



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Hon. Mr Sipho Emmanuel Hlomuka, MPL
KwaZulu-Natal Legislature MEC: Education
KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government

K W A Z U L U - N A T A L

BUDGET

SPEECH

2024/25

**GROWING
KWAZULU-NATAL
TOGETHER**





Hon. Mr Sipho Emmanuel Hlomuka, MPL
KwaZulu-Natal Legislature MEC: Education
KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government

THE 2024/25 KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUDGET SPEECH

DELIVERED BY HON. SIPHO HLOMUKA

TUESDAY, 13 AUGUST 2024

Honourable Speaker, Ms Nontembeko Boyce;

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ms Mmabatho Tembe;

Honourable Premier, Mr Thami Ntuli;

Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Executive Council;

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;

His Worship Mayor of uMgungundlovu, Cllr Muziwokuthula Zuma

Members of the diplomatic corps;

Chairperson of the KZN Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders,
Inkosi Shinga;

All traditional leaders;

Director General, Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize.

Head of Department, Mr Nkosingithi Ngcobo.

All Heads of Departments and Senior Management:

CEOs of Public Entities;

People of KwaZulu-Natal;

Members of the media;

Business leaders;

Distinguished guests;

**Ladies and Gentlemen!!! It is indeed a great pleasure and honor that I
am given an opportunity to present this budget to this August House.**

INTRODUCTION

Thirty years ago, the first democratic President of the Republic of South Africa and the African National Congress, Dr Nelson Mandela took to the podium on his inauguration and committed the country to work together in fighting crime, the injustices of the past; and to generally improve the lives of all South Africans. He further committed the government to also fight the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

He therefore uttered the following words of wisdom,

“In a life of extremes, education was constant.”

Again today, we are firmly standing here to remind the people of KwaZulu Natal, that education is still a societal equalizer, education is still the key to success and the main contributor in fighting the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, our constitution calls on us to build an education system founded on equality, human dignity, and advancing human rights and freedoms.

The signing into law of the famous BELA BILL which proposes changes to the South African Schools Act and seeks to hand control to the Education Department in determining a school's language policy and curriculums, compulsory schooling from Grade R, and the prohibition of corporal punishment and initiation practices, will indeed usher us closer to the realization of our constitutional call.

Madam Speaker, this Budget speech takes the queue from the State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered by His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa guided by the National Development Plan (NDP), It also follows the State of the Province Address (SOPA) delivered by the Premier of Kwazulu-Natal Honourable Thami Ntuli guided by the Provincial Growth Development Plan (PGDP).

Somlomo ohloniphekileyo, lesi sabelo-zimali somnyango wethu wezeMfundo sisithula ngenyanga ka Ncwaba (August) okuyinyanga yabantu abayigugu kakhulu kuthina sonke, abantu besifazane. Kuyishwa elikhulu kakhulu ukuthi namanje ziyaqhubeka izigameko ezithinta ukuhlukumezeka kwabantu besifazane kanye nezingane.

Somlomo, ngicela ningivumele ngidlulise ukuzwelana nomndeni ka **Nqobile Hlophe** obengumntwana oneminyaka eyishumi nantathu (13) obefunda e-Pinetown Girls High School nobekubikwe ukuthi ulahlekile wase etholakala emakhazeni ase-Pinetown esedlulile emhlabeni emuva kokushayiswa imoto ezama ukubalekela izigilamkhuba. Siyazwelana nomndeni wakwa-Hlophe kanye nayo yonke imindeni elahlekelwe abathandiweyo bayo ngenxa yezigilamkhuba ezingenawo unembeza.

Madam Speaker, in commemorating International Women's Day in March 1987, Thomas Sankara, the former President of Burkina Faso profoundly said:

"Inequality can be done away with only by establishing a new society, where men and women will enjoy equal rights...Thus, the status of women will improve only with the elimination of the system that exploits them"

Lokhu ke Somlomo kuyahambisana nenkulumo ethulwe uNdunankulu walesi siFundazwe uThamsanqa Ntuli emgubhweni obuse; Bergville Okhahlamba Sports Complex ngesonto elidlule, lapho ezibophezele ngokweseka umzabalazo wokulwa nalesi sikhava sokuhlukunyezwa kwabantu besifazane ngaphansi kwendikimba ethi:

"CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF: ACCELERATE EQUITY AND STRENGTHEN WOMEN DEVELOPMENT"

Honourable Speaker, we are proud to remind the people of KwaZulu-Natal that the budget we tabled last year (2023/2024 MTEF) focused on implementing various measures, including the non-filling of critical office-based posts, installation of boreholes to reduce water costs and the utilisation of surplus educators to fill vacancies in schools. This year, the focus will also include the advertisement of post-level one posts that will display transparency amongst employment seekers and the public at large. "Sthesha Wayaya"

Madam Speaker, the main appropriation for the department is R62.988 588 billion (Sixty-two billion nine hundred and eighty-eight million five hundred eighty-eight thousand) in 2024/2025 with 80% accountable for compensation of employees. Further breakdown of our budget will be illustrated towards the end my speech.

