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KwaZulu-Natal Legislature MEC: Education
KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government

2023/2024 BUDGET POLICY SPEECH
DELIVERED BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR EDUCATION
MS MC FRAZER, MPL, ON 20 APRIL 2023







SPEAKER OF THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, HON. BOYCE

KWAZULU-NATAL PREMIER, HON. DUBE-NCUBE

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND THE LEGISLATURE

MEMBERS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

LEADERSHIP OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

MAYORS, COUNCILLORS AND AMAKHOSI-HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, MR NKOSINATHI NGCOBO

SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP OF ORGANISED LABOUR

LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY FORMATIONS

OUR SOCIAL PARTNERS

LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS JOINING US TODAY

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I greet you all





1. INTRODUCTION

As I stand here, I am inspired by the words of the late Ghanaian president, Dr. Francis Kwame Nkrumah, who eloquently said:

“The task ahead is great indeed, and heavy is the responsibility; and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge - a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve - to achieve the highest excellencies”

Madam Speaker, it is with great honour that we present the budget speech for the 2023/24 fiscal year, buoyed by the exceptional performance of the matric Class of 2022.

We are humbled by the accolades bestowed upon the collective that was responsible for ensuring that KwaZulu-Natal was positioned among the galaxy of academic stars, as one of the three best performing provinces in South Africa.

Soon after the results of the 2022 National Senior Certificate examinations were announced, we were mindful of the fact that our celebrations had to be short-lived.

This was due to the realisation that these results set a higher bar for us, and there was a growing expectation for us to surpass our previous achievements and never falter.

The words of our democracy's founding father, uTata Nelson Mandela, ring true: ***“After climbing the great hill, one finds that there are many more hills to climb.”***

Indeed, Madam Speaker, as an ANC-led government we have successfully ascended a great and challenging hill which saw the propelling of our Department to being one of the top three in the country.

However, as Madiba astutely observed, the higher we climb and achieve, the greater the challenges we face.

We are keenly aware, as a collective responsible for educating our learners, that there is still much work to be done. However, we know that no challenge is insurmountable, and we remain steadfast and encouraged by the task ahead.



2. THE YEAR 2022/23 IN REVIEW

Madam Speaker,

The 2022/23 academic year was undoubtedly one of the most challenging periods for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. In addition to the ongoing pandemic, our schools were severely impacted by a series of devastating storms that left a trail of destruction across the province last year. Academic activities in several schools were disrupted, and numerous learners were forced to relocate after their homes were damaged by the floods. Dozens of our schools were also severely affected, compounding the difficulties faced by our education system.

Honourable Members, the Department continues to be haunted by the budget pressures due to the carry-over of the budget reductions implemented over the 2021/22 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) against Compensation of Employees for the cost-of-living wage freeze, as well as budget cuts to reduce the headcount on personnel.

This has left the Department with an underfunded Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) and compelled us to cut to the bone. Currently, the approved structure is underfunded by 5 151 (Five thousand, one hundred and fifty-one) posts.

To mitigate the impact of these budget constraints, we have implemented 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. The Department has also been aggressively implementing an ICT strategy to improve its efficiencies through use of virtual meetings, online submission as well shortened turnaround time to process appointments and terminations.

However, it must be emphasised that the savings achieved thus far are insufficient to cover the shortfall resulting from the budget cuts.

Honourable Members, the educational landscape in our province can be best described by the words of the Nigerian Poet and Novelist, Ben Okri, who once wrote:

“The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering.”

Despite the challenges that plagued our schools and the province at large in 2022, as the biggest education system in the country we triumphed. Through our collective



resilience, we achieved a remarkable pass rate of 83% in the matric Class of 2022. This represents a significant 6.2% improvement from the previous year's 76.8%.

What's more, the quality of our passes also improved substantially, with 69 849 (Sixty-nine thousand, eight hundred and forty-nine) bachelor passes recorded in 2022 compared to 61 856 (Sixty-one thousand, eight hundred and fifty-six) in 2021. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our learners and educators, as well as the support of the Honourable Members, parents, social partners and other stakeholders.

