

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, GENDER, AND OTHER CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Creating a Conducive
Environment for Every Learner

*Presented at 2024 JSR
By: Deputy Directors for
Inclusive Education and
School Health Nutrition.*

Introduction

This presentation highlights the progress and challenges in enhancing inclusive education and school health and nutrition in Malawi against the NESIP targets.

It outlines key initiatives aimed at improving access for marginalized children, supporting school health and nutrition programs, and addressing gender inequity.



Number of New Resource Centres Constructed

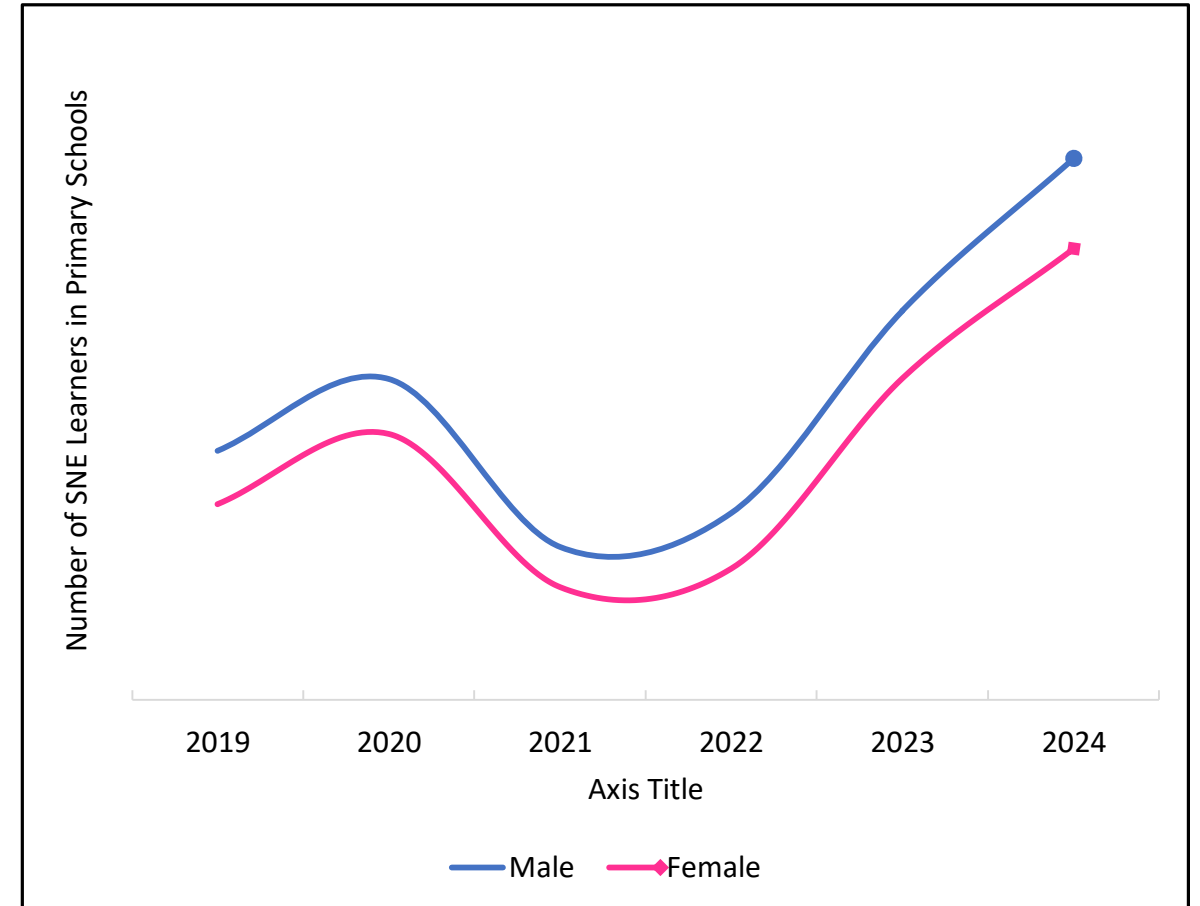
- In 2024, GoM has allocated an initial MK1.5 billion towards the construction of model resource centres, one in each of the 34 educational districts
- The sites for the construction of the resource centres have already been identified
- Designs for the model resource centres are in place; advert for the hiring of contractors has been floated and selection process is in progress.
- In the year 2024, 17 previously non-functional resource rooms have been revitalized with the support of development partners, increasing the number of functional centers from 161 in 2023 to 178 out of a total of 257.