THE YEAR 2023/24 IN REVIEW

The 2023 academic year, like the previous years, was characterised by a limited budget, which made it challenging for the Department to perform its core function, which is teaching and learning.

It is the Department's mantra that the classroom is the centrepiece of all its activities. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints resulting from the sheer size of the Department and budget cuts, it becomes a challenge for the Department to perform its teaching and learning core function optimally. As a result, the classroom becomes the first casualty.

More often than not, the Department relies on the creativity, imagination, and dedication of its officials, especially educators, to ensure that the Department continues to defy the odds.

In our spirited quest to transform society through the provision of quality education despite challenges, we are encouraged by the words of the Brazilian progressive pedagogue, Paulo Frere, who said, ***“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practise of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in transformation of their world.”***

As a department, we choose to use education as an instrument to achieve the latter.

Honourable members, here are the schools that we have completed as promised in the previous budget speech.

NO.	NAME OF SCHOOL	DISTRICT
1	Llyod Primary School	iLembe
2	Tongaat Special School	Pinetown
3	JG Zuma Secondary School	Pinetown
4	Ekucabangeni Secondary School	uMzinyathi



Ladies and gentlemen, it is common knowledge that the province was affected by several natural disasters in the 2023/24 financial year. Despite these devastating events, the Department managed to respond in real time by providing interim interventions, including the provision of mobile classrooms where required, ensuring that teaching and learning continued uninterrupted. The Department also initiated and commenced the rehabilitation of damaged elements, with rehabilitation work completed in several schools.

When discussing our recent achievements in curriculum delivery and education outcomes, we must acknowledge our journey as the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal.

Madam Speaker, I must remind this house that we are talking about a Department that experienced a significant decline in 2015, prompting the then Premier of the Province, Comrade Senzo Mchunu, to call for an Education Indaba to explore ways to pull the Department out of the morass it was in at the time.

It was this Education Indaba that led to what the Department termed "Operation Bounce Back." Since then, the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal has not looked back.

J.K. Rowling, in her speech titled "The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination", correctly exhorted the Harvard University students saying, ***"Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life."***

From a department commonly associated with the three bottom provinces in the national rankings, Madam Speaker, our rock bottom became the only solid foundation on which the Department rose from the ashes like a proverbial phoenix.

Despite financial constraints and many challenges that beset the Department, the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal continues to rise in terms of education outcomes.



One of the objectives of the Department's Academic Improvement Plan of 2023 was to increase the provincial pass percentage from 2022's 83% to a maximum of 100%.

Among other strategies to improve results, the Department implemented interventions such as Accountability Sessions and Winter and Spring Tuition.

The ground-breaking 86.4% pass rate - with a 3.4% increase from 83% obtained in 2022 - was the result of a collective effort by all involved in our education project.

In line with the objectives of our Academic Improvement Plan, the number of schools achieving a 100% pass rate saw a notable increase, rising from **214** in 2022 to **246** in 2023. As a province, we also succeeded in reducing the number of schools performing below 40%, from **29** in 2022 to **18** in 2023. All of our districts performed at 80% and above, with notable improvements from all of them

Our bachelor passes increased from **61 856** (sixty-one thousand, eight hundred and fifty-six) in 2021 to **69 849** (sixty-nine thousand, eight hundred and forty-nine) in 2022, and further to **72 099** (seventy-two thousand and ninety-nine) in 2023.

All 10 of our special schools performed at 80% and above, with five of them obtaining a 100% pass rate. This demonstrates our commitment to focusing on learners with special education needs - we aim to leave no one behind.

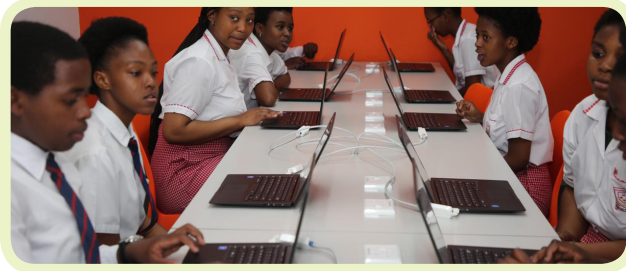
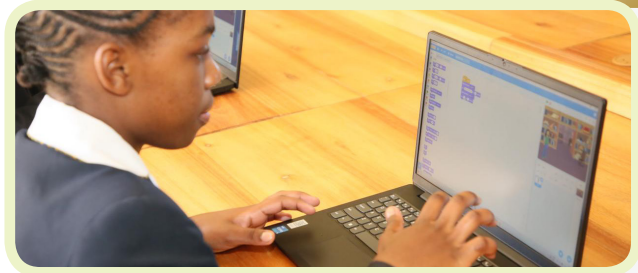
The achievements we discuss are the combined efforts of all our educators from the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, up to the Further Education and Training Phase.

