



# Secondary Education in Malawi

2024 Education Sector Performance  
Report

# Outline

1. Introduction
2. Sector Performance
  - Increased Equitable Access to Secondary Education with particular attention to Girls, Vulnerable Groups and those from Rural Areas
  - Improved quality and relevance of secondary education
  - Improved governance and management of secondary education
3. Recommendations

# 1. Introduction

Secondary education is vital for deepening knowledge, developing critical thinking, and preparing students for further studies and careers.

The strategic direction for secondary education focuses on increasing access, ensuring equity, and enhancing quality, emphasizing both physical infrastructure and teaching-learning resources.

The goal of the NESIP is to improve academic achievement, promote inclusion, and elevate the status of STEAM education while addressing various aspects such as curriculum relevance, school governance, and decentralization.

The ESPR chapter on secondary education touches on successes, e.g. increased classroom space, reduced dropout rates; and challenges such as limited school access, financial barriers, gender disparities, and support for students with special needs.

This report analyses Secondary Education, using evidence-based data to enhance learning outcomes.



Increased Equitable Access to Secondary Education with particular attention to Girls, Vulnerable Groups and those from Rural Areas



# Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development is vital for bridging gaps in secondary education access and quality by providing students with conducive learning environments

The 2023/24 statistics indicate that there were **1,916** secondary schools, where **972** were public schools, **483** were private schools, and **461** were open secondary schools. By September 2024, there are **1013** public secondary school

Since the launch of NESIP in 2020, **133** new public secondary schools have been completed, reaching 56.7% of our midterm target.

More new schools are under construction, i. e. **19** schools are expected to be completed by 2025

Additionally, sites for **7** Secondary Schools of Excellence have been identified. Four (4) contracts were tendered. A contract for one site has been awarded.



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# Infrastructure Development

The Ministry has set minimum school infrastructure package which includes, science lab, library, administration block. Hence, expansion and upgrading of CDSSs

From 2020, the Ministry in collaboration with the development partners have expanded and upgraded more than 150 secondary schools, mostly CDSSs

In the year under review, a total of **83** schools have been expanded and **138** schools are currently under expansion

40 more secondary schools, 35 of which are CDSSs will be expanded and upgraded from 2025. Eleven (11) of these will have technical wings



Science Room

# Complementary Frameworks/Strategies

Apart from infrastructure development to increase equitable access to secondary education, the Ministry has embarked on policy reforms. They include:

1. Expansion of Open, distance and e-learning
2. Development of Open Secondary School Strategy
3. 57 double-shift schools have been introduced to maximize existing resources and accommodate more students.
4. Development of Secondary Education PPP Framework

# Enrolment and Gender Parity

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The Net Enrollment Rate in 2024 stands at 16.8%, which is significantly below the NESIP target of **27.6%**.

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Gross Enrollment Rate (GER): The Gross Enrollment Rate in 2024 reached **27.5%**, below the NESIP target of **35.6%**.

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The historical trend suggests challenges in achieving the 2025 targets of **30%** and **38%** for NER and GER respectively in secondary education.

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Current enrolment rates imply that only 17% of school-age population have access to secondary education, highlighting the need for increased access.

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The **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** for secondary education in 2024 stands at **0.99**, indicating near-equal enrollment of boys and girls, though slightly below the 2025 target of **1.0**



# Enrolment and Gender Parity (cont.)

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Differences between urban and rural areas are evident, with **urban areas** achieving a GPI of **1.04**, reflecting a slight predominance of female enrollment, while **rural areas** have a GPI of **0.98**, showing a minor disparity favoring male enrollment.