Primary School Enrolment

- The NESIP aims to have 60% of appropriate-age persons with Special Educational Needs (SEN) attending school by 2025.
- However, in 2024, **215,224** SEN students were enrolled in primary schools (111,018 males and 104,206 females)—a growth of 11% from the previous year's 193,880.
- Therefore, SEN learners now make up 4% of total primary school enrollment.
- The largest categories of impairment among these learners include those with learning difficulties, low vision, and hearing challenges.

Trend and projections of SNE learners' enrolment in primary education between 2019 to 2024

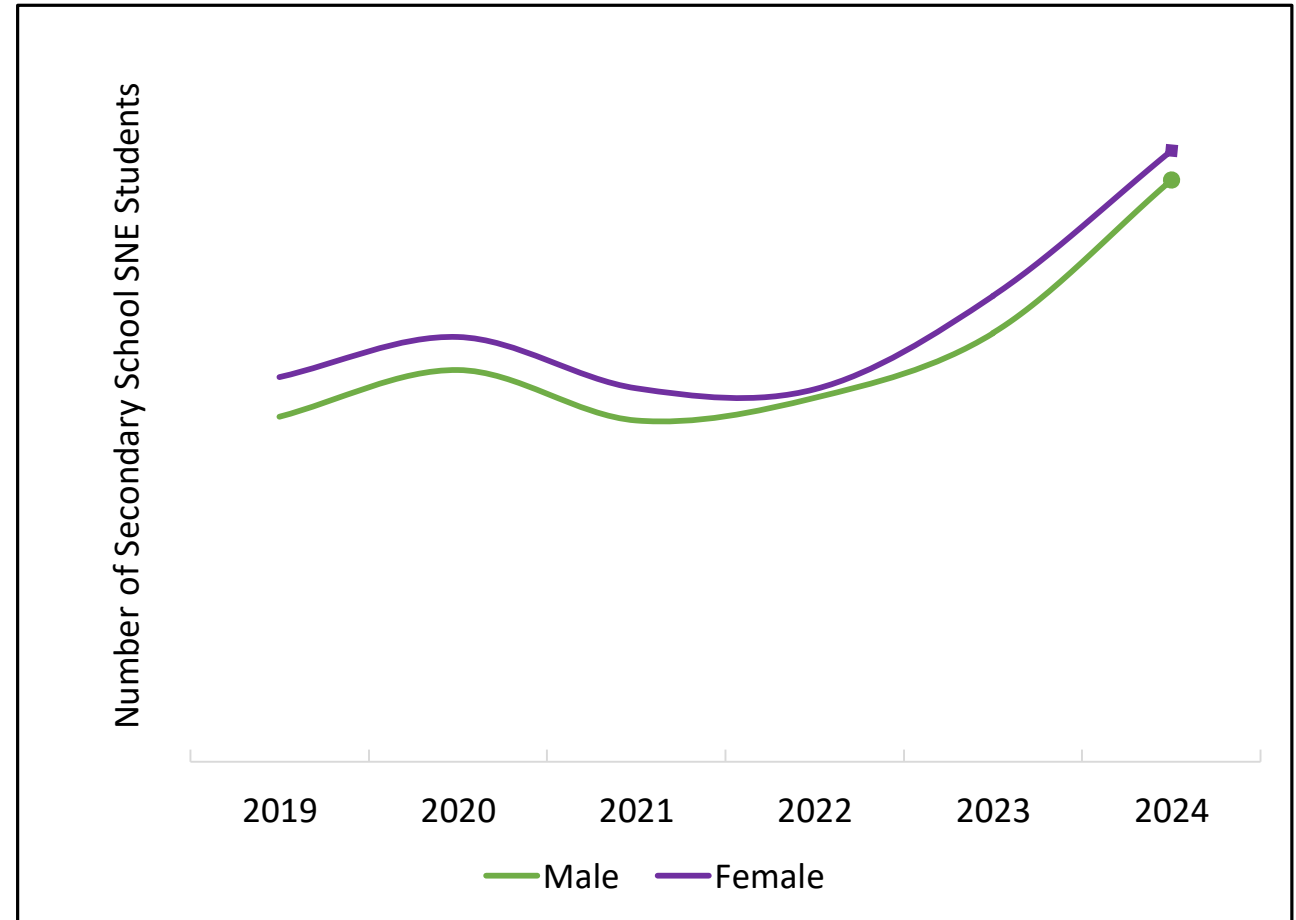


Source: EMIS

Secondary School Enrolment

- In 2024, enrollment for Special Needs Education (SNE) students increased from 11,521 in 2023 to 15,032 in 2024, continuing a steady rise since 2019.
- Male enrollment grew from 4,349 in 2019 to 7,328 in 2024, while female enrollment increased from 4,847 to 7,704
- This year, SNE students represented 2.8% of total secondary enrollment