Our commitment to Early Childhood Development (ECD) has seen the Department conducting roadshows throughout the province in 2023. This was to ensure that the ECD function shift from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education is being properly implemented and understood by all involved in ECD.

Madam Speaker, buoyed by the performance of our systems at all levels and witnessing the results of the maturing system of education in KwaZulu-Natal, we are confident that we are poised to surprise many in the Republic of South Africa.

Ours is a story of hope, resilience, and collective effort to ensure that our province continues to be the talk of the nation when the results are released in January 2025.

MST AND ICT PROGRAMMES



As a department, through the MST/ICT Directorate, we have formulated an integrated strategy aimed at enhancing the province's performance in Mathematics and re-igniting our learners' passion for the subject.

In April 2023, the Department held the Mathematics Summit, which resulted in the development of a 5-Year Mathematics Strategy to improve learner participation and attainment in Maths. Having recognized the benefits of competitions, the Department, through the Maths Science and Technology (MST) Conditional Grant, continues to support participation and cover learner registration fees for competitions conducted by reputable entities such as SAASTA, SAMO, and SAMC. To supplement this strategy, the Department continues to use e-learning and ICT to deepen knowledge and understanding.

A total of 62,000 learners in Grades 11 and 12 were supplied with Maths study guides this year at a total cost of R10.8 million. This number is in addition to the 17,000 study guides provided in the previous year. At least 46 primary schools were supplied with Maths manipulatives to simplify the teaching of Mathematics. In 2023, the pass percentage in Mathematics at NSC (Grade 12) reached a total of 64.2%, which is an increase of 9.6% from the previous year.

TEACHER PROVISIONING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT

Through the Teacher Development Directorate, 60 schools from six districts are piloting the new Coding and Robotics subject in the foundation phase, intermediate phase, as well as in Grades 7 and 8. A total of 260 schools are piloting the new Coding and Robotics subject (33 in Foundation Phase, 112 in Grades 4-7, and 115 in Grades 8-9). The new subject has now been approved by uMalusi.

29 Foundation Phase schools have been resourced with ICT gadgets and Robotics kits. 60 more schools will be resourced within the financial year 2024/2025. At least 6 000 intermediate phase and Grade 8 educators will be orientated on coding and robotics. The planned orientation of 6000 educators did not take place due to financial constraints in the 2023/2024 financial year. The plan is to orientate 2500 Foundation Phase educators (Grade R-3) in the 2024/2025 financial year on the approved Coding and Robotics Curriculum. The MST conditional grant will be used for orientation. In March 2024, Department of Basic Education conducted orientation workshops for 39 Foundation Phase Subject Advisors in the approved curriculum.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



A total of 1000 practitioners were trained on the National Curriculum Framework for birth to four-year-olds in 2023/24. Additionally, 4215 ECD practitioners were trained on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Districts are prioritizing support for practitioners who teach diverse age groups.

EMBRACING FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (4IR)

PILOTING OF THE ONLINE LEARNER ADMISSIONS SYSTEM.

The Department conducted a due diligence study on provinces that are already implementing the online learner admissions.

The pilot of the online learner admissions system will be conducted in the four districts (Amajuba, Umlazi, Pinetown and uMgungundlovu). The department is diligently preparing to ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place for the system to go live in September 2024.

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIAL

The Department has rolled out an online tool to assist Section 21c schools in efficiently procuring LTSM. The Department will support Section 21c schools in managing their LTSM responsibilities and procurement mandate. A total of 1239 Section 21c schools have opted for school-based procurement - they have created profiles and compiled requests for quotations from their suppliers before the target date of 26 July 2024. Helpdesk services have been reinforced to ensure that all Section 21c schools opting for school-based procurement are supported.

ELITS

A total of 150 schools with libraries utilizing the norms and standards to procure additional school library materials will benefit from ICT devices to support them in accessing the KZN education digital school library platform. A total of 120 public schools with spaces ready for school library development, will receive multimedia resources to support reading and library development. An additional 100 schools will be added to the list of public schools receiving e-books through the KZN Education digital school library platform.