The number of our schools that obtained a 100% pass rate also increased from 145 in 2021 to 212 in 2022.

Honourable Members, as the Department we are also proud to report that no school in this province obtained a 0% pass rate in 2022.

KZN had much to celebrate as 11 of our 12 districts were also able to reach the 80% pass rate, a target which was set by the Provincial Government.

Umzinyathi was also not too far behind as it obtained 79,8% last year. As the Department we will be providing the necessary support to Umzinyathi with the aim of ensuring that it joins the 80% league this year.

Honourable Members, we are pleased to report to this Esteemed House that construction of the following State-of-the-Art Schools has been concluded.

They are:

- Dundee Junior Secondary School in Umzinyathi District,
- Xoloxolo Senior Primary School in the Harry Gwala District,
- Mgai Primary School in Ugu District
- and Phumanyova Technical High School in Zululand.
- We are further pleased to report that the upgrades at the following schools have been completed. They are:
 - Mbhekwa Secondary School in Zululand District,
 - Fundokuhle Secondary School in Umzinyathi District,
 - Intunjambili Secondary School in Ilembe District, and
 - Inanda Special School in Umlazi District.



Subsequently, teaching and learning spaces have been increased in the Province.

Bahlonishwa, the Department continued with the eradication of pit latrines in the past financial year as part of our deliberate strategy to restore the dignity and well-being of our learners. The Department identified 1 377 schools that had pit latrines. One Thousand one hundred and twenty (1 120) of these schools have been eradicated of pit latrines while the remaining schools are at various stages of construction and should be completed in the 2023/24 financial year. This is part of ensuring that learners have safe ablution facilities.

Madam Speaker, the distribution of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) for schools that undertake procurement through the Department was done, with 100 per cent of stationery and 99.3 per cent of textbooks delivered by the beginning of the 2023 school year.

The Department will commence planning for the 2024 school year in August 2023 to determine the requirements for various schools based on in-year school surveys to determine the learner numbers.

3. MARCHING FORWARD

Honourable Members, the Constitutional right to access basic education is absolute and has no limits or qualifications. The National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030, further directs that ***“by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes”***.

In this regard, the Department’s strategic plans are aligned with the priorities of the ANC-led government at both the national and provincial levels. These include improving the skills of numeracy and literacy across all grades, as well as rolling out a coding and robotics curriculum to more schools so that our learners are exposed to the necessary technical and digital skills needed to take advantage of opportunities that come with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

As the Honourable Premier said in the State of the Province Address in February: ***“Our focus now is on improving the quality of education and preparing learners for the future world of work and industries where no one is left behind.”***

4. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY



NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

Madam Speaker,

it is no secret that Department is constrained by budgetary reductions and reprioritisation of funds.

Due to the budget cuts made in previous budget processes, further reprioritisation towards the funding gap that already exists in the province could not be undertaken. Therefore, no-fee schools will continue to be funded at R955 per learner in 2023/24, while the recommended national funding norm is R1 602 per learner for quintiles 1 to 3.

The fee-paying schools in quintiles 4 and 5 are funded at R522 and R179 per learner, compared to the recommended national norm of R803 and R279, respectively.

A shortfall of R1.455 billion exists in order to address the funding gap and to meet the national target. The Department will continue to implement the recommendations from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) towards strengthening the rationalisation team in order to reduce small and non-viable schools, to assist the department to realise savings.

PROVINCIAL ACADEMEC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Madam Speaker,

The Department has undertaken a comprehensive revision and strengthening of the Provincial Academic Improvement Plan, in order to tailor it to the unique educational demands of the 2023 academic year and to equip our learners with skills and knowledge needed to exploit lifelong learning opportunities.

The Plan includes some of the intervention programmes of previous years which have over the past years improved learner outcomes. The schools will write common tests as part of continuous assessments in all subjects and curriculum directorates will continue to conduct teacher orientation support in the subjects and topics highlighted by diagnostic reports. The teacher development directorate will continue providing support to school. We will also make educators of all levels account for the level of performance of their subjects and schools management teams will have to on curriculum management.