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# Primary Transition and Secondary Dropout Rate

## Primary Transition Rates:

Male transition rates to secondary education have consistently fallen below the NESIP targets over the observed years, reaching 49.6% in 2024

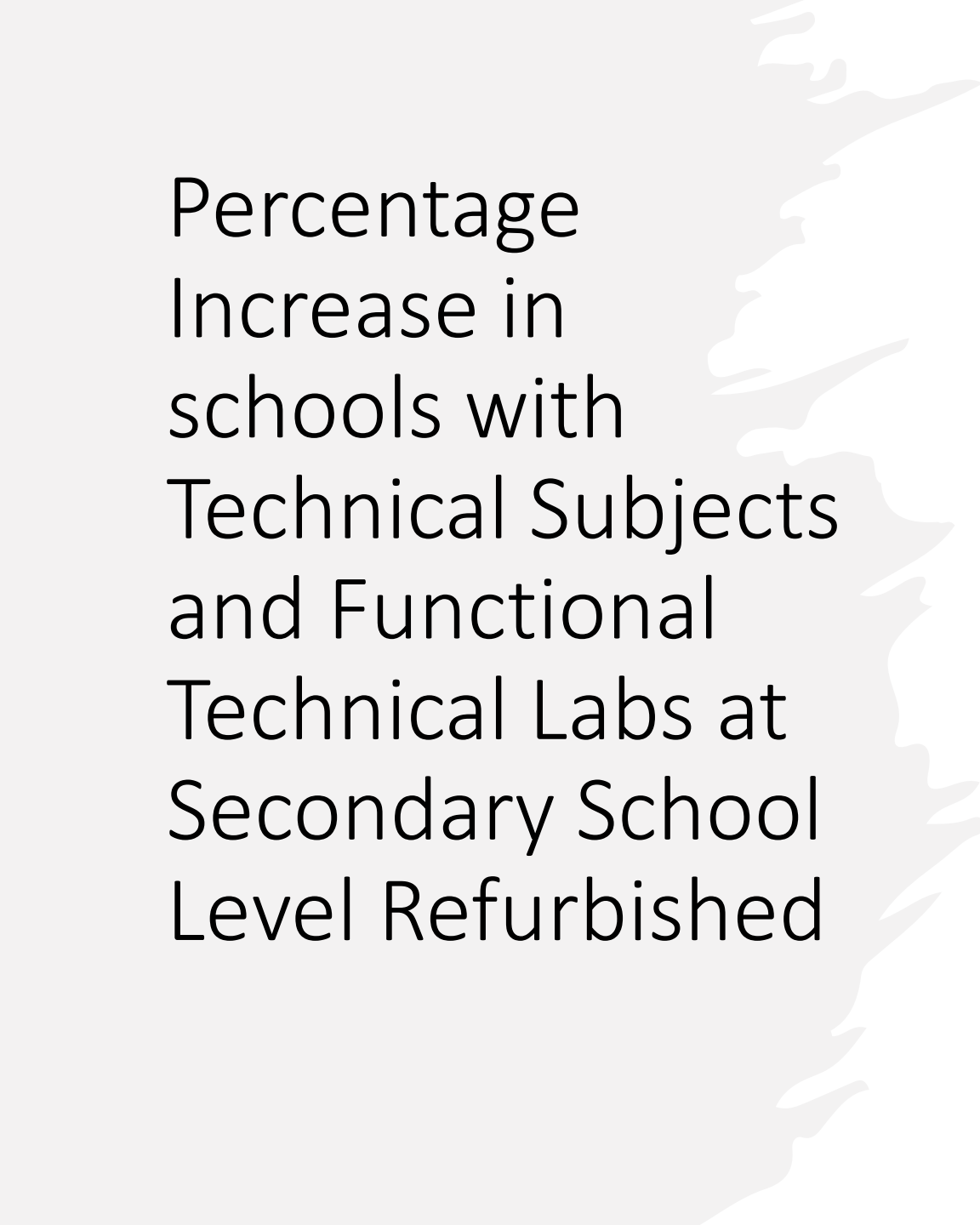
Similarly, female transition rates have generally remained below the targets, reaching 49.9% in 2024, falling short of the NESIP target.

The overall Transition Rate for the year under review is 49.8% against the NESIP target of 53.6 for 2024 %

## Dropout Rates:

In 2023, the dropout rate for males was 4.06%, while the rate for females was notably higher at 5.99%, indicating that more females dropped out than their male counterparts.