ACQUISITION OF TOOLS OF TRADE

To promote efficiency in the delivery of services, the department has distributed 2 474 laptops to districts and head office officials. This initiative has enhanced agility and digital mobility while improving service delivery. The impact of these tools on service delivery has been significant.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Department's post establishment and the state of vacancies are as follows: The total approved post establishment of the Department is 107 503 post with 99 261 filled as of June 2024, resulting in 8 242 vacancies:

EDUCATOR POSTS

A total of 90 057 educator posts have been approved, with 86 737 posts for distribution to public schools through PPN certificates resulting in a teacher pupil-ratio of 1:31. 2020 posts are set aside for the provision of substitute educator in case of those educators who may be ill or need to be on maternity leave.

86 807 educator posts were filled as of June 2024. As of June 2024, there were 2240 vacancies for school management teams (SMTs). These will soon be advertised through a bulletin. Between January and June this year the department filled more than 1700

post level 1 educator vacancies using the provincial database of qualified unemployed. To ensure more transparency in our recruitment processes, we have taken a decision to advertise vacant post level one educator posts. Processes are at an advanced stage in this regard and an advert will soon be released publicly to enable qualified unemployed educators to apply.

The budget required to fill all educator posts is R1 763 586 374, while the approved budget for payment of salaries for educators is R42 989 272 880.

PUBLIC SERVANTS POSTS

A total of 15 207 public servant posts were approved, with 11 344 posts filled, leaving 3 863 vacancies. The budget required to fill all public servants' posts is R1 072 158 236, while the approved budget is R7 436 602 608.

SPECIALISTS POSTS

The department's approved post establishment also make provision for 2 049 specialist posts in the form of circuit managers, subject advisors and other categories of education specialists that are responsible for providing support to teaching and learning in schools. As of June 2024, only 950 posts remain filled, and the rest have become vacant as a result of attrition, leaving 1 099 vacant specialist posts. Due to budgetary constraints the department has been unable to fill these vacancies. The budget required to fill vacant education specialist posts is R964 960 548.

THERAPISTS

A total of 190 posts for therapists in special schools were approved, with 65 posts recently filled, leaving 25 vacant therapist posts. The budget required to fill all vacant therapists' posts is R16 449 671, while the approved budget is R74 358 782.

PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILDING OF THE STATE OF THE ART SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE



Madam Speaker, we have elevated the provision of infrastructure to all our institutions, focusing on building new schools, refurbishing those in disrepair, and undertaking many other crucial infrastructure-related projects.

The Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal continues to implement various education infrastructure programmes and projects aimed at delivering conducive teaching and learning environment across all schools in the province. These initiatives ensure compliance with the promulgated Norms and Standards for Schools.

The implementation of the Three-Stream Model is ongoing. In this regard, the Department continued with the construction of the state-of-the-art Maritime School of Excellence in Umlazi, as promised in the previous budget speech. The construction of this school is at an advanced stages and is expected to be completed in the current (2024/25) financial year. We will shortly present to this House the list of all schools currently under construction and those at pre-construction stages.

In the 2023/24 financial year, the Department completed several major school infrastructure projects: the construction of the Ekucabangeni Secondary School in UMzinyathi District, J.G. Zuma Secondary School in Pinetown District, upgrades and additions to the YWCA Special School in Amajuba District, upgrades at the Buhlebuzile Primary School which is under construction in the Zululand District, phase one of upgrades and additions to Lloyd Primary School in Pinetown District, and the upgrades and additions to the Mathole High School in Zululand District, as per the commitment made in the previously tabled Budget Speech.

The Department cumulatively eradicated pit latrines to 1 267 schools across the province. The construction on the remaining 56 schools continued in the 2023/24 financial year and will be completed in the 2024/25 financial year, with details to be shared shortly. The other 54 schools are either closed or non-viable. These non-viable schools are undergoing the School Revitalisation and Rationalisation Process (SRRP), a programme that is in line with Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic which mandates the Department of Education to provide quality, accessible, and affordable education.

In the quest to achieve our constitutional mandate, the Department identified micro non-viable schools for integration to other schools or closure. This determination was based on the lack of resources and compromised quality of teaching and learning in micro non-viable schools, hence the implementation of the SRRP.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is well-known that the province was affected by several natural disasters in the 2023/24 financial year. Despite these devastating events, the Department managed to respond in real-time through the provision of interim interventions, including



the provision of mobile classrooms where necessary to ensure that teaching and learning to continue uninterrupted. Additionally, the Department initiated and commenced the rehabilitation of damaged elements, with work already completed on some schools.

The Department is currently constructing 22 new or replacement schools and several schools are undergoing major upgrades and additions as promised in the previous Budget Speech.

