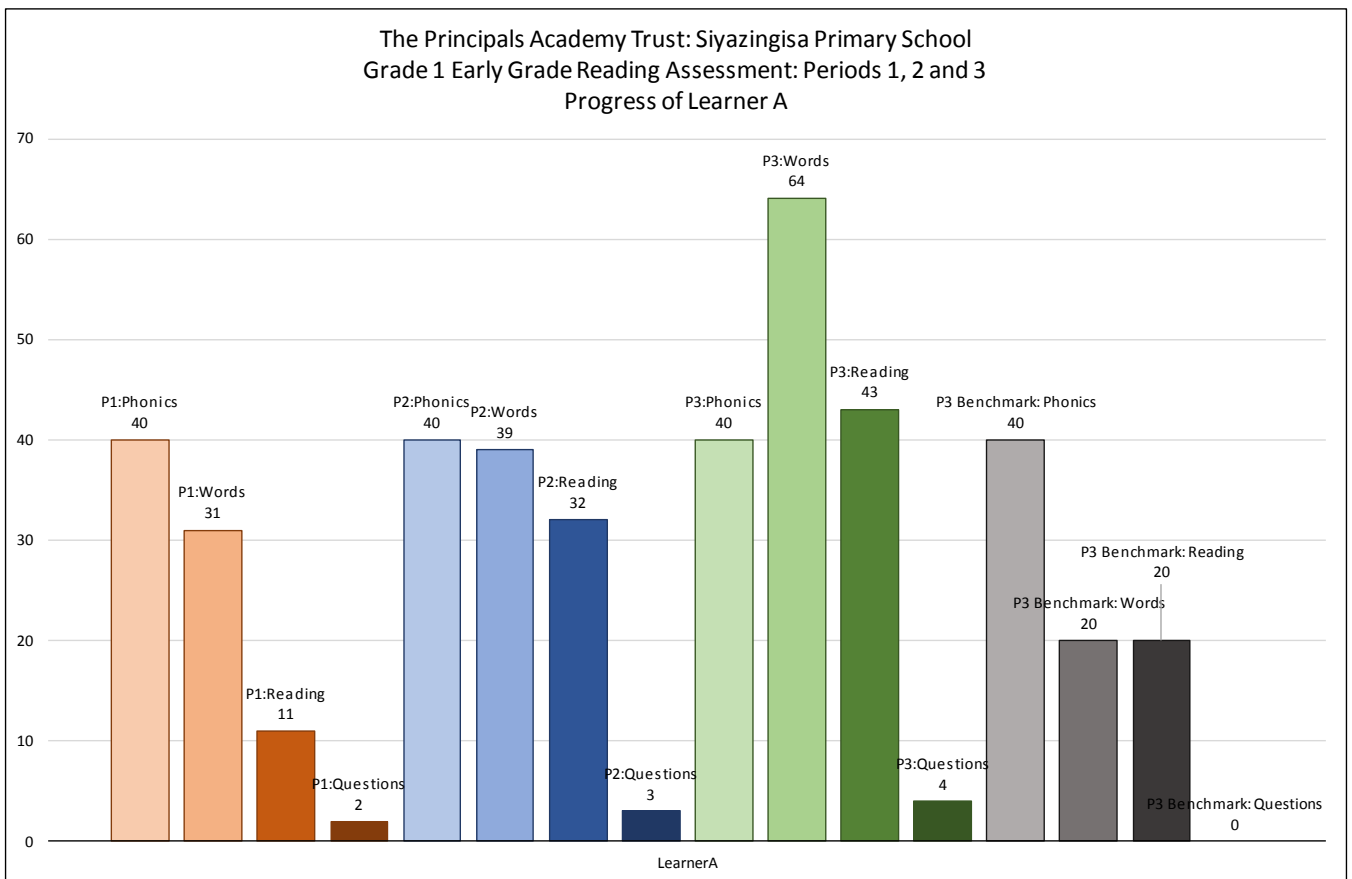**Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)**