Madam Speaker, with the support of the Honourable Members of this Esteemed House and all our educational stakeholders, the Provincial Academic Improvement Plan 2023 aims to:

- Increase the National Senior pass rate to 100% with a minimum of 85% in 2023.
- Increase the number of schools which achieve 100% pass rate by 5% from 212 to 223.
- Increase the bachelor passes by 5% from 42.5% to 47,5%.
- Eliminate schools that perform at 40% and below.
- Improve performance of learners with Special Education Needs.
- Improve the pass percentage and distinctions in Mathematics and Sciences.
- Improve the pass percentage in Technology and Technical subjects

MST AND ICT PROGRAMMES

The concerning trend in learner performance in the country has shown that the national average in learner performance for Mathematics remains below 60%. Another worrying factor is the observation of learners snubbing Mathematics in favour of Mathematical Literacy.



As part of our efforts to address this challenge, the Department of Basic Education has declared 2023 as the year of Mathematics. This requires all provinces to break-through the 60% ceiling in terms of Mathematics performance.

Over the past five years, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has observed a range in Grade 12 Mathematics performance, spanning from 50.6% to 54.6%. Additionally, the province is currently facing a decline in learner participation within the subject. In 2022, the percentage of students enrolled in Mathematics, as opposed to Mathematical Literacy, was only 38%.

As Greek master mathematician and scientist, Pythagoras once remarked: “**Concern should drive us into action and not into a depression**”.

In furtherance of this objective, the Department convened a highly successful three-day Maths Summit last week. At this gathering, various stakeholders, including academics and educators, collaborated to formulate an integrated strategy aimed at enhancing the province’s performance in Mathematics and reigniting our learners’ passion for the subject.

CODING AND ROBOTICS PILOT PROJECT

Marxist revolutionary and Pan-Africanist who served as President of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara once declared: “**You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future**”.

In this academic year KwaZulu-Natal will have 260 schools from six districts piloting the new coding and robotics subject in the foundation phase, intermediate phase, and in Grades 7 and 8.

At least 6 000 intermediate phase and Grade 8 educators will be orientated on coding and robotics. Over and above orientation, the teachers will also require 160 hours of content training through Higher Education Institutions.



5. TEACHER PROVISIONING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT

The supply of qualified educators into the system remains a challenge, particularly in subjects like Mathematics, Physical Science, Technical Mathematics, Technical Science, Engineering, Graphic Design, and Braille.

In addition to the provision of bursaries to attract young people into teaching, the Department will be engaging with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) with a view to encouraging more young people to register for Mathematics and Science qualifications.

The MTEF also provides for training and development in terms of structured training in teaching methodologies and subject content for an estimated 3 600 educators and subject advisors in Mathematics, Physical Science, computer applications and technology subjects, as well as the purchase of ICT equipment such as computer hardware, and software (including robotics, coding and ICT integration) for 1 000 schools.

In respect of early retirement, educators and public service employees have a right to retire at the age of 55, and many employees are opting to exercise this right to retire early. This has and will continue to result in the Department losing skilled and experienced cohort, and many of these positions will be filled by the re-deployment of the 1 104 excess educators.

The uptake of early retirement has reduced the rate of applications for leave as this category of employees is more prone to health issues. In addition, it is anticipated that the number of substitute educators being appointed will reduce due to the reduction in applications for leave for long periods.

Since the salaries of newly appointed educators are much lower than those of the educators whose salaries are higher based on their many years of experience, the Department is expecting some savings against the personnel budget. There are also concomitant expenses relating to long service awards, service bonuses, etc., which will either be reduced or not be payable, thereby reducing the personnel costs even further.

6. PUBLIC SPECIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

The provision of quality and accessible Public Special School Education remains one of the top priorities for the Department. We have allocated R1 602 166 (One billion, six hundred and two million, one hundred and sixty-six thousand) to this programme.