By 2024, this gender disparity had slightly decreased, with males at 4.08% and females at 5.85%. While this narrowing of the gap is a positive development, it highlights ongoing challenges affecting female retention in education.



# Percentage Increase in schools with Technical Subjects and Functional Technical Labs at Secondary School Level Refurbished

- Significant strides have been made in expanding technical subjects in secondary schools.
- In 2024/25, the Ministry plans to offer technical subjects in 120 secondary schools.
- The subjects, mostly clothing and textile and Home Economics are already been offered in 44 schools
- New textbooks for Computer Studies, Home Economics, Clothing and Textiles, and Technical Drawing are being procured for 76 schools
- These schools were selected based on their proximity to Technical or Community Colleges, ensuring they benefit from access to resources and expertise.
- The plan is to collaborate with the Ministry of Labour for students' practical experience


# Number of Beneficiaries for Bursaries to Needy and Vulnerable Students

The number of applicants for the secondary education bursary program in 2024 was 68,422 highlighting the need for financial support.

The number of bursary beneficiaries decreased from 42,043 in 2023 to 32,945 in 2024. This figure is below the NESIP 2025 target of 40,000.

The decrease was due phasing out of some programmes. However, the figures will pick up in the 2024/25 academic as new programmes are being introduced and some benefactors are increasing the number of beneficiaries



A group of students in a chemistry laboratory. They are wearing white lab coats, blue surgical masks, and clear safety goggles. One student in the foreground is writing in a notebook. The lab bench is equipped with various glassware, including a large white bottle with a red cap, a beaker, and a flask. A metal stand with a clamp is visible in the background.

Improved  
quality and  
relevance of  
secondary  
education

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The SqTR for English worsened from a baseline of 190 in 2019 to 212 in 2022, with a slight improvement to 208 in 2024. The target for 2025 is set at 90, suggesting the need for considerable interventions to achieve this goal.

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The SqTR for Mathematics deteriorated from a 2019 baseline of 158 to 361 in 2022, with a slight improvement to 269 in 2024. The target for 2025 is 75, highlighting the need to reduce the student-teacher ratio for better math education.

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The SqTR for Physics faced severe challenges with a baseline of 561 in 2019, reaching an alarming 1109 in 2022. By 2024, there was a slight improvement to 860 against the NESIP mid-term target of 260.

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The SqTR for Chemistry faced severe challenges with a baseline of 561 in 2019, reaching an alarming 7204 in 2022. By 2024, there was a great improvement to 860, from 983 in 2023, against the NESIP mid-term target of 260.

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**Being remedied through expansion of virtual science labs**

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# Student Qualified Teacher Ratio

