



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

2024/25

BUDGET & POLICY SPEECH

SPEAKER NOTES FOR

HON. MEC FOR EDUCATION, MR FUNDILE GADE



2024/2025 POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH
BY MEC FOR BASIC EDUCATION
MR F GADE

Honourable Speaker of the Provincial Legislature
Honourable Premier of the Eastern Cape Province
Honourable Members of the Executive Council
Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee of Education
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature
Mayors and Councillors
Traditional Leaders
Head of Department of Education
Senior Management of various Departments
Our Social Partners
Organised Labour
Members of the Media
Distinguished Guests
Educators and Learners
Comrades, Fellow South Africans

INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and honour that I stand here before this august house to present the 2024/25 Policy and Budget Speech on behalf of the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

Looking back, Madam Speaker, over the last decade, we have made significant improvements in expanding access, participation, and equity in our education system in the Eastern Cape. This administration will continue to consolidate, expand, and accelerate this mandate by ensuring that education remains the apex development imperative in accelerating the social transformation and modernisation agenda of the province.

As tabled in this august house at the beginning of the sixth administration; our singular focus, in the past five years, has been on improving on all facets of teaching and learning in the province. This commitment is aligned to government's National Development Plan and commitments to other international convention such as Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) of the African Union.

Honourable members, the National Development Plan (NDP), enjoins us to enhance *“access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learner outcomes by 2030”*. It further enjoins us to improve the *“performance of South African learners in international standardised tests should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development and with similar levels of access”*.

Notwithstanding the many challenges we face as a country and a province Madam Speaker, I am sure this house will agree that our basic education system has been on a steady rise over the past decade.

We have increased the number of learners passing the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Exams from 50% in 2008 to 81.4% in 2023. We have more than doubled the percentage of learners who are eligible to pursue their studies at university from 14.5% in 2008 to 39.6% in 2023. More specifically, in the last term of administration from 2019 to 2023, the Eastern Cape has produced 146 561 Bachelor passes and 108 442 Diploma passes.

These accomplishments reflect the positive narrative that the Eastern Cape Department of Education will continue to share. Some of these strides include, but are not limited to the following:

- The Eastern Cape has achieved one of the highest throughput ratios in the country as more learners move through 12 years of schooling faster.
- We have demonstrated the most rapid increase in the number of NSCs obtained from schools in the 2009 to 2023 period, which is remarkable considering that the Eastern Cape is the only province with a substantial decline in the number of 18-year-olds in the population.
- Our province has one of the highest Maths participation rates according to fee status.
- We are in the 80% club in relation to the NSC outcomes with less than a percentage difference in the pass rate between the Eastern Cape and other top 4 provinces.

- The province has consistently shown significant improvement as demonstrated in the latest NSC results, achieving 81.4%, marking a 4.1% increase from 2022.
- We have achieved universal enrolments at over 98% and note that EC ranks consistently highest in the country in terms of learners enrolled in schools.
- The Eastern Cape was the first province in the history of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) to provide an additional meal in the form of breakfast to Quintile 1 schools (which are considered the most impoverished).

Access to educational institutions in the province has expanded steadily and, not only do more young people attend and complete school than ever before, but access to early learning opportunities has expanded dramatically. The improvements in equity and inclusivity have also been attributable to highly intentional pro-poor education policies.

The province provides a nutritious meal every school day to over 1.6 million children while 80% of public-school learners do not pay school fees. These policies help alleviate the financial burden on vulnerable households and create meaningful opportunities to attend and progress through school.

Policies to screen and identify children with special educational needs have also helped to ensure that more than 90% of 7 to 15-year-old children with disabilities now attend school. The Eastern Cape education system is working for all learners who should be afforded the best of quality teaching and learning.

BUDGET CONTEXT

The budget for the 2024/25 Financial Year considers adjustments that have been effected to our baseline allocations over the 2024 MTEF period.

