshed, 2010) whose functions and activities have a significant impact on student outcomes and inclusion.

Operating model – how the district workforce drives outcomes

What could these district functions do to successfully deliver on the ESP and support a self-improving system? How can we ensure these functions actually drive education outcomes? We outline below a high-level model, proposing five district functions which have the potential to deliver on Ghana's ESP and move the Ghanaian education system towards a self-improving system.

Target state operating model for the school-facing district workforce

	1 Leadership & Vision	**2** Capacity & skills	**3** Collaboration	**4** Scaling & learning	**5** Data & Accountability
	Building collective will & professional responsibility for inclusive, quality teaching & learning	Build teacher professional skills & ownership of their professional development	Nurture teacher professional communities & system leadership	Using evidence to identify & scale 'what works'	Ensuring data & evidence feed decision-making
High level functions	• Establish a shared and urgent sense of commitment to excellent teaching & learning • Prioritise resources to support marginalised students • Mediate national policy, translating it for local context • Engage teachers in a dialogue about policy, feeding back messages to MoE on which policies work & which don't	• Support schools & teachers to diagnose development needs against local and national priorities • Provide school-based coaching: helping schools & teachers to reflect on practice, test new approaches, and set improvement priorities • Offer technical & subject expertise to schools, based on the best international evidence, to challenge practice and inject new ideas	• Identify high performing schools & connect them with struggling schools in the circuit to provide peer support & challenge • Set up & model teacher communities of practice, including protocols for peer review & sharing high impact practice • Identify & deploy system leaders so they are assets for all schools • Support schools to build coalitions with communities to promote inclusion	• Identify positive outliers, disseminating & scaling good practice so all teachers can benefit • Facilitate collective experiences such as district network events to celebrate success & reflect on learnings • Support teacher-led research, to trial innovations & adapt practice based on local evidence about 'what works'	• Use data to evaluate school & teacher performance against national & district benchmarks • Empower schools to use data to self-evaluate & help them improve • Use data to target resources locally where they are needed most • Use aggregated evidence on CPD needs to inform College of Education pre-service curriculum

System drivers of effective teaching & learning	There is a strong district-wide dialogue about teaching, learning & inclusion priorities District-wide resources & collective efforts of all stakeholders are aligned to these priorities There are clear benchmarks & standards for performance & schools are empowered to use performance data to identify improvement plans School and teacher capacity is continuously developed through school-based professional development Schools & teachers are motivated as they see best local practice recognised & they are confident their professional feedback on policies will be heard

(Adapted from Jones, C. and M. Davis (2018) School improvement at scale: getting results from a school-led delivery model. Education Development Trust)

Some of these functions are already being undertaken but need strengthening to ensure they focus on teaching and learning quality, and inclusion. Many of these functions also build on good practice identified during the research. The best Circuit Supervisors, for example, are already engaging teachers and head teachers in dialogue about new policies: head teachers explained how social media such as WhatsApp were used frequently by the best Circuit Supervisors to share updates on new priorities. Participants also explained how the best Circuit Supervisors also identify good practice in schools and make efforts to disseminate and scale practice, such as asking teachers to upload lesson plans on online platforms.

High level recommendations

We outline below the main implications and recommendations for workforce roles. Current structures are good building blocks for a future workforce, and there are many important assets such as good professional motivation and a desire to improve practice. We propose that the workforce does not therefore need radical re-structuring to build future core capabilities. The re-design activity should therefore focus on:

- Re-focusing and re-purposing school-facing roles to deliver the new functions
- Re-designing core processes so that the linkages between roles are clearly defined and they drive improved outcomes e.g. re-designing school improvement processes, feedback loops into policy direction, and best practice sharing
- Putting in place training to build the capacity of district officials in new roles
- Putting in place clear performance criteria and a performance management process to identify capacity gaps for the new model over time

The high-level changes we recommend are:

1. **Data collection** – we recommend a significant reduction in routine data collection and monitoring activity. Key metrics should be identified which enable monitoring of service delivery. Otherwise, only data which is used for decision-making or which supports school improvement plans should be collected. We also recommend an investment in technology to significantly reduce essential data entry and analysis. These actions will free up significant professional capacity to undertake value adding activity i.e. work which supports education outcomes.

2. **District Director and Deputy Directors** – we recommend the role is retained but heavily re-focused, away from authorising reports and administrative decisions, towards being an instructional leader i.e. setting a district-wide vision, using data to set priorities, external stakeholder engagement in teaching and learning priorities.

3. **Girls' Education Officer and Peripatetic Officer** – we recommend the role is retained and capacity is released by protecting role-holders from undertaking out of scope duties. Duties should be re-focused away from infrastructure reviews and reactive troubleshooting, towards a proactive service to schools to help school staff diagnose barriers to participation and learning and put in place solutions.