Madam Speaker, we are also engaged in the construction of various schools across the province. Most of these projects, which are currently in various stages of completion, will be finalized within the current financial year.

NO.	NAME OF SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATUS
1	Dingukwazi Secondary School	Zululand	88% Progress Complete
2	Buhlebuzile Primary School	Zululand	95% Progress Complete
3	Esidumbini Primary School	iLembe	90% Progress Complete
4	Mariannhill Primary School	Pinetown	82% Progress Complete.
5	Inkosi Mgwazeni High School	uMkhanyakude	82% Progress Complete.
6	Menzi Secondary School	uMlazi	50% progress complete
7	Siyakhanyisa Primary School	King Cetshwayo	60% progress complete

8	Mconjwana High School	uMgungundlovu	35% progress complete
9	Bulwer Primary School	Harry Gwala	35% progress complete
10	Siyakhula Secondary School	uMkhanyakude	5% progress complete
11	Mzingezwi Secondary School	iLembe	10% progress complete
12	Open Gate Special School (Completion Contract)	uMgungundlovu	Terminated at 16% progress complete.
13	Ohlange Secondary School	Pinetown	10% progress complete
14	Musa Special School	Zululand	15% Progress Complete
15	Maritime School of Excellence	Umlazi	87% Progress Complete
16	Solomon Mahlangu Primary School	Pinetown	25% Progress Complete
17	J.G. Zuma Secondary School	Pinetown	The project is on Practical Completion.
18	Thembinkosi Primary School	Amajuba	55% progress complete
19	Cliffdale Secondary School	Pinetown	29% progress complete
20	Woodlands Primary School	uMgungundlovu	72% progress complete.
21	Dlilanga Secondary School	uMkhanyakude	46% progress complete
22	Collingwood Primary School	Umlazi	60% Progress Complete.
23	Phuthini Secondary School	uThukela	80% Progress Complete
24	Meadowsweet Combined School	uThukela	80% Progress Complete
25	Vimbukhalo Primary School	uThukela	72% progress complete
26	Mthwane Secondary School	Harry Gwala	5% progress complete
27	Kwanyamazane Primary School	uMkhanyakude	38% progress complete

It should be noted, ladies and gentlemen, that some of the projects mentioned above, have encountered challenges, prompting the Department to terminate contracts of certain contractors and replace them with others. This is done in line with our aim to ensure that we receive value for money on all the projects we undertake and that our

learners ultimately have access to high quality classrooms equipped with the modern technological gadgets.

At this juncture, I believe it is important to share that we have eight projects that are in the pre-construction stage, for which we anticipate appointing contractors in due course. These projects are as follows:

NO.	NAME OF SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATUS
1	Zamimpilo Special School	Zululand	Design Development
2	Bawelise Special School	Zululand	Concept Viability: Stage 2
3	Inkosi Thathezakhe Special School	uMzinyathi	Design Development
4	Amaoti 3 Secondary School	Pinetown	Design Development
5	Vukuzakhe High School	Umlazi	Design Development
6	Umthwalume High School	Ugu	Design Development
7	Pro-Nobis Special School	uMzinyathi	Design Development
8	Sukuma Comprehensive School	uMgungundlovu	Design Development

Honourable Members, it gives me great pleasure to reiterate the commencement of five Technical High Schools scheduled for the 2024/25 financial year. These are Sihayo Technical High School in UMzinyathi District, Mpumelelo Technical High School in uThukela District, Dingeka Technical High School in Harry Gwala District, Mvaba Technical High School in Pinetown District, and Nombika Technical High School in iLembe District.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me hasten to share that the Department of Education prioritises the provision of quality education to Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN). To this end, the Department is on course with the construction of several Special Schools in the province to ensure that education is as inclusive as possible.

The Department will continue with the eradication of asbestos in schools, with 59 schools currently in the construction stage, the installation of boreholes, rehabilitation of storm-damaged schools, the construction and maintenance of Grade R and Early Childhood Centres (ECD), and general maintenance and repair works for schools.

It should, however, be noted that despite our hard work and commitment to ensuring the provision of state-of-the-art infrastructure in all our schools, budget cuts and disruptions by business forums remain the biggest factors negatively affecting the delivery of education

infrastructure programmes and projects.

MAKING PUBLIC SPECIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION A PRIORITY

Honourable Speaker, I want to reiterate that the Department remains steadfast in its obligation to support Public Special School Education through the provision of quality education and accessible schooling facilities.

To accomplish this, we have allocated R593 246 million, of which R406 003 million is committed to compensation of employees, including educators, therapists, and support staff in Special Schools. Meanwhile, R157 297 million is proportionately transferred to the 76 Special Schools with 21 923 learners for the procurement of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) resources, specialised equipment, assistive devices, and operational costs.