For 2024/25 the total budget allocation is R42,441 billion, of which R38,404 billion is for Equitable Share, and R4,037,941 billion is allocated for Conditional Grants.

Over the MTEF cycle, the Equitable Share increased from R34,036 billion in 2020/2021 to a revised estimate of R38,404 billion in 2024/25, whilst Conditional Grants increased from R2,927 billion in 2020/21 to a revised estimate of R4,038 billion in 2024/25. The Equitable Share allocation increased by 12.83% from the 2020/21 revised estimate, due to:

- The effects of budget changes on the department's baseline, because of the recovery from a national fiscal consolidation implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Changes in new data updates of the Provincial Equitable Share (PES) formula; and

- A further additional amount provided on personnel to address the pressures associated with wage agreement.
- Moreover, funding is provided to augment the per learner allocation on Norms and Standards.

The Department welcomes improvements in allocations for the following Conditional Grants:

- The **Education Infrastructure Grant** increased by R65,792 million in the 2024/25 financial year and reduced by R29,033 million in 2025/26 and R23,482 million in the 2026/27 financial years respectively from the 2023 MTEF baseline.
- The **National School Nutrition Programme Grant** increased by R27,276 million in 2024/25; R1,377 million in 2025/26 and R2,875 million in 2026/27 from the 2023 MTEF baseline.
- The **Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Grant** increased by R702,000 in 2024/25; R1,132 million in 2025/26 and R1,193 million in 2026/27 from the 2023 MTEF baseline.
- The **Early Childhood Development Grant** increased by R13,531 million in 2024/25; R196,000 in 2025/26 and R460,000 in 2026/27 from the 2023 MTEF baseline.
- **The Social Sector EPWP Incentive Grant for Provinces** has an allocation of R48,283 million in 2024/25 financial year.
- The **Expanded Public Works Programme Integrated Grant to Provinces** has an allocation of R2,582 million in the 2024/25 financial year.

IMPROVEMENTS IN QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

We are elated that not a single district achieved below the 30% Bachelor pass rate in 2023. In a nutshell, Madam Speaker, the performance of the Department has been improving steadily since 2019 except for a marginal drop in 2020. Quantitative improvements in the NSC results were observed in rural districts, thus suggesting a narrowing equity gap in the urban / rural divide.

The province is grateful for the support received from several partners, ranging from the efforts of Local Municipalities, private Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

These partners were helpful in the organisation and coordination of extra tuition classes. Collaborating with subject advisors, they assisted with Differentiated Additional Learner Support Materials, as well as motivating educators and learners.

I am proud to announce that every eligible learner in the system had an opportunity to sit for their NSC examinations. To all the successful candidates, the Department wishes you the best in your future endeavours. Make your province and country proud. The future of this nation is in your hands - make it count.

OVERARCHING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The department will support the work of the 7th Administration to achieve the priority focus area of building an ethical, capable and developmental State. We know that a capable state should have the requisite human capabilities,

institutional capacity, operational delivery mechanisms and technological platforms to deliver on the National Development Plan through a social contract with the people. This also entails ensuring effective corporate governance support to all districts and all schools.

The provincial education sector adopted the Education System Transformation Plan in 2019 whose strategic thrust was to ensure improved learning outcomes across the education system. The plan has since been revised to 2024 – 2029, focusing on five pillars viz Capacity Building, Economic Drive, 5th Industrial Revolution, Inclusive Education and Social Cohesion; and Infrastructure Development.

Ensuring the efficient and reliable provision of public services plays a vital role in cultivating trust and forging a strong connection between the government and its citizens. At the centre of effective public service delivery lies the recognition that citizens are the primary beneficiaries of public services. We must place their needs and aspirations at the forefront of our efforts. We commit to improving service delivery across the department, placing learners, educators and schools at the centre of education service delivery.