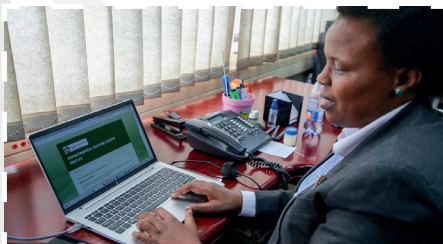
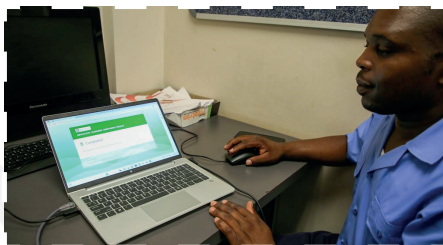
The funds allocated over the MTEF include the Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Grant, which seeks to assist in inclusive education for learners with intellectual disabilities in care centres and public special schools.

Additionally, the budget caters for transfers to special schools for the purchase of LTSM resources, and the procurement of specialised equipment, assistive devices, and support materials for support care centres, as well as operational costs. The programme also provides for the purchase of buses in 2023/24 for transporting disabled learners in special schools in line with the learner transport policy.

Department has commenced with the procurement of 10 new buses for special schools. We will also be filling the posts for support staff such as drivers, hostel mothers, cleaners, where we will be utilising an amount of R10 million set aside for job creation.

Indeed, as Kwame Nkrumah once remarked: ***“Those who would judge us merely by the heights we have achieved would do well to remember the depths from which we started.”***

7. EMBRACING FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (4IR)



ONLINE REGISTRATION

As announced by the Honourable Premier during the State of the Province Address, KwaZulu-Natal is gearing up to pilot the Online Learner Admissions System. The pilots will be rolled out in a few districts in order to test its efficiency in addressing the long queues at the start of every academic year.

DIGITAL MIGRATION

With the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) taking centre stage, the Department is also capacitating its staff to perform effectively and optimally. Three thousand and two hundred (3 200) laptops and five hundred as well as fifty-eight (558) desktops have been procured as tools of trade aimed at improving service delivery in the system.

These have already been distributed to all districts and the beneficiaries are circuit managers, subject advisors and other office-based support personnel.

This will help improve service delivery and the efficiency of the system, including reducing traveling time and costs as officials will be able to hold meetings virtually.

Bahlonishwa, 64 schools have also been provided with school-based connectivity worth R219 million. All learners and educators in these schools have full school WI-FI access and interactive smart screens.

Additionally, 1 840 Laptops have been provided for educators, including principals, in the 64 schools.

E-SUBMISSION SYSTEM

The Department will continue with the implementation of the e-submission system in schools to assist in improving the timeliness of the receipt of documents such as leave forms, termination forms, and South African Schools Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) databases to head office.

In 2023/24, the Department will develop an online data warehouse capable of being hosted on the cloud environment in order to cater for future system requirements of the e-submission system to accommodate growth towards removing silo systems and to allow for better integration of departmental systems.

The Department will further migrate from the current on-site-based storage system to the cloud-based system. It is estimated that this initiative will cost the department an additional R50 million to capitalise the project over the MTEF period, and this has



been budgeted for. This is in addition to the ongoing commitments on the roll-out of e-submission and e-leave solutions.

8. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



Honourable Members, the capacitation of our Early Childhood Development centres is ongoing. We have allocated R2 005 078 000 (Two billion, five million and seventy-eight thousand) to this programme.

It is anticipated that 1 000 practitioners will be trained on the National Curriculum Framework for birth to four-year-olds in 2023/24.

Madam Speaker, the contracts for 6 041 (six thousand and forty Covid-19 screeners that were appointed during the height of the coronavirus pandemic ended on the 31st of March 2023.

These screeners came at a cost of R245 million and these funds have now been redirected to improving the conditions of service of our Early Childhood Development (ECD) Practitioners.

To this end, the process of converting them from being paid a stipend to salaries is underway.