The Department has commenced plans to procure 10 standard 35-seater buses for commuting disabled learners in Special Schools, in line with the learner transport policy.

The training of Foundation Phase educators and ECD practitioners on Inclusive Education practices, focusing on screening learners with learning barriers and implementing appropriate support, will further facilitate the provision of quality education.

The funds allocated over the MTEF include catering to the needs of Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disabilities through a Conditional Grant amounting to R36 584 million. Through this Grant, the Department provides psycho-educational and therapeutic services, LTSM resources, assistive devices, and learning programmes to learners in Special Care Centres, which fall under the auspices of the Department of Social Development. These services are facilitated throughout KZN by seven teams comprising Education Specialists, Educational Psychologists, and Health Care practitioners, including Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Physiotherapists, all of whom are employed by the Department.

PROVISION OF DEDICATED LEARNER TRANSPORT



Honourable Members, despite continued budgetary constraints that persist in affecting the provision of dedicated learner transport in KZN, the government has, for over a decade, been providing learner transport to thousands of qualifying learners who travel long distances to their schools of need. This reflects the government's recognition of the unenviable situation many learners face, where, without such intervention, they would find it difficult to access education. Many of these learners would have to traverse dangerous terrains on foot, putting their lives at risk, while others might simply drop out of school.

This year, just over 77 000 learners are being transported to school daily through the dedicated learner transport programme, at no cost to their parents or guardians. These are learners who travel a minimum distance of three (3) kilometres to the nearest appropriate school or school of need.

Through the learner transport programme, the government has ensured that access to education is provided, and that late coming and incidents of dropping out are drastically reduced for many learners who live far from their schools. This, in turn, has minimized the risks these learners face while traveling to school and has ensured that quality teaching and learning are delivered in class without disruptions from latecomers.

However, the learner transport programme has, over the past two years, experienced massive budget cuts, putting the programme at risk of collapse. In the 2023/2024 financial year, the budget for the programme faced a shortfall of around R160 million. This financial year (2024/2025), instead of receiving R549 615 585.55, the programme was allocated R278 419 000, leaving it with a shortfall of R271 196 585.55. This situation might lead to the collapse of the programme within the first six months of the current financial year if it is not addressed. Discussions with provincial Treasury are ongoing to find ways to avert this situation.

PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME



Honourable Members, please allow me to report that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has long been at the forefront of ensuring that throngs of learners from qualifying schools receive nutritious meals daily as part of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

Introduced as one of the strategies to alleviate poverty, the National School Nutrition Programme targets schools in the poorest communities and benefits multitudes of learners by improving learner attendance and participation in class, reducing learner absenteeism rates, providing support to learners from child-headed households, and contributing to the overall improvement of learner attainment.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the NSNP is operating on a budget of R2 417 049 818,79. This operational budget is based on the Department of Basic Education's commitment to top-up the deficit of R129 209 818,79. This top-up is intended to correct the long-standing issue of abnormality of funding only 95% of the benefitting learners in KwaZulu-Natal learners due to an alleged lack of funding. The approved total allocation of R2 287 840 000,00 is insufficient for the feeding of learners, which requires a total budget of R2 379 966 746,21. This means the total budget allocation has a deficit of R92 126 746,21 for the feeding of learners alone before allocating for the other three core functions comprising: administration, cooking equipment and utensils, and Nutrition Education. As such, the province will record a quarterly over-expenditure until the Department of Basic Education delivers on its commitment to top-up the budget with the indicated deficit.

The utilization of the operational budget of R2 417 049 818,79 is consistent with the guidance by the Department of Basic Education, according to the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) and other directives from the Department of Basic Education and the National Treasury.

In 2024/25, the programme caters for 1,385 850 learners in 3696 quintiles 1 – 3 primary schools and 889 931 learners 1372 quintiles 1 – 3 secondary schools, serviced by a total of 13 756 Volunteer Food Handlers. The programme also caters to 17 681 learners in 62 identified Special Schools, as well as 206 762 needy learners in 275 targeted quintile 4 and 5 schools (i.e., 181 primary schools and 94 secondary schools) serviced by a total of 1 163 Volunteer Food Handlers. This makes an overall total of 2 500 224 learners in 5 405 schools covered by the Nutrition Programme throughout the province, which accounts for just over 90% of all public schools provincially and approximately 26% of schools countrywide. All learners benefiting from the programme are provided with meals on school days through the NSNP grant for 209 days planned for 2024/25. This is an increase of 5 days compared to the 203 feeding days in the 2023/24 financial year.