Madam Speaker, for the 2024 academic year, the Department is targeting to achieve 85% pass rate in NSC results. Differentiated support will be done through several interventions to support learners at risk (performing at Levels 1 and 2) These interventions include:

- Learner Extended Hour Programmes: We will provide additional learning hours to support students who require extra help. These extended hours are designed to offer personalized attention and reinforce key concepts.
- Incubation Classes: Specialized classes will be established to nurture and support learners who show potential but are currently

struggling. These classes will focus on building foundational skills and confidence. Tutorial Sessions: Dedicated tutorial sessions will be held to offer targeted support in specific subjects. These sessions will be tailored to address individual learner needs and provide additional practice in challenging areas.

- Radio Lessons: We will leverage the power of radio to reach learners across the province. Community radio stations, as well as national stations like Umhlobo We FM and TRU FM, will broadcast educational content. The availability of slots on national stations is currently pending.
- 'Know Your Learner' Concept: This initiative aims to understand each learner's unique challenges and strengths. By gaining insights into their individual needs, we can provide more effective support and resources

These comprehensive interventions are designed to address the diverse needs of our learners and ensure they have the resources and support necessary to succeed.

The policy focus areas for the 7th administration include the following priorities:

- Ensuring that all employees are adequately serviced and payments due are processed and finalised on time. This also includes ensuring that all service providers are paid timeously. Boost the presence of underrepresented groups in the workplace, such as women and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, offer opportunities for employee development and also youth development in the province.
- Foster a culture of good corporate governance and the effective management of all institutions. In this regard the department will focus on

the capacitation of all School Governing Bodies ensuring that the governance of schools is a collective endeavor of all.

- The department will focus on increasing access to high-quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres by improving school readiness, enhancing service quality, and monitoring progress through collaboration with social partners and civil society. A key policy strategy will be the professionalisation of the ECD sector to ensure continuous quality improvements in early childhood development.
- In this term of government, the department will place a special focus on Inclusive Education recognising the right of all children to feel welcomed into a supportive educational environment. Our basic education system must accommodate and address the needs of all learners, including those requiring additional support due to social disadvantages, cultural differences, or other barriers to learning.
- Enhance Inclusive Education as a fundamental right for all children to feel embraced in a nurturing educational setting that can accommodate and address the requirements of every learner. By investing in Special Schools, we can ensure that children with disabilities and special needs have the opportunity for complete growth and improved socio-economic prospects in the future.
- The National Development Plan Vision 2030 advocates for using home languages as the medium of instruction. The institutionalisation of the Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) from Grade 4 for learners to be taught in their home language for improved learner performance is of critical importance.
- The department will accelerate the delivery of infrastructure to ensure safe, secure, and compliant physical teaching and learning environments. This

includes providing well-equipped libraries, computer labs and enabling ICT infrastructure.

- The department will further ensure that all schools are adequately resourced for optimal functioning. Key to this objective is to ensure that managers at all levels in schools, districts and Head Office are adequately prepared to execute the task of government and to provide excellent service to our learners and communities at large.
- Maintenance of existing education facilities including hostel facilities and rehabilitation of historical schools in an effort to preserve their legacy.
- Provision of minor maintenance of schools within the Beautification Programme especially targeting performing and high enrolment schools in order to create an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning while addressing local based economic growth.
- Through the Schools Rationalisation and Realignment Programme, the department continues to address the challenge of poor resourcing, teaching and learning in small and unviable schools whilst optimising utilisation of existing resources.
- Prioritisation, strengthening and diversification of curriculum provision to cater for the diversity of learners in the system. We will expand access to technical and vocational subjects, aligning with the Three Stream Model. Through its Digital Evolution Strategy, the department will focus on transforming and enhancing ICT support across the system over the next five years.

ENHANCED CURRICULUM OFFERING

EASTERN CAPE READING STRATEGY

In the coming years, the department will review and enhance its planning and execution of the Reading Strategy. We will engage partners interested in supporting reading initiatives in the Eastern Cape and consult with other provinces to learn from their Reading Strategies and best practices both locally and internationally.