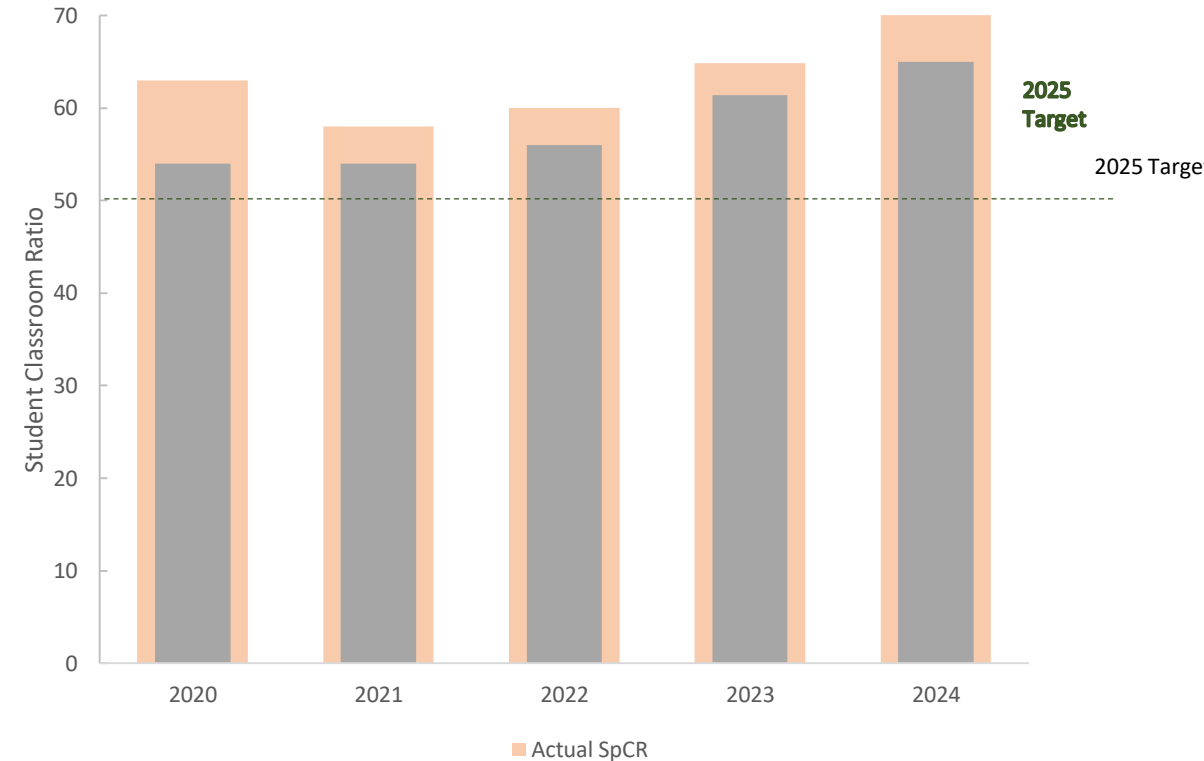
Inadequate infrastructure has hindered student transitions from primary to secondary education, affecting accessibility and expansion.

SCR and SpCR values between 2013 and 2023 varied but exceeded the NESIP target of 50:1 in 2023, with SCR at 61.4 and SpCR at 64.9. However, there's no clear trend.

Potential for increased enrolment in secondary education exists if significant infrastructure projects continue to be initiated.

Addressing infrastructure deficits is crucial for accommodating more students and improving the quality of secondary education.

## Secondary Student Classroom Ratio



Source: EMIS

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ICT integration in secondary schools varies significantly across districts in Malawi, ranging from 0% to 27%, with a national average of around 11% against a mid term target of 40%

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Nkhotakota stands out with the highest percentage (27%) of schools offering ICT lessons, while Neno and Phalombe have none.