SEAMLESS IMPLEMENTATION OF SANITARY DIGNITY PROGRAMME THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE

Ladies and gentlemen, with great pride, I want to report to this House that for many years now, KwaZulu-Natal has been the envy of many as being a torchbearer in the proper implementation of the Sanitary Dignity Programme (SDP).

I am therefore delighted to share with you, ladies, and gentlemen, that for the current financial year, the Department has set aside a budget of R68,000,000.00 to continue with the provision of sanitary towels to indigent girls in quintile 1-3 schools, special schools, farm schools, and selected quintile 4 schools.

For this financial year, the number of schools targeted is 5 172, out of which 76 are special schools and 1 158 are farm schools. A total number of quintile 1-3 schools benefiting from the programme is 3 938, with the number of girls targeted in quintile 1-3 and 4 schools for 2024/25 financial year is 966 171.

Honourable Members, let me also hasten to share that a total number of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools targeted for the current financial year is part of the 973 171, while a sizable number of learners in special schools is also targeted among the beneficiaries.

Since its introduction in KwaZulu-Natal, which led to all other departments nationally introducing it, the Sanitary Dignity Programme has helped restore the dignity to masses of learners who previously had to endure using uncomfortable materials such as sanitary towels.

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO DISTRICTS

Honourable Members, we fully understand that our districts are very important for the



proper functioning of the Department because it is in districts where, essentially, the tyre hits the road in as far as teaching and learning is concerned. It is for this reason that the Department continues to provide all the necessary support to districts.

As part of providing support to some of our schools that were previously achieving higher percentages but are now passing with below 70 percent (T70 Schools), the Department is engaging in a support programme led by IDS DDG, Ms Weziwe Hadebe, to assist these schools in reclaiming their former glory. There are many other support programmes that have been introduced with the purpose of ensuring that districts receive the support they need so that all the schools can perform better. We are doing all this because we want to see KwaZulu-Natal finally occupying the number one spot in terms of the performance of provinces.

TACKLING THE SCOURGE OF HIV/AIDS THROUGH “MY LIFE MY FUTURE” CAMPAIGN INTERVENTIONS FOR THE 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

With respect to tackling the scourge of HIV/AIDS, in the current financial year (2024/25), with an allocation of R65 952 000 from the HIV and AIDS Life-Skills Education Grant “My Life My Future Campaign”, we will be intensifying our endeavours to fight this disease. Our aim is to increase HIV, STI, and TB knowledge while focusing on skills required to decrease risky sexual behaviour among learners and promote retention of vulnerable learners in schools.

To address the increased demands and upscale service delivery to vulnerable learners, the deployment of 750 Learner Support Agents across all 12 districts will continue as the first line of support for vulnerable learners affected by social ills, given that their impact on service delivery far outweighs the cost of their stipends.

Other programmes, including initiatives to keep girls and boys in schools, training educators to implement Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), and HIV/AIDS and TB prevention programmes, will be intensified. Given that 2024 is the year for the re-election of governing bodies, special attention will be given towards empowering newly elected School Governing Body officials on their roles in supporting South Africa’s HIV prevention strategy and decreasing risky behaviour among learners.

In addition, School Management Teams (SMTs) and School Based support Teams (SBSTs) will be trained to develop, review, and implement plans to keep vulnerable learners in school. Advocacy and social mobilisation events, such as World AIDS Day, Child Protection Week, TB Awareness Day, and My Life My Future Peer Education Camps, will be undertaken. Sexual and reproductive health services will be provided in primary and secondary schools, through the Integrated School Health Programme, in collaboration with Departments of Health and Social Development, as well as Civil Society Partners

through Local AIDS Councils.

“My life My Future” Peer Education camps and school-based peer education club activities are being conducted across all 12 districts to instil positive behaviour change among our learners. The Department will also continue working closely with the Department of Social Development and civil society partners to conduct psychosocial support groups and/or referral systems for learners abusing drugs and those experiencing bullying, challenging behaviour, or any other form of vulnerability.

Honourable Members, it is my view that if we do not roll up our sleeves and face the scourge of HIV/AIDS in our schools, we will not be doing justice, and history will judge us harshly. Therefore, as the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, we are committed to doing all that is humanly possible to combat this scourge.

ENCOURAGING A HEALTHY MIND IN A HEALTHY BODY THROUGH SPORTS PROGRAMMES

As part of ensuring that our learners stay active, we are dedicated to implementing all sports programmes. Recently, we introduced the “Siyadlala Thursday”, encouraging schools to dedicate time to sports every Thursday. This programme is gaining traction across various parts of the province.