Trend and projections of SNE learners' enrolment in Secondary education between 2019 to 2025



Source: EMIS

Tertiary Enrolment and NCHE Selection

- In 2023/24, enrollment for Special Needs Education (SNE) students in higher education institutions has risen from 156 students in 2023 to 315 in 2024 across public and private institutions.
- Of these, 186 are males while 129 are females.
- This year, 57 SNE students (37 males and 20 females) have been selected to various public universities in Malawi
- Majority of those selected to the universities are those with visual impairments (24) and hearing impairments (17)



Provision of TLMs and other Assistive Devices

- In 2024, funding allocation for procurement of TLMs for SNE students doubled with 60% of the budget allocated to primary and 35% to secondary
- However, the funding remains inadequate to cater for the needs of various students with diverse needs at all levels including tertiary institutions.
- This is because enrolment of SNE learners continue to increase at all subsector levels

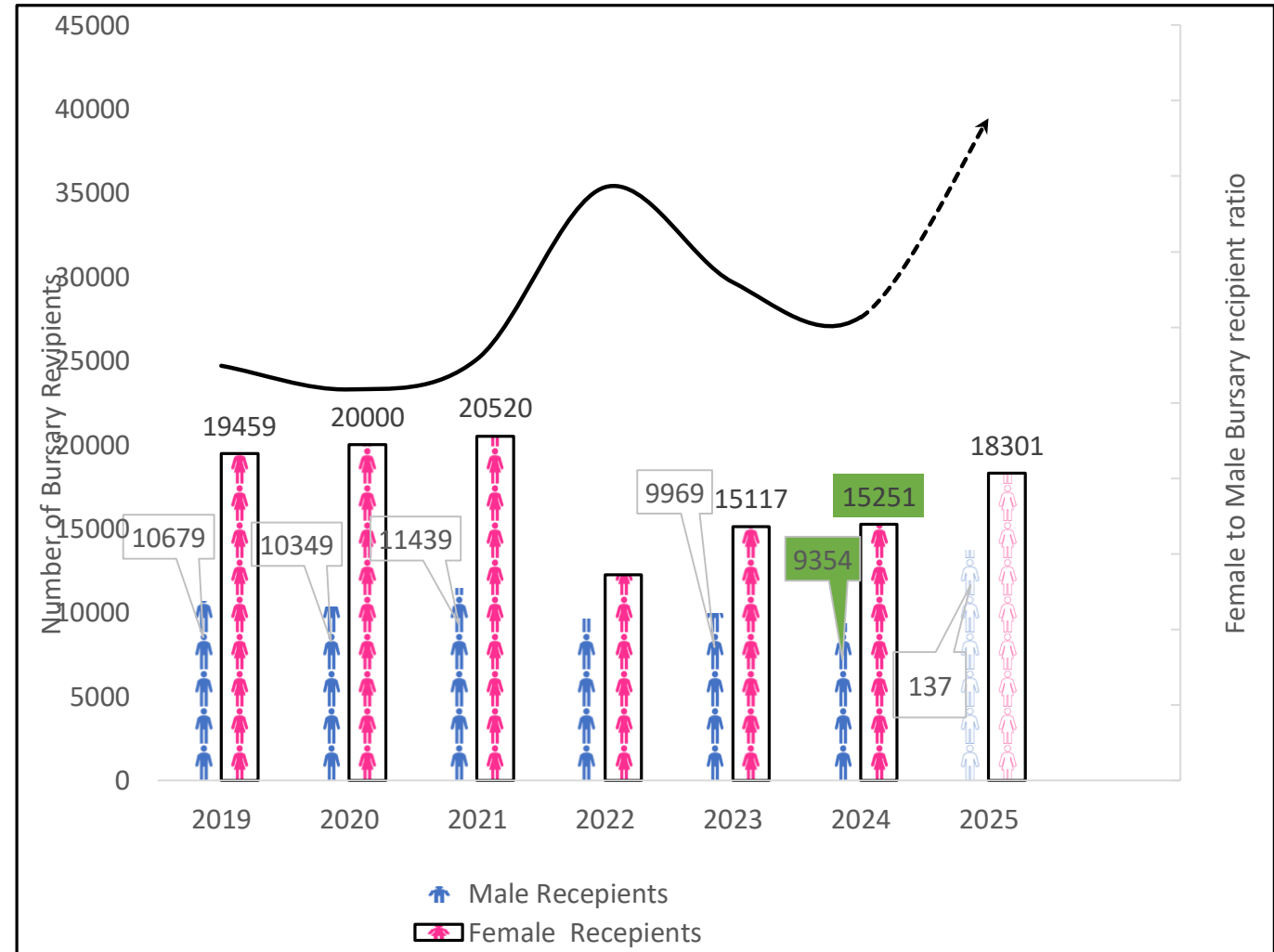


Gender Trends in SNE students receiving bursaries

The ratio of male to female SNE students receiving bursaries remains skewed, with projections indicating a challenging path toward achieving a balanced 1:1 ratio by 2025. Efforts must focus on increasing bursaries for male students to meet the target.



Trend and projections of the ratio of Male to female vulnerable students receiving bursaries

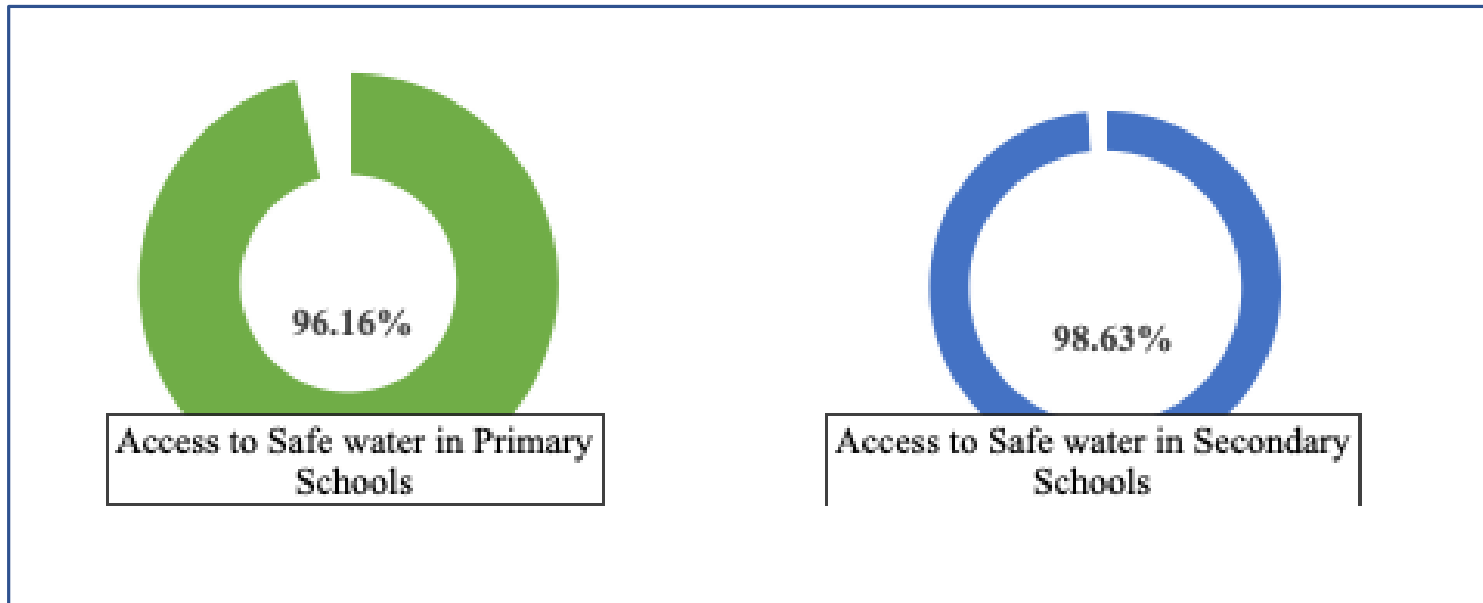


Source: EMIS

Percentage of Primary and Secondary Schools with Safe Drinking Water

In 2024, 96% of primary and 98.6% of secondary schools had safe drinking water, surpassing the NESIP target of 80%. However, some schools still rely on unprotected sources, emphasizing the need for continued improvements in water infrastructure.