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the reading strategy is crucial to ensure that learners' reading abilities are improving. To this end, schools will conduct Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA) and School-Based Assessments (SBA), sharing the results to enable targeted intervention and support where needed. Additionally, the department will consider external verification of EGRA results and external assessments of reading in selected grades.

In summary, the ECDoE's 2024 MTEF policy priorities for further improvements of reading in the province are:

- Increasing the availability of high-quality readers to learners.
- Providing high-quality training to teachers for teaching and supporting reading.
- Monitoring and support for School Reading Policies.
- The involvement of School Governing Bodies, families, and communities in reading activities.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress on the Reading Strategy and learners' reading.

Through these efforts, we aim to enhance our children's ability to read for comprehension in the 2024 Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Over the next five years, the education sector will continue to implement the Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) programme, extending the use of African languages as mediums of learning and teaching beyond Grade 3. This space was previously dominated by English and Afrikaans. Research indicates that learning outcomes improve through the MTBBE programme, as learners excel when taught in their home languages. The ECDoE has piloted the MTBBE, using isiXhosa and Sesotho as mediums of instruction up to Grade 9 for subjects such as Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology, and Social Sciences, among others. We will continue to expand the MTBBE across all districts.

Madam Speaker, through the Eastern Cape's organic MTBBE model for teaching and learning and in public schools, DBE saw the need to gradually implement the normalisation of trans-language which allows for:

- (i) Maintenance and/or gradual release/delayed transitions between African languages and English; and
- (ii) Alignment of multilingual learning and multilingual assessment.

This is a fundamental linguistic human right that has not been realised since the dawn of democracy. The Rapid Assessment Language research conducted by DBE and NECT identified the Eastern Cape Province as the only one providing a model for the incremental use of African languages for learning and teaching.

- These critical policy imperatives in relation to Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education and the Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) will remain focus areas of the Department in the 2024 MTEF period.

DELIVERING A CURRICULUM AIMED AT BUILDING SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Madam Speaker, our curriculum interventions are based on basic principles of improving performance. These basic principles are comprehensive data analysis (to identify strengths and areas of intervention), developing targeted/differentiated intervention programmes, and establishing accountability systems aimed at managing performance.

Fellow citizens, “Focus Schools”, also referred to as “Schools of Specialisation”, are a visible manifestation of the Three Stream Model and are a legislatively distinct category of public schools that cater to learners with identifiable talents and aptitudes in areas such as Agriculture, Maritime studies and others. The department started implementing the project by establishing Agricultural Sciences schools.

The department will persist in supporting and equipping agricultural schools by focusing on the development of skills and capacity-building of school communities, learners, and educators. We will maintain engagement with stakeholders and private sector partners to secure adequate funding and resources, both physical and human, as well as suitable infrastructure for effective farming activities.

To advance the establishment of Maritime Studies focus schools, maritime subjects have been introduced in five schools across the province: two schools in both the Buffalo City Metro Education District and the OR Tambo Coastal

District, and one school in the Nelson Mandela Bay District. Following discussions with school communities in Nelson Mandela Bay, four additional schools will join the programme in 2024.

In line with the sector's framework for **Skills for a Changing World**, the department piloted Coding and Robotics so that learners and teachers could respond to emerging technologies and artificial intelligence. In the 2023/24 financial year, 186 schools piloted Coding and Robotics. The pilot schools across the 12 education districts include 25 Grade R to 3 schools (Foundation Phase); 111 Grade 4 – 7 schools (Intermediate Phase), and 50 Grade 8 – 9 schools (Senior Phase).

All educators from these schools have been trained in Coding and Robotics content and are currently implementing the programme, except for Grade 8 and 9. Orientation for principals of the Grade 8 and 9 pilot schools is scheduled for Term 1, with implementation set to begin in Term 2.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for the subject has not yet been promulgated and as such, the pilot programme will continue in the same schools in 2024.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND E-LEARNING

In this financial year we are planning to deploy Smart Classrooms to 12 additional schools in the province (one per district). Over the next two years (2024-2025), we anticipate that each district will have at least three schools equipped with Smart Classrooms.