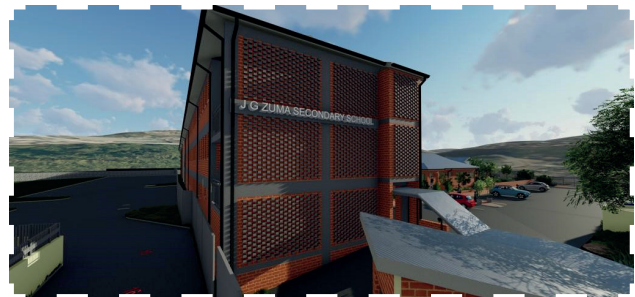
The Department has commenced with converting the first batch of 500 Grade R Practitioners to permanent posts within the approved educator post establishment at a cost of R 232.5 million. This relates to those with the teaching qualification.

The balance of R12,5 million will be utilised to improve the stipend of Grade R Practitioners.



The Department will also continue conducting visits to ECD centres to monitor the implementation of the curriculum framework. The Department will work in collaboration with NGOs that support the ECD curriculum programmes that need to be strengthened.

9. INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING & DELIVERY



Consistent with our objective of creating a conducive and safe environment for teaching and learning to efficiently take place, the Department continues to implement various Education Infrastructure Programmes across KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of these programmes is to address backlogs in education infrastructure across the province as well as to ensure excellence and compliance with the Norms and Standards of Schools.

It must be noted that the Department's roll-out of new infrastructure was previously affected by the budget cuts and by the reprioritisation undertaken to implement storm and flood damage projects, as well as to repair vandalised schools.

We have allocated R3 205 584 000 (Three billion two hundred five million, five hundred and eighty-four thousand rands) for infrastructure development in 2023/24.

The implementation of the three-stream model has gathered momentum. The Department is, therefore, establishing various Focus Schools in pursuance of this objective. As per the commitment made in the 2022/23 KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's Budget Policy, the Department has appointed a contractor and construction of the State-of-the-Art Maritime School of Excellence, in Umlazi, has



commenced. This school will provide learners with education and opportunities in the marine economy.

The Department is currently in the process of procuring the ICT School of Excellence in Amajuba District. This will be KwaZulu-Natal's fourth Focus School and it will equip our learners with the necessary digital skills and exposure to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which is the next frontier of economic development.

Honourable Speaker, we further undertake to deal with all key infrastructure projects that we could not finish in the previous financial year but have progressed in implementation and will be delivered in 2023/24 financial year.

These projects include:

- The Solomon Mahlangu Primary School in eThekweni,
- JG Zuma Secondary School, which is also in eThekweni,
- Ekucabangeni Secondary School in Umzinyathi,
- Dingukwazi Secondary in Zululand,
- Esidumbeni Primary in Ilembe District, and
- Inkosi Mgwazeni Secondary in Umkhanyakude District.

I want to assure this House that there will be strict monitoring of these projects by the Department in order to ensure successful implementation and delivery.

Madam Speaker, the construction of nine schools will be implemented during 2023/24 financial year. They include Menzi Secondary in Umlazi, Kwanyamazane Primary School in UMkhanyakude, Phuthini Secondary School in UThukela District and Siyakhanyisa Primary School in King Cetshwayo.

In the 2023/24 financial year, construction will also commence on several other projects. They include an extensive upgrade of Ohlange Secondary, which is a school that was founded by the first president of the African National Congress, Dr John Langalibalele Dube, uMafukuzela onjengezulu.

Work will also commence on:

- The Cliffdale Secondary School,
- Amaoti 3 Secondary School,



- Mthwane Secondary School in Harry Gwala District
- Siyakhula Secondary School in King Cetshwayo District,
- Mzingezwi Secondary School in Ilembe, and
- Bulwer Primary School in Harry Gwala District to mention a few.

Moreover, as part of job creation in the construction sector, the Department will be employing youth, women and other persons from vulnerable groups for the maintenance of about 200 schools across the province. The work will include painting as well fixing doors and windows.

10. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Honourable Members, ensuring the provision of a conducive and safe learning environment for learners with special educational needs remains a top priority to this ANC-led government, as these are amongst the most vulnerable learners in our communities. The completion and delivery of Inanda Special School in Umlazi is reported as one of the Department's significant achievements.

The Department will continue to closely monitor the construction of the Tongaat Special School in Pinetown and YWCA Special School in Amajuba and ensure that they are completed in the 2023/24 financial year.