Percentage of primary and secondary schools with safe drinking water sources in 2023/24



Source: EMIS

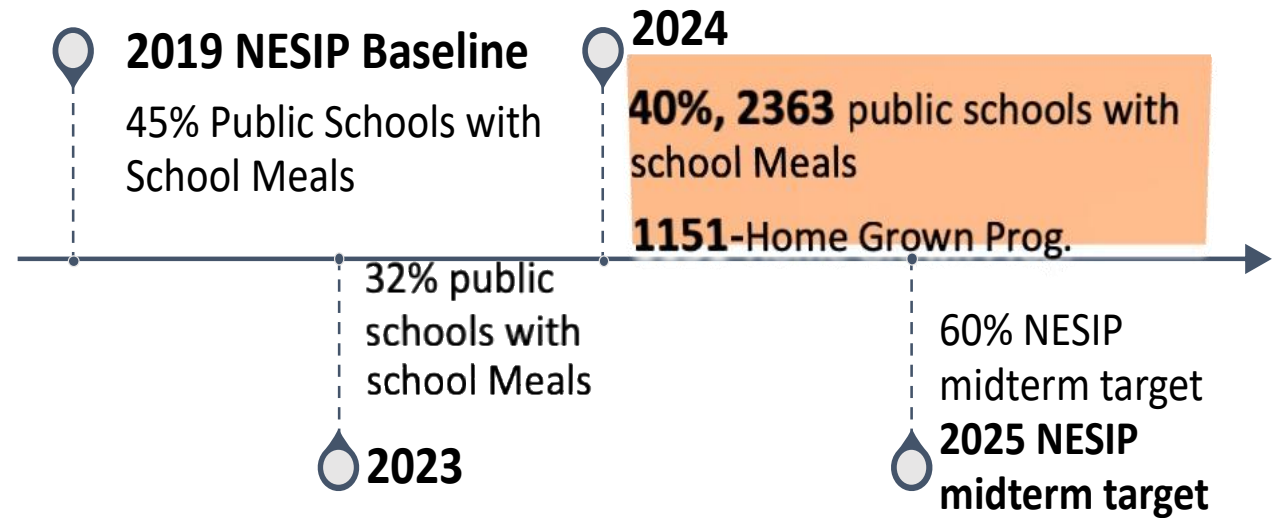


Expansion of School Feeding Program

Currently, 40% of public primary schools participate in school feeding, up from 32% in 2023, yet short of the NESIP target of 60%. The Home-Grown School Meals Program is particularly valuable for sustainability, with government and community support facilitating local food production.

Recommendations:

- Advocate for universal school feeding to reach the NESIP target.
- Expand the Home-Grown School Meals Program, particularly in schools with available land for food production.
- Strengthen community involvement to secure local food contributions for school meals.