In the 2024/25 fiscal year, we plan to resource 150 schools—125 from the e-learning equitable share and 25 from the MST grant—with the e-learning solution package. This package includes an E-Library trolley with 20-22

devices, a data projector, visualisers, and a C3 Content server pre-loaded with CAPS-aligned content.

Madam Speaker, the department plans to pilot 12 ICT resource centres, equipping each classroom with interactive boards, learner devices, and C3 content servers. We will also develop a provincial Learning Management System (LMS), which will be implemented gradually over the next few years. In the 2024/25 Financial Year, the department will refurbish two provincial broadcasting studios.

IMPROVING ACCESS FOR ALL

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the department has established high-level support programmes for deaf or hard of hearing who have cochlear implants in Greenwood (NMB) and Nelson Mandela Primary School in Mthatha.

We have employed 22 nurses in special schools with hostels, to provide valuable services to learners. In addition, 28 specialists and 120 support staff have been appointed between December 2023 and February 2024. Since 2019, we have established 24 special schools as resource centres. This means that not only do these special schools benefit from the expertise of specialists, but all nearby public ordinary schools also gain access to these valuable services. In the past decade, we have ensured that at least every year over 10 000 learners with special needs are placed in the 45 special schools available in the province.

The department will focus on the priority areas in the 2024 MTEF period:

- In March 2024, five netball players will represent South Africa at the Turkey International Games.

- Providing extended training in South African Sign Language (SASL) for both teaching and communication purposes.
- Strengthening the capacity of full-service schools.
- Strengthening the capacity of the District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs) to ensure effective functioning of School Based Support Teams (SBSTs).
- Procure necessary tools for all therapists and psychologists.
- Offer accredited training for educators on inclusive education.
- Supply assistive devices to learners with barriers in mainstream schools to support achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 by 2030.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker, Early Childhood Development (ECD) plays a crucial role in influencing individuals' next career paths and accomplishments.

The formative years of a child's life significantly impact their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, which in turn shapes their educational achievements, career choices and overall well-being. The latest Grade 12 results for the Eastern Cape demonstrate that a more refined Early Childhood Development (ECD) approach can lead to greater achievements.

Key interventions for the 2024/25 financial year include:

- Enrol 200 Pre-Grade R practitioners in basic financial management courses.
- Provide assessment training to 120 Pre-Grade R practitioners.
- Offer emergent reading training to 120 Pre-Grade R practitioners.
- Train 50 Grade R practitioners in Coding and Robotics
- Allocate funding for 1 200 Pre-Grade R practitioners to achieve Level 5 certification.

- Monitor and evaluate implementation of all programmes.

Effective training enables ECD professionals to acquire the essential expertise and understanding required to deliver high-quality education to young children. This involves understanding the various stages of child development, designing activities that are suitable for each stage, and fostering an environment that promotes growth and development. This sector needs professionals who will effectively address the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution. ECD programmes are progressively integrating activities that familiarise children with fundamental principles in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Introducing STEM disciplines early can spark interest and curiosity, setting the groundwork for future careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

LEARNER SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

One of the department's key policy priorities is to ensure effective social protection and create a safe and supportive learning environment for learners.

Learner Support

Key measures to achieve this include the deployment of 800 Learner Support Agents (LSAs), 49 LSA Supervisors and 98 Social Workers across schools and Circuit Management Centres. Their primary tasks include identifying and supporting orphans and vulnerable children, providing psychosocial support, and referring them to other health and social welfare services. They also conduct awareness campaigns on issues such as learner pregnancy, absenteeism, learner dropout, bullying, drug and substance use, and many others. These efforts are crucial in ensuring that our learners are mentally and psychologically healthy, enabling them to excel academically.