The construction of the State-of-the-Art Musa Special School in Nongoma is already underway.

The Department is also forging ahead with the finalisation of the pre-contract documentation for the construction of the Zamimpilo Special School and Bawelise Special School in Zululand. Construction will commence in the 2023/24 financial year.

The Department has further prioritised the implementation of the Inkosi Thathazakhe Special School in Umzinyathi District in the 2023/24 financial year.

11. BOARDING FACILITIES

Somlomo Ohloniphekile, the provision and upgrading of hostels in our schools is of outmost importance to ensure safe housing for all boarder learners in the province. In this regard, the Department has prioritised five schools to have their boarding facilities upgraded in the 2023/24 financial year. These are:

- Vukuzakhe High School and Reunion Special School in uMlazi District,



Mthwalume High School in Ugu District,

- Pro-Nobis Special School in uMzinyathi, and
- Sukuma Comprehensive School in uMgungundlovu District.

12. DIGNITY OF LEARNERS

In support of the Department's responsibility of ensuring basic services are available at schools, the Department continues to rollout the borehole programme. The installation of boreholes in 277 schools, is at the planning stage and earmarked for site handover to contractors during the first Quarter of 2023/24.

The eradication of asbestos in schools is also rolled out in an attempt to remove the unsafe and hazardous material which is predominantly roofs in the schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Province continues to experience devastating effects of climate change. This results in increased number of storm and flood damaged school infrastructure. The floods experienced in April 2022 damaged education infrastructure in 356 schools. The rehabilitation and repairs have been completed on 148 schools, 16 schools are on construction stage, 172 schools are on tender stage and 20 schools are on design documentation stage.

It must be noted that the 2023/24 Education Infrastructure Grant of R2.9 billion includes R269.313 million (two hundred and sixty-nine million, three hundred and thirteen thousand rand) to cover the carry-through costs of repairing and rehabilitating the schools damaged in the April 2022 floods.

13. EXTRA-CURRICULAR EDUCATION



Madam Premier, the Department of Education unequivocally agrees with the views on sport expressed by the Secretary-General of the African National Congress and former Minister of Sport and Recreation, Cde Fikile Mbalula.



In his statement, he aptly characterised school sport as the cornerstone of our entire sports development continuum. He further emphasised the critical role played by grassroots development, which is primarily delivered through our schools, in fostering meaningful and sustainable development.

Subsequent to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture last year, we remain resolute in our endeavour to revitalise school sports and creative arts programs across the province.

Our primary objective is to provide a platform for our learners to exhibit their talents and enable them to realise their full potential in these areas. Accordingly, all our schools have been directed to implement “Dlala Thursdays” in their timetables where time is allocated for sport and creative arts activities.

The exemplary display of talent exhibited by our very own Edendale Technical High School Girls Soccer team serves as a testament to the passion and enthusiasm our learners possess for sports. In the past year, this team has achieved a string of notable victories, including securing a second consecutive triumph at the National Africa Schools Championship. Most recently, they represented South Africa at the CAF Africa Schools’ Football Championship, held in Durban earlier this month.

14. SCHOOLS SAFETY

The right to access basic education, enshrined in our Constitution, is absolute and should not be subject to any limitations or qualifications. The effects of school vandalism and disruptions to academic activities during protests are highly detrimental to our learners, and it is imperative that we take a firm stance against such behaviour.

Furthermore, the concerning trend of violence and thuggery spilling over onto school premises, resulting in the assaults and even deaths of our learners and educators, is an issue of utmost concern.

The Department has facilitated the establishment of 5 904 safety committees in schools across the province. These schools have also been linked to police stations. A total of 1 200 school safety committees were trained on disaster management in the past year.

I’m also pleased to report that 5 782 (five thousand, seven hundred and eighty-two) schools have adequate fencing. One hundred (100) school fences are due to be replaced in the new financial year.



We appeal to the Honourable Members and citizens of KwaZulu-Natal to work with us in safeguarding our children's right to education by actively protecting the schools in their communities from criminal activities and any attempts to disrupt academic activities.

15. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SCHOOLING SYSTEM

Honourable Speaker, in line with the policy on the Transformation of the Schooling System, the Department has started the process of implementing the framework on small and non-viable schools.

Data analysis indicated that some schools are so small that running them tends to be more costly because the Department needs to provide them with more resources above the prescribed norms.

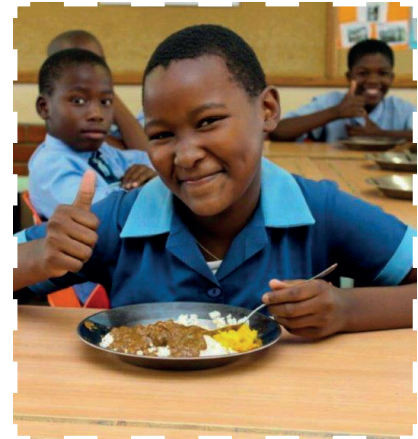
Therefore, as the MEC for Education, I have signed the notice of intention to merge and close some of the affected schools. However, this is subject extensive consultation with the affected stakeholders including traditional leadership and Amakhosi. Roadshows with principals and school governing bodies have been held as part of the awareness programme.

Among the schools that have been identified for closure, 34 will be repurposed for alternative use by the Department, including the conversion into vocational skills centres to address the shortage of technical skills.

It is noted that the process of transformation of the schooling system involves the movement of learners between schools, and hence learner transport is also an important factor that has to be considered. Therefore, the Department prioritised schools that do not require learner transport, for closure and merger in 2023/24.



16. CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING



NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME

The National School Nutrition Programme grant allocation for 2023/24 amounts to R2.089 billion (Two billion and 89 million rands) after receiving an additional allocation of R120.917 million (one hundred twenty million, nine hundred and seventeen thousand rand).

This will ensure that 2 445 466 (Two million, four hundred and forty-five thousand, four hundred and sixty-six) learners from 5 446 (Five thousand four hundred forty-six) schools are provided with balanced nutritious breakfast and lunch meals every day.

It should be noted that the Department is implementing a hybrid model which is the private label programme and bulk procurement executed through placing annual orders with service providers.

This will allow the Department, through the use of service providers, to not only source food from retail markets but also from manufacturers, farmers, and distributors under the private label programme.

Other priorities of this programme include the recruitment and training of 14 675 (Fourteen thousand six hundred and seventy-five) volunteer food handlers as well as the procurement of kitchen equipment.

Honourable Members, it is worth mentioning that the commencement of the process has had some glitches which resulted in the delays in the delivery of food items to schools last week. This was due logistical challenges encountered by the newly appointed main service provider.



The Department swiftly intervened and put measures in place to ensure the delivery of food items to all the schools across KwaZulu-Natal. We are closely monitoring the situation as part of ensuring that all learners are provided with nutritious meals as expected.

I'm pleased to report that good progress has been made and our learners are getting meals.

LEARNER TRANSPORT

Madam Premier,

KwaZulu-Natal is home to the largest number of rural schools and continues to have the highest enrolment of learners in the country. In recognition of the challenges faced by learners who live far from their schools, our ANC-led government has taken the decision to provide transport to some of these learners. This initiative aims to improve access to education and ensure that no learner is left behind due to their geographical location.

While we have about 74 000 (Seventy-four thousand) learners from over 400 schools currently being transported to school through the dedicated learner transport programme on a daily basis at no cost whatsoever to their parents or guardians. These are learners who travel a minimum distance of three (3) kilometers to the nearest appropriate school.

Admittedly, there are thousands more learners who qualify to benefit from dedicated learner transport, but who do not benefit as a result of budgetary constraints. The Department is in regular engagement with Provincial Treasury to find ways to address this hurdle, as well as the attendant scourge of unavoidable overloads..

Honourable Members,

In line with the ANC-led government's commitment to creating job opportunities for vulnerable members of our society, the Department receives R1.985 million (One million, nine hundred and eighty-five thousand rand) from the EPWP Integrated Grant for Provinces and R31.796 million (thirty-one million, seven hundred and ninety-six thousand rand) from the Social Sector EPWP Incentive Grant for Provinces.