Additionally, ladies and gentlemen, as part of ensuring that we implement all our sports programmes, we have participated in several athletic events such as the Provincial Primary Schools Athletics which was held at Kings Park stadium in Durban. We also have participated in the National Primary Schools Athletics held at the University of Limpopo. The Provincial Secondary Schools Athletics was held at Msunduzi Athletics Stadium, and the National Secondary Schools Athletics was held at Paarl, in the Western Cape. Notably, Team KZN was represented by 88 athletes at the National Championship.

It is also heart-warming to share with you that an athlete from Harry Gwala District was recognized for Ministry Budget during the 2024 National Track and Field Athletics for the 1500m race. The province of KwaZulu-Natal secured third place in the National Swimming Championship held in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape.

Furthermore, it is my pleasure to share with you, ladies, and gentlemen, that football leagues have begun in five districts in preparation for the Provincial Championship which is scheduled for September 2024 in Durban. The winners will advance to the National Championships to represent KZN in Gauteng, with national winners representing South Africa in the CAF Schools Championship. Edendale Technical High School has notably presented the province well over the past three year.

The Provincial Intellectually Impaired Games will be held in Durban in August as preparation for the National Games, which will take place in Gqeberha in August 2024.

SINGING OUR WAY TO THE TOP THROUGH MUSIC PROGRAMMES

It is well-known, ladies and gentlemen, that our province is very well endowed with great talent in various fields, including music. Our learners continue to excel in numerous music competitions, proudly representing KwaZulu-Natal.

Recently, we participated in the ABC Motsepe South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE) in Rhema Bible Church in Randburg Gauteng. Our teams sang with great enthusiasm and emerged victorious, collecting 18 trophies and became National Champions. We are very proud of the work done by all school choirs, conductors and officials that represented the Province.

PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET

The budget allocated to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is as follows:

PROGRAMMES	BUDGET ALLOCATION	BUDGET IN WORDS
1. Administration	R2 341 621	Two billion three hundred and forty-one million six hundred and twenty-one thousand
2. Public Ordinary School Education	R52 217 275	Fifty-two billion two hundred and seventeen million two hundred and seventy-five thousand
3. Independent School Subsidies	R85 500	Eight-five million five hundred thousand
4. Public Special School Education	R1 727 871	One billion seven hundred and twenty-seven million eight hundred and seventy-one thousand
5. Early Childhood Development	R2 089 021	Two billion and eighty-nine million and twenty-one thousand



6. Infrastructure Development	R2 687 657	Two billion six hundred and eighty-seven million six hundred and fifty-seven thousand
7. Examination And Education Related Services	R1 839 643	One billion eight hundred and thirty-nine million six hundred and forty-three thousand
Total	R62 988 588	Sixty-two billion nine hundred and eighty-eight million five hundred eighty-eight thousand

CONCLUSION

Honourable Members, this presentation reflects what we anticipate achieving in our province, while striving to provide quality public education to our communities during this period of renewal and hope. SONA and SOPA addressed pressing issues and highlighted the successes that we have achieved in the 30 years of our democracy.

We are committing to this House Madam Speaker, that KZN will remain the top contributor in the National Senior Certificate pass rate that is currently at its highest rate ever.

Somlomo nendlu yonke, kukhona ke engifike ngakuthola kuloMnyango engikuthatha njengomncintiswano onesidingo futhi ophilayo. Ngifike ngathola ukuthi kunoZakewu, wonke ama Districts asebenza kanzima ukumehlisa emthini kanti naye futhi lo Zakewu uthi nje cha!! Akayi ndawo okunalokho angalekelela wonke amaDistricts ukuthi abe sesicongweni njengaye lo Zakewu ongu District Director wase UMkhanyakude. I regard this as a necessary and a very healthy competition.

I will take the queue from the National Department of Education and appreciate the following Achievements:

The latest matric pass rate is the highest ever.

No-fee schools are accounting for more and more bachelor passes achieved.

Provision of daily nutritious meals to about 90% of deserving learners.

Provision of scholar transport.

All 10 of our special schools performed at 80% and above, with five of them obtaining a 100% pass rate.

As I conclude Somlomo, I would like to thank my organization the African National Congress, umbutho wabantu for deploying me as one of its representatives in this new Provincial of Government Unity. I would also like to thank Honourable Premier Thami Ntuli for deploying me in this crucial department and all members of the Executive Council.

I thank members of the Provincial Legislature and the Education Portfolio chair, Hon. Buthelezi, and all members of the Education Portfolio Committee for their support.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to my predecessor Honourable Mbali Frazer for the sterling work she has done in the Department.

My gratitude also goes to the team that worked tirelessly in preparing this budget speech



led by HOD Nkosinathi Ngcobo. This team goes above and beyond, and they are truly appreciated.

I thank you.

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KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
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