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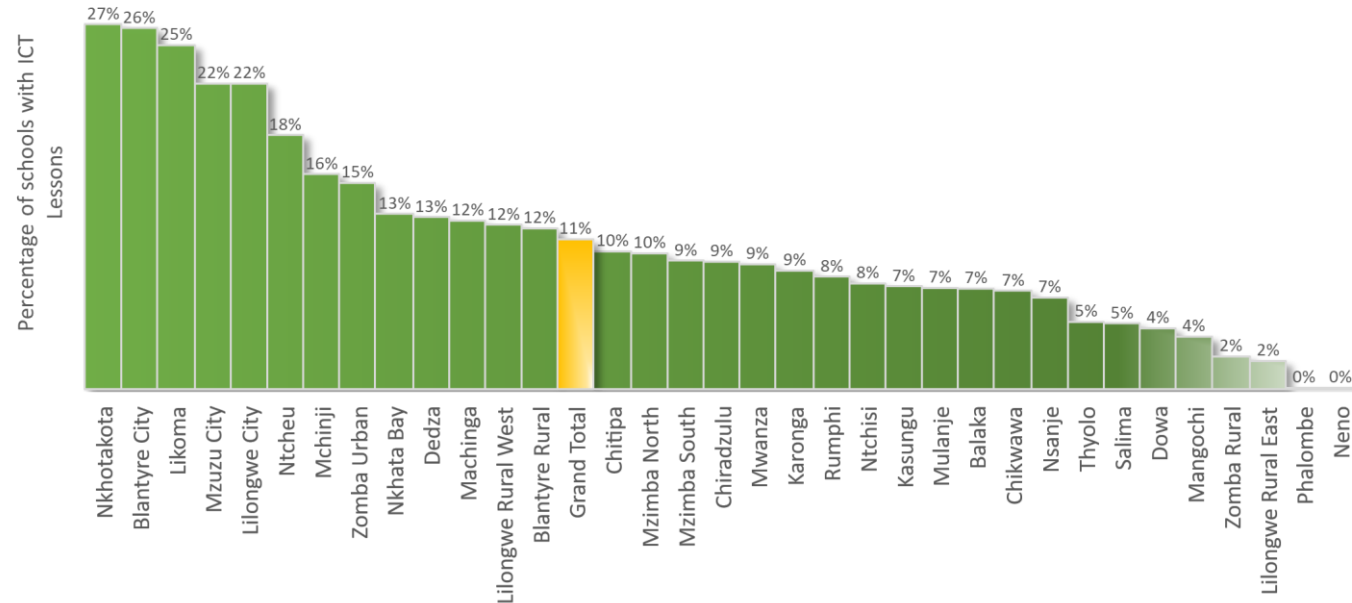
The data highlights a significant digital divide among education districts, with some having better access to ICT resources and knowledge, potentially exacerbating educational disparities.

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Closing the gap in ICT integration is essential to ensure equitable access to modern learning resources and opportunities across all districts.

## Percentage of schools with ICT Integration (Labs, connectivity, devices, content, Girls Can Code, digital skills for teachers)

2022/23 academic year.



Source: EMIS



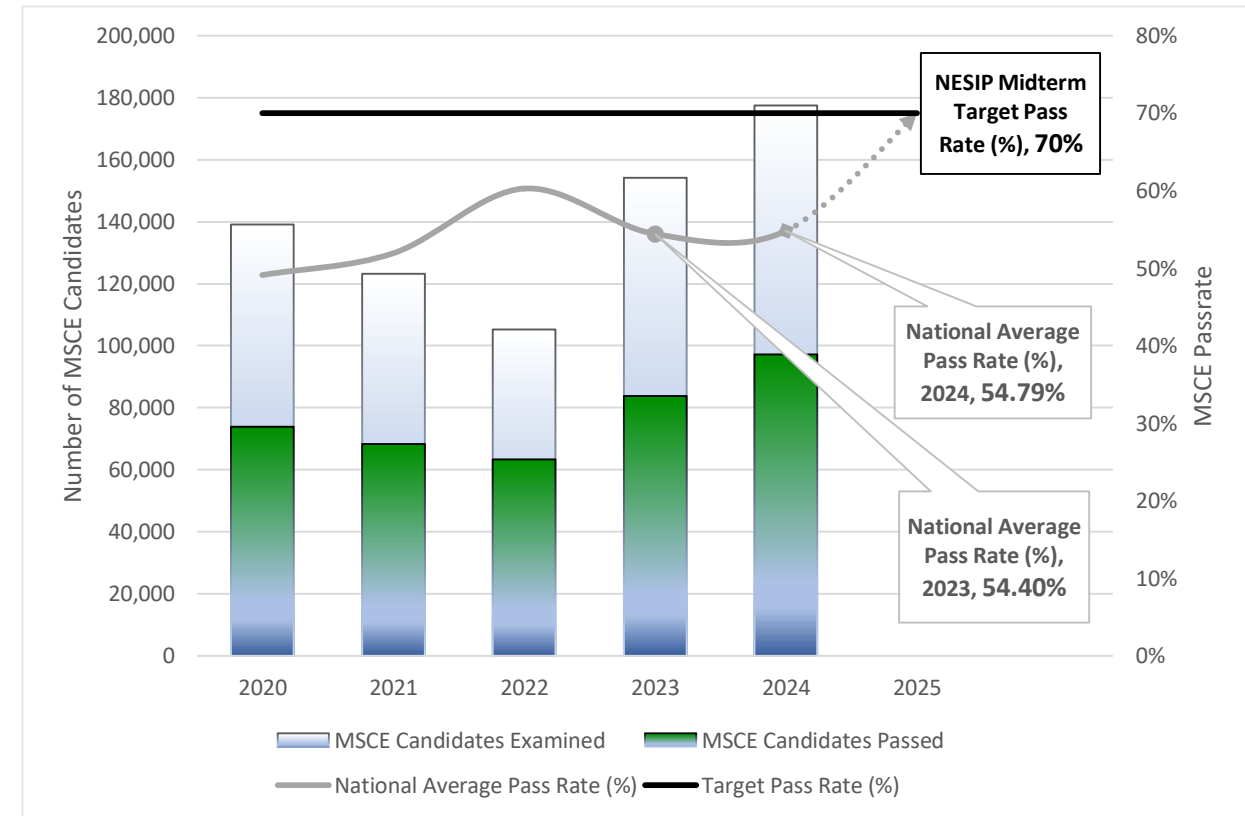
The MSCE pass rate in Malawi from 2012 to 2022 showed a mix of gains and setbacks, with both increases and decreases over the years.

