

# Access norms and spatial information for schools are of national importance

Information Brief 5

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## Education access norms well defined

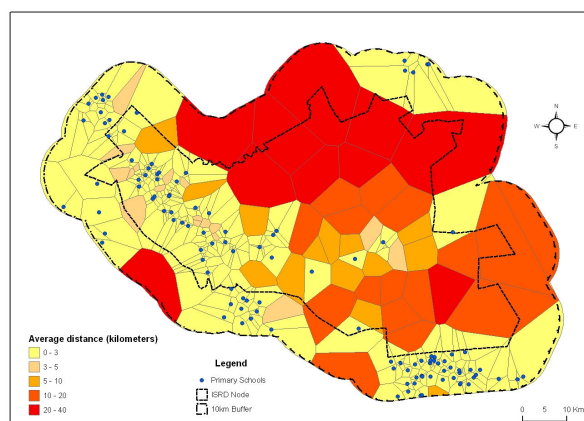
The Department of Education has developed a comprehensive set of access norms and standards for the provision of primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, they have very comprehensive spatial datasets for their schools. What is also impressive is that the Department of Education has published their norms and standards in a Government Gazette for public comment. This places the Department in a good position for them to undertake further accessibility studies to evaluate their norms and standards and fine tune them in the process.

		Type of School	
		Primary	Secondary
<b>Target population</b>		Learners (age group 5-12 years)	Learners (age group 13-17 years)
<b>Capacity</b>	Small	135-310	200-400
	Medium	311-620	401-600
	Large	621-930	601-1000
<b>Mode of transport</b>		Walking	Walking
<b>Travel time/distance</b>		3km	3km

The table above shows the access norms that the Department of Education has defined. They have stipulated the target population and defined different sized schools for primary and secondary schools. The access norms and standards indicate that primary and secondary learners should be within a 3km walk distance of a school. This accessibility study has provided a spatial view of the Department of Education's access norms and standards within the ISRD nodes for the first time.

## Under provision of secondary schools an issue

The average walking distance to a secondary school in the ISRD nodes is 5.0 km. What the accessibility study shows using the above access norms and standards is that there is generally an under supply of secondary schools in the ISRD nodes. The under supply is the worst in the ISRD node of OR Tambo where the accessibility study shows that a 279% increase in secondary schools is needed. Other nodes where there is a need for a significant increase in secondary schools



include Umzimkhulu (270%), Alfred Nzo (149%), Zululand (34%) and Umkhanyakude (22%).

Access to primary schools in the ISRD nodes using the access norms and standards is much better. The average walking distance to a primary school in the ISRD nodes is 2.1 km. However, the eastern parts of Maruleng seem to be a problem where there are very few schools (see red areas on map above).

The access study shows that it is only in Umkhanyakude where a 16% increase in the provision of primary schools is required.

Using the access norms and standards, the accessibility study suggests a reduction in the number of primary schools in all other nodes, but it is in Maluti-a-Phofung where the largest reduction of 75% is proposed.

Ukhanyakude seems to be the priority node to concentrate on as it requires improvements in school provision in both the primary and secondary sectors. Considering the above, the Department of Education may have to adjust their access norms and standards or they will have to implement strategies to address especially the under supply of secondary schools.

### ***Access norms of the Dept of Education may need to be fine tuned***

There is no doubt that further analysis will need to be done to fine tune the access norms and standards for schools. Changes in the access norms and standards may need to be considered to ensure optimal access is provided to education facilities for learners across the country. For example, the Department might



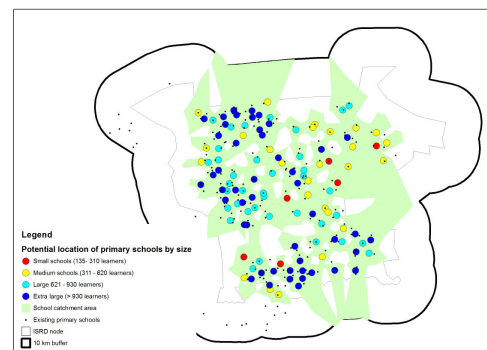
want to review what happens when the capacities for different sized schools or travel

distances are changed. There might also be the need to do more localized analyses of areas where a need for extra large schools has been identified or to see if it is viable to build two schools in such locations instead of one.

Furthermore, outside of the areas where learners are able to walk to school, accessibility studies will have to be done to see whether learners can be transported to school or whether they will need to be housed in hostels. Access norms and standards may have to be differentiated between densely and sparsely populated nodes (e.g. Central Karoo, Chris Hani, Kgalagadi, Ukhahlamba) and other areas in South Africa. Access norms and standards may also have to be differentiated between primary and secondary schools. However, if the principle is accepted that primary and secondary learners should have equal opportunity to access education then this consideration would not be legitimate.

### ***Optimizing the location of primary and secondary schools***

The access study evaluated the Department's access norms and standards and it looked at where there were access problems for learners to get to school. It also identified the optimum location of primary and secondary schools considering the access norms and standards of the Department. By overlaying existing schools with the optimally located ones an understanding was obtained as to which existing schools are optimally located. The map below of Bushbuckridge shows the result of such an analysis and also shows where there are gaps in the provision of existing schools.



**For further information please refer to the final report. Contact Trevor Holdsworth at the Dept of Public Service and Administration (dpsa) on (012) 336 1040 or [trevorh@dpsa.gov.za](mailto:trevorh@dpsa.gov.za)**