Percentage of Primary Schools with Specialist Teachers

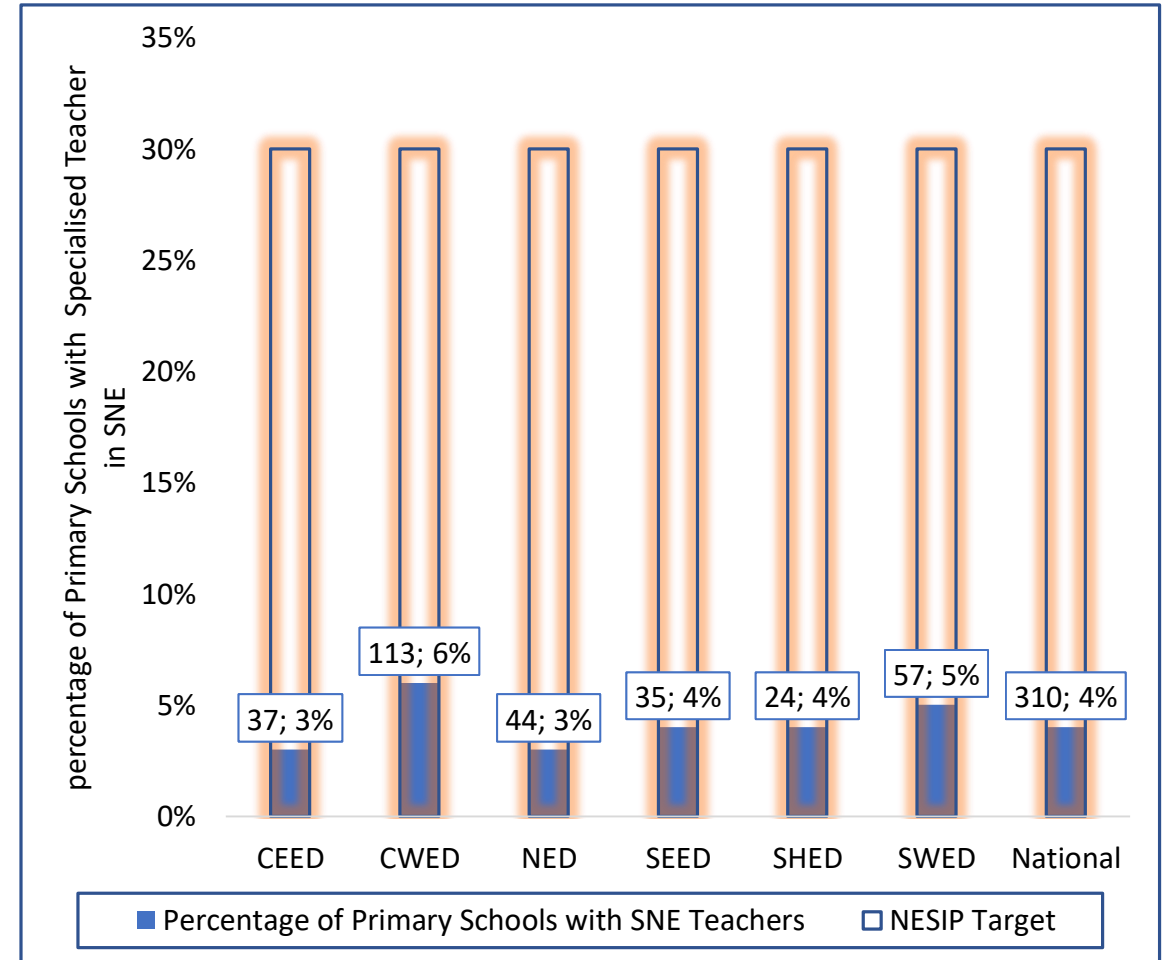
By 2023/24, only 4% of primary schools in Malawi (209 schools) have specialist teachers trained to support students with special needs, a slight increase from 3% in the previous year far falling short of the NESIP mid-term target of 30% by 2025.

The highest proportion of schools with specialized teachers is in the Central Western Education Division (CWED) at 6%, while other divisions range from 3% to 5%.

Regardless of the shortage of specialist teachers, MOE is building capacity for mainstream teachers in IE to ably support learners with diverse needs. In 2024, 33,312 primary school teachers have been trained in inclusive education pedagogical approaches and sign language.

In addition, MOE has submitted a proposal for land and funding towards the construction of the Inclusive Education institute to address the shortage of IE and specialist teachers.

Percentage of schools with specialized teachers in SEN by education division for the 2023/24 school year