For 2024/25 period, the department plans to undertake the following activities:

- Revive the District ISHP Task Team in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Social Development.
- Train 500 educators in Comprehensive Sexuality Education and prevention programmes for HIV, STIs, and TB.
- Orient 500 School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies on developing Policy Implementation Plans.
- Commemorate Health & Wellness Weeks with events such as Mental Health Week, National Child Protection Week, World TB Day, World AIDS Day, and International Drug Day.
- Implement Peer Education Programmes; and
- Host the CSTL conference.

School Safety

Human Rights Watch has identified that the biggest threat to the right to education is not discrimination or lack of access to schools, but rather violence occurring within or near schools. Such violence compromises children's ability to learn endangers their physical and psychological well-being, and often causes dropouts. The right to education includes not just having schools and teachers available but also ensuring a safe environment conducive to learning.

Priority Interventions to enhance school safety in the 2024 MTEF period include:

- Prioritising the Nelson Mandela Metro Bay (NMMB) in all intervention and awareness programmes conducted with SAPS, Community Safety and School Safety Partners, particularly in areas with high safety concerns.

- Focusing on 221 schools in Motherwell, KwaZakhele and Central, with joint intervention programmes planned to help communities ensure safety in these schools.

Scholar Transport

Honourable members, the ECDoE in collaboration with the Department of Transport provided scholar transport to learners travelling long distances to school and to learners in vulnerable and unsafe areas. For the 2024/25 financial year, 103 000 learners will benefit from the provision of scholar transport. We acknowledge that some deserving learners did not benefit from scholar transport due to budgetary constraints.

We are actively engaging with all stakeholders to ensure every eligible learner benefits from this vital state intervention, which aims to provide fair access to quality education.

Several factors impact the provision of scholar transport in the province, and we are implementing measures to address these issues:

- The number of learners requiring transport fluctuates and is updated annually due to factors such as parents relocating with their children, affecting transport needs.
- Learners who completed Grade 12 and Grade 7, which are exit grades, may attend schools that do not require scholar transport services.
- The rationalisation programme affects the movement of learners from closed and merged schools to larger schools.
- Learner dropouts influenced by various social issues.
- Parents moving to new areas may require transport services not covered by existing contracts with DoT, leading to community challenges when learners are not transported.

- Prioritising community and parental involvement and maintaining transparency from Head Office to District scholar transport issues.
- The ECDoE has improved the quality of learner data by strengthening the effective utilisation of SASAMS, which reduced previous challenges.
- Ongoing engagement with district stakeholders ensures that learners accessing the service are selected according to policy, and a truly deserving.

NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME

The NSNP is set to provide breakfast meals to 1 503 835 learners, followed by the primary meal to 1 603 233 learners in 4 831 targeted schools. This programme will continue, thereby ensuring improved access and retention of vulnerable learners in schools.

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

Honourable members, providing decent, safe and fit-for-purpose infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning remains a critical priority.

Despite the annual allocation of R1.6 billion for the infrastructure development programme, the Eastern Cape Department of Education is dealing with an infrastructure backlog of R80 billion. Efforts are being made to reduce the backlog by constructing new schools, rationalising, and realigning small and unviable schools to increase operational efficiencies and provide a quality teaching and learning environment. The School Rationalisation and Realignment Programme (SRRP) aims to reduce schools by 33%.