We have been searching for some time for a form of assessment that could be used by our schools to assess learners in the early grades when the normal assessment process used by schools in the higher grades do not apply. Recently, almost by accident, we discovered that an appropriate instrument for reading assessment is available and is currently in use in all public schools in the country. Our enquiries revealed that many school principals are largely unaware of its purpose, with their only involvement being a signature of the statistical report that is forwarded to the school's district office 3 times each year.
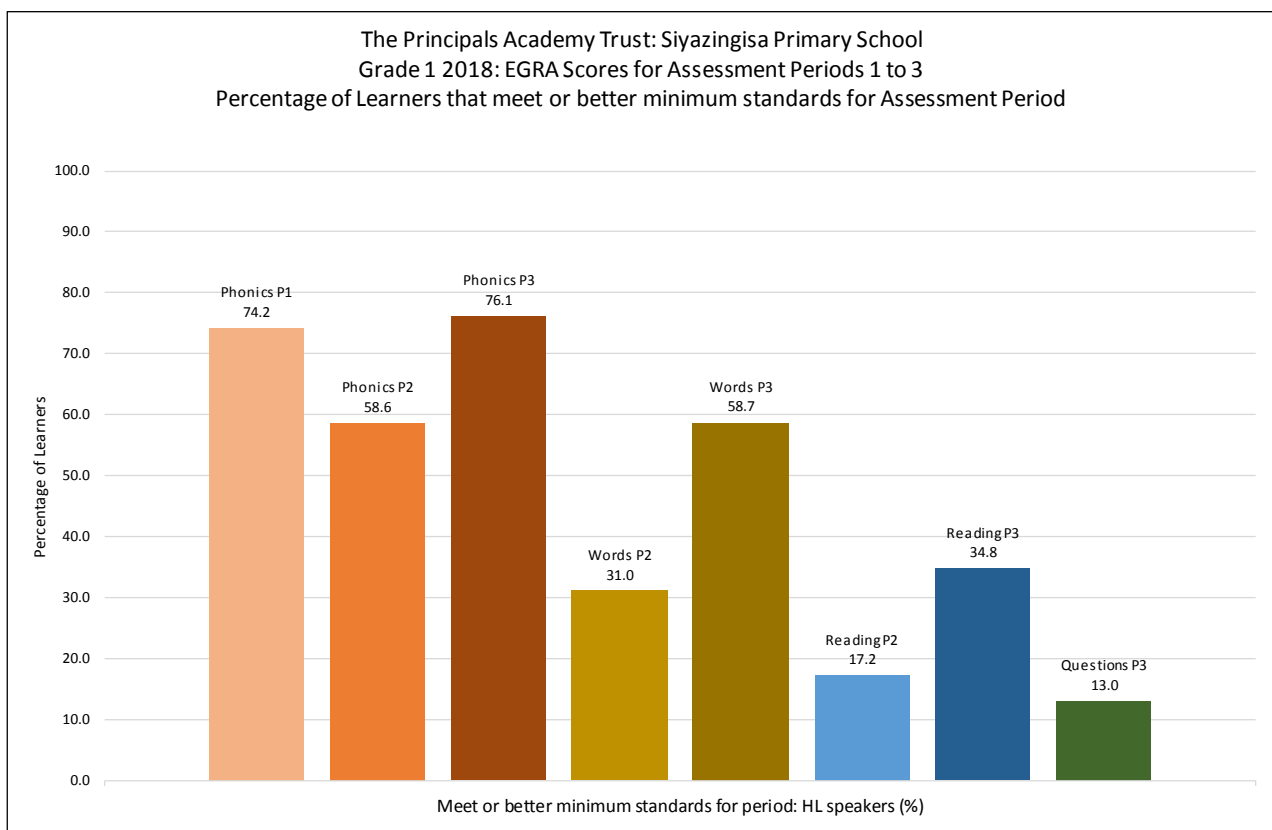
Our understanding is that EGRA testing was piloted in selected schools in 2016 and introduced to all schools in 2017. There has apparently been no official training or briefing of principals or teachers on the purpose and use of the instrument. We are surprised by this as the tests results provide data that we believe can be exceptionally helpful in tracking the growth and development of the reading and comprehension skills of individual learners, in helping to identify learners who struggle to master the reading process, early on and in helping teachers to group learners with similar strengths and weaknesses. It can also be used by principals and district officials to identify teachers who may not be properly competent to teach reading at the Grade-level to which they have been assigned.

We are in the process of developing an instrument (Excel spreadsheet) which the teachers, who work in the school where we have a presence, can use to capture the results of these tests and which will provide a relatively detailed analysis of learner performance both at an individual learner level and at a class and group level. Our plan is to use this data to identify common problems across schools and then to make use of the ECD and Foundation Phase specialists that are part of the PAT's team of mentoring consultants to provide training and for the schools and teachers that form part of the PAT programme.

The chart below, *on page 2*, shows the progress of this Grade 1 learner across the three assessment periods. Learners are assessed during the course of terms 2, 3 and 4 each year. Learners are assessed individually by their teachers using test instruments. Each test consists of four components namely Phonics, Word recognition, Reading of extended text, and the ability to correctly answer 5 questions based on the text (Comprehension). Learners are given one minute to complete each of these tasks with a minimum "Benchmark" standard set for each component, assessment period and grade. The minimum benchmarks for Grade 1, assessment period 3 are shown in grey in the chart.

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST
*t: 021 286 0009 * e: joanne@principalsacademy.ac.za * www. principalsacademy.ac.za*
The Principals Academy is a PBO (Registration NO. 930 041 885) and is a registered Trust IT2943 / 2012.
Trustees: Charles Richard Haw, Clive John Edwards, John Le Roux

The Principals Academy Trust: Siyazingisa Primary School
Grade 1 Early Grade Reading Assessment: Periods 1, 2 and 3
Progress of Learner A

The chart below shows the performance of a class group from the same school and represents the percentage of learners from that class that meet or bettered the Benchmark standards for each assessment period. It is important to note that in the first assessment period of Grade 1 there is only a benchmark set for Phonics. The benchmarks for words and reading in period 3 are both 20 words correct in 1 minute and there is no benchmark for Questions correctly answered.

The Principals Academy Trust: Siyazingisa Primary School
Grade 1 2018: EGRA Scores for Assessment Periods 1 to 3
Percentage of Learners that meet or better minimum standards for Assessment Period

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST
*t: 021 286 0009 * e: joanne@principalsacademy.ac.za * www. principalsacademy.ac.za*
The Principals Academy is a PBO (Registration NO. 930 041 885) and is a registered Trust IT2943 / 2012.
Trustees: Charles Richard Haw, Clive John Edwards, John Le Roux

We believe that the use of the EGRA tests and the data that these provide can have great value if it is used diagnostically to assist teachers in identifying learners who may need support and in helping teachers to develop appropriate teaching methodologies and intervention strategies which support learners in their acquisition of language.