Source: EMIS

Percentage of Secondary Schools with Specialist Teachers

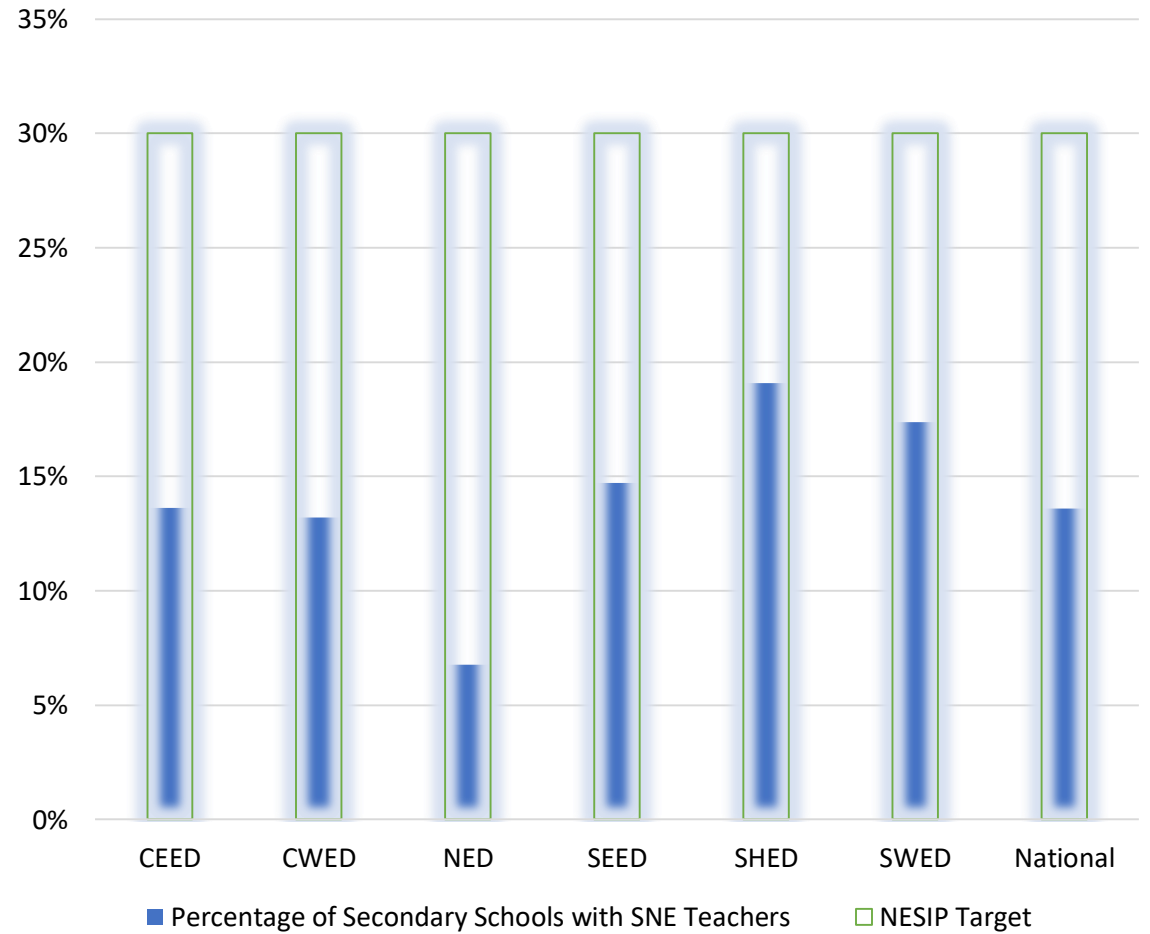
SHED has more schools with specialised teachers (19%) while NED has the lowest (7%).

Nationally, 14% of secondary schools have specialized teachers, which is less than half of the NESIP target (30%).

This indicates a substantial shortfall, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to bridge the gap and ensure students with special needs receive adequate support.

However, there are ongoing capacity building initiatives for mainstream teachers on inclusive education

Percentage of Secondary Schools with SNE Teachers



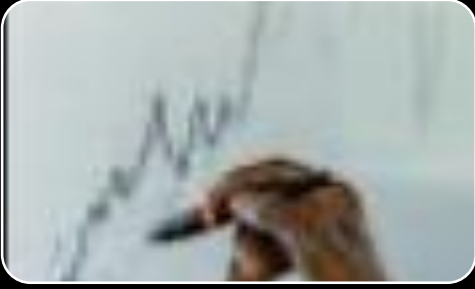
Source: EMIS

Recommendations

- There is need to allocate more resources towards:
 - the construction and rehabilitation of resource centres as well as procurement of TLMS at all subsector levels of education.
 - Expanding School feeding programme to reach all public primary schools
 - Construction of standard WASH facilities and promote improved sanitation among communities and learners
 - Construction of kitchens and feeding shelters to support the school feeding programme
- Adequate resources must be committed towards the construction of a fully-fledged inclusive education institute to address shortage of specialist teachers
- Key stakeholders must comply to the minimum standards for the construction of resource centres
- Strengthening coordination and collaboration with education partners for effective implementation of IE intervention



Conclusion



Overall, the sector has made commendable strides in inclusive education and school health and nutrition.



However, increased investments in infrastructure development, teacher training, safe water access, and school feeding programs are necessary to fully meet NESIP goals to provide equitable and inclusive educational opportunities for all.



Continued collaboration with development partners and communities remains a critical requirement



thank you!