These funds are used to employ 117 and 1 246 people, respectively, to undertake work, such as cleaning of school gardens, grounds and ablution facilities through



labour intensive methods using unemployed youth and indigent women.

Bahlonishwa, the Basic Education Sector has effectively implemented the national mass employment programme through the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI). In this respect, a further 58 500 posts have been provided for the current phase of the programme which commenced last and will continue until September 2023.

17. PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET

The Department's budget increased by R3.156 billion from R57 480 788 billion (Fifty-seven billion four hundred and eighty million seven hundred eighty and eight thousand rand) in 2022/23 to R 60 637 286 billion (Sixty billion six hundred and thirty-seven million two hundred and eighty-six thousand rand) in 2023/24 which is an increase of approximately 5.5 per cent.

Although additional funds were provided by National Treasury over the 2023/24 MTEF, this will only partially reduce the pressures against Compensation of employees in the 2023/24 financial year.

This budget, Madam Speaker, is being presented in a very tight fiscal environment where there is no additional funding available for financially struggling departments like ours. As a result, we are required to further tighten our belts and seek alternative sources of funding. Additionally, provincial departments are not expected to submit any requests for baseline increases unless instructed to do so by the Provincial Treasury.



The Department's budget is allocated as follows:

Programmes	Medium-term estimates
1. Administration	R2 282 276 (Two billion, two hundred eighty-two million, two hundred and seventy-six thousand rand)
2. Public Ordinary School Education	R48 194 444 (Forty-eight billion, one hundred ninety-four million, four hundred and forty-four thousand rand)
3. Independent School Subsidies	R95 799 (Ninety-five million, seven hundred and ninety-nine thousand rand)
4. Public Special School Education	R1 602 166 (One billion, six hundred two million, one hundred and sixty-six thousand rand)
5. Early Childhood Development	R2 005 078 (Two billion, five million and seventy-eight thousand rand)
6. Infrastructure Development	R3 205 584 (Three billion two hundred five million, five hundred and eighty-four thousand rand)
7. Examination and Education Related Services	R3 251 939 (Three billion, two hundred, fifty-one million, nine hundred and thirty-nine thousand rand)



Total

R60 637 286 (Sixty billion six hundred and thirty-seven million two hundred and eighty-six thousand rand)

19. CONCLUSION

Honourable Premier, while we are humbled by the outstanding performance of the province across all grades, we are keenly aware of the significant task that lies ahead of us. It is with this in mind that we dedicate this budget presentation to the collective effort of all involved, including parents, educators, social partners, and the Honourable Members of this August House, who have made the success of the KZN Province possible.

Madam Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the leadership of the ANC for putting their trust in us, the Honourable Premier Mrs Dube-Ncube for her exceptional leadership, the Members of the Executive for their support, as well as to the Chairperson of the Education Portfolio Committee and its Honourable Members. My thanks also goes to the Head of Department, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo and his team of Senior Managers, our social partners, as well as officials working for the Department of Education, for their dedication and support.

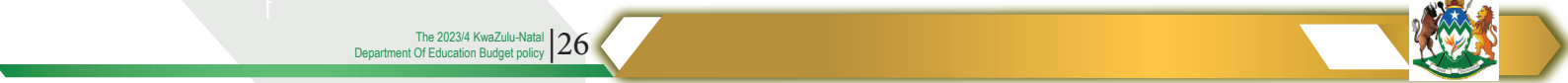
We are also indebted to all the educators, principals of our schools, parents, learners, SGBs, traditional leaders and all the people of KwaZulu-Natal who have made a tremendous contribution to the basic education sector. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their unwavering support.

With that, I table the budget of the Department of Education to this Esteemed House

I THANK YOU.



Notes

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Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. In the top-left corner, there is a large, light gray triangular shape pointing towards the center. In the bottom-right corner, there is a smaller, light gray triangular shape pointing towards the center. Additionally, there is a light gray rectangular shape in the middle of the page, slightly offset from the center, which appears to be a shadow or a design element. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused piece of stationery.