4. **Circuit Supervisors and Subject Co-ordinators** – these roles are retained but completely re-designed so that, between them, they undertake Functions 1 to 4 as outlined in the Operating Model. This means they engage with schools in completely new ways:
   - *Coaching* – they provide 1:1 and group coaching to teachers, using the best international evidence to provide on-the-job feedback, support and challenge. They help teachers set professional development priorities.
   - *Facilitating school collaboration* – they broker connections between schools and teachers to help them share knowledge and practice. They undertake activities such as facilitating professional collaboration between teachers (e.g. communities of practice), connecting innovative and high performing schools with similar schools that can learn from their practice (e.g. statistical neighbours) and providing tools and support (e.g. protocols, structures, guidance) for schools to share knowledge and practice, and solve local problems.
   - *Brokering knowledge and practice* – they undertake activities such as translating the best international evidence on pedagogy for use in the local context, building the capacity of teachers as researchers, identifying local bright spots, and scaling up the best local innovations.

    o   *Data-driven improvement planning* – they help schools to use performance data (both self-evaluations and external reviews) against clear teaching and school quality standards to develop clear school improvement plans; they support ongoing cycles of delivery, reflection and continuous improvement.

Circuit Supervisors will tend to focus more on building whole school capacity, including school leader coaching, linked to national school and teaching standards. They will also broker connections between school leaders.

Subject Co-ordinators will tend to focus more on building teacher level capacity, including 1:1 coaching and by building subject specific teacher networks. A medium-term goal will be the identification of System Leaders with specialist expertise in Maths and Literacy.

5. **System leaders** – over time, the role of Subject Co-ordinator (and their supporting team of Trainers) should be replaced by school-based expertise: in other words, System Leaders who are subject experts and serve teachers.

Pathway to the target state

Reaching the target state is a process and we propose this is achieved in two phases. The first phase addresses pressing challenges highlighted in our research, such as reorienting school facing and management district roles to activities focused on driving school improvement. Central to this is raising professional standards and expectations across all roles, improving accountability and support systems to build school level capacity and expertise, building more robust systems to collect meaningful data and supporting evidence-based decisions, and providing leadership capacity to help schools collaborate and learn from best local practice.

The second phase shifts the workforce to the target state and towards a self-improving system. It assumes a more capable and skilled school-level workforce is in place, and that the district workforce should focus on unleashing that capacity to ensure all schools benefit from the best in the system. The district role therefore shifts towards enabling schools and teachers to lead change themselves. Rather than adding capacity, the role shifts to providing tools and protocols for school-to-school collaboration and accountability (e.g. peer-led review, peer sharing of knowledge), identifying best practice and scaling it up across the district and the wider system. District leaders also facilitate collective learning cycles which help identify 'what works'.

We illustrate a proposed pathway below for key roles:

Role	First Phase	Second Phase
District Director	• Establish a shared sense of commitment to excellent teaching & learning in the district & with the community (e.g. District Assembly) • Formalise a mechanism to gather strategic insights from school feedback & performance data • Identify priority areas for improvement • Ensure district workforce resources go to the schools who are most in need	• Invest in scaling up & disseminating the best local practices • Make performance data available to schools, teachers & local communities • Feedback teacher experiences of national policy to the region
Circuit Supervisor (CS)	• Evaluate school & teacher performance against national standards. • Shift monitoring activities to focus on teaching & learning • Begin to create a school improvement culture and encourage ownership of data by schools • Provide support & training based on school needs • Identify best practice in the district & build school capacity to share their knowledge & skills	• Identify high performing schools in their circuit & connect them with struggling schools to provide peer support & challenge • Supporting schools to self-evaluate against national standards to build data literacy & capacity for self-improvement.

Subject Coordinator	• Provide subject specific capacity building for teachers and school leaders, observe their practice & provide developmental feedback & coaching. • Translate the best international & local evidence on science, maths & technology for accessible resources, training & support • Set up & model effective teacher communities of practice in their subject areas • Systematically collect & analyse performance data in their subject area across grades & identify key challenges	• Coach school-based Subject Leads to provide peer support to neighbouring schools • Co-construct professional development resources with local teachers. • Supporting teacher-led research, to trial innovations & adapt practice based on emerging local evidence about 'what works' • Identify and scale best local practice & innovations in their subject area
Girl Education Officer (GEO) and Peripatetic Officers	• Ensure a broader definition of inclusion, to encompass those with learning disabilities • Proactively work with schools to diagnose the causes of exclusion, and propose solutions • Advocate for inclusive practices, including providing training on inclusive practices to other district officials – harness technology to reach more schools • Ensure strong data on inclusion for use by district officials	• Build school level capacity to diagnose and deliver inclusive practices themselves • Create & delivering an inclusive education strategic plan for the district, including taking preventative action to support inclusion • Share & scale best practice in inclusive education • Support schools to build coalitions with communities to promote inclusion

Further considerations

This review makes recommendations for re-focusing core district workforce roles, so that professionals have the core capabilities needed to deliver the ESP and to support a self-improving system.

We recommend that a number of wider questions are considered to ensure maximum impact from a re-design exercise, at the right pace:

- How can a focus on teaching and learning be incentivised? The current focus on compliance monitoring is embedded into the district culture. How can a new focus on the review of teaching and learning be initiated and incentivised at every level of the system?
- What leadership behaviours will we see in a new workforce system underpinned by trust and shared responsibility? How can leaders model the coaching and collaborative culture that they want to promote in schools?
- How quickly can System Leaders be identified – what capacity is there at school level already? A shift to the second phase of change towards the target state could be undertaken more quickly if System Leaders can be identified and supported.
- How quickly can technology be used to reduce the administrative burden on professionals, and to release their capacity to focus on teaching and learning?

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