As embedded within the District Development Model approach herewith are the key priorities in the delivery of infrastructure for the 2024 MTEF period:

- A total of R119 million has been set aside for the provision of new and maintenance of existing boreholes and the construction of sewer ponds at 152 schools.
- To counteract the perpetual threat posed by load shedding, we are embarking on an initiative to provide solar panels for the provision of energy to institutes and educational office facilities.
- The wellness and security of educators and learners remains a high priority for the sector, and we have started implementation of its Phase V fencing programme through which 167 schools will benefit. Priority is given to 60 crime-ridden areas, in Sarah Baartman, Buffalo City Municipality and Nelson Mandela Bay and 17 Agricultural schools.
- We are committed to using infrastructure as a critical enabler in sustaining the improvement in matric results. This includes a focused effort on reviving and providing new hostels to historic schools such as Healdtown Comprehensive School, Daliwonga SSS, Makaula SSS, Ntsonkotha SSS (to be completed in May 2024), Khanyisa Special School, Gamble Street Secondary School, and five Mega Schools including as Zibi Meyer, Tinana and Ntabeni Primary Schools, Pontseng and Luzie Drift Secondary Schools.
- The department also committed to invest in inclusive education by continuing the construction of Khayaletu, Khanyisa, Amasango and Sive Special Schools this year.
- Planning for the technical workshops at OR Tambo and Majali Technical High Schools, Sterkspruit SSS and Sidinane SSS, has

been prioritised with construction set to begin in the fourth quarter of the financial year.

- Lastly, we will be rolling out a programme on maintenance of educational institutes and district offices thus improving employee working conditions, health, and safety.

Furthermore, the ECDoE is set to implement a strategic support initiative aimed at bolstering Technical High Schools in the province. This will be achieved by enhancing the Civil Engineering (Construction) curriculum through the utilisation of existing Infrastructure projects within the province, coupled with leveraging our established relationships with our Implementing Agents. The integrated collaborative effort is designed to provide learners with practical experience that extends beyond the confines of the classroom. The primary objective is to ensure that students in technical high schools not only acquire theoretical proficiency but also cultivate the practical skills essential for executing real-world tasks.

Additional interventions to address key issues in the school infrastructure environment include:

- Natural disasters, such as floods and tornadoes, particularly affect the OR Tambo Coastal and OR Tambo Inland areas. The department will allocate specific funds for natural disasters and has a Disaster Management Plan in place.
- Social ills affecting our communities such as the burning of schools, burglary and theft require urgent attention. The seventh Administration must focus on integrated planning and the use of Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR) structures to address these problems. In addition, communities are encouraged to take responsibility for and protect government assets.

SCHOOL RESOURCING AND ADMINISTRATION

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS (LTSM)

I am pleased to announce that we delivered 100% Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) for the 2024 academic year, before schools closed for the holiday in the 2023. The materials included textbooks, stationery and workbooks as well as Graded Readers for Grades 1 to 7 learners.

I want to encourage schools and Stakeholders to ensure that the retention of LTSM is a collaborative effort, so that we can provide more resources in the coming years. For the 2024/25 fiscal year, the ECDoE will ensure that priority is given to learners and schools with schools being funded at 100% as per the National Norms and Standards.

Madam Speaker and Honourable members, we must acknowledge that the province inherited many small schools from the homeland era, but outmigration to urban centres, within and outside of the province, has made many schools unviable for quality teaching and learning. Because of low enrolments, classes in small schools often consist of multiple grades sharing the same teaching space and educator. This is not ideal for achieving quality learning outcomes.

Several small schools have been identified for rationalisation. The aim of the rationalisation process is to improve opportunities for learners by placing them in schools that are equipped to provide quality education. The Department only considers closure of schools if it is possible to place all affected learners and teachers in suitable, safe, and enhanced learning environments. This is to promote the effective use of human resources, learner teacher materials, physical infrastructure, and financial resources. We will continue to collaborate with all stakeholders in the effective utilisation of basic education resources.

PARTNERSHIPS

Given the constraints of a shrinking budget, the Department cannot fulfill its mandate independently. Therefore, we have established partnerships and received donations to support education. These collaborations are crucial for delivering high-quality education and meeting the expectations of the Provincial Development Plan and the objectives outlined in the National Development Plan.

ALBERTINA NONTSIKELELO SISULU SCIENCE CENTRE

In collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training (the DHET) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), DBE reviewed and finalised the Integrated National Strategy for MST Education