The pass rate gradually improved from 51.95% in 2012 to 60.30% in 2022, with fluctuations along the way.

Notable progress was seen in 2018 when the pass rate reached 61.90%, but setbacks occurred in 2019 and 2020 when it dropped to 50.42% and 41.49%, respectively.

In 2024, results show a moderate improvement in performance with a national average pass rate of 54.79%, a slight increase from the 54.40% recorded in 2023. This improvement is encouraging but still falls short of the NESIP Midterm Target of 70%.

# MSCE Pass Rates



# Student-Textbook ratio in Mathematics, Sciences and English

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Student-textbook ratios for English and mathematics in 2023/24 range from 1.16 to 1.40, indicating reasonably low ratios.

Ratios for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Computer Studies range from 0.53 to 0.85, with most subjects meeting the NESIP 2025 target except Geography.

A significant procurement effort led to the acquisition and distribution of 1.3 million textbooks for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics, achieving a 1:1 ratio in 91% of CDSSs.

While Computer Studies has a low student-to-textbook ratio, challenges exist with teacher availability, and efforts to provide resources for new secondary schools and digitalization initiatives are ongoing.





Improved Governance  
and Management of  
Secondary Education



## Percentage of schools with SSIP instituted and functional

- The Government has made significant progress in implementing the Secondary School Improvement Plan (SSIP) in 6 pilot districts, which aims to improve school autonomy and educational standards.
- The initiative will be expanded to include six (6) additional districts
- The Ministry plans to roll out the SSIP to all the schools in the remaining education districts
- The Ministry is optimistic about meeting the NESIP target of SSIPs in 70%

## Percentage of secondary schools with functional Boards of Governors (BoGs)

- The Ministry has developed guidelines and training manuals for the BoGs and conducted ToTs to 680 schools, with plans to extend this capacity-building initiative to all schools to meet or exceed the NESIP target by 2025.
- In the year under review, 76% of public secondary schools established Boards of Governors, a significant increase from 24% in 2023 and a remarkable leap from almost no BoGs .
- The NESIP target of 70% BoGs by 2025 is achievable.





Recommendations

1. Continue with the expansion drive: Infrastructure development, and development and implementation of complementary frameworks/strategies

2. Lobby for funds for bursaries for both boys and girls

3. Enhance ICT integration in Education

4. Continue working on school governance and management

5. Increase number of schools with technical education wings and strengthen collaboration with Ministry of Labour on linking schools with technical institutions

6. Improve Curriculum Alignment and teaching methods

7. Implement Continuous Assessment System



The End

Thank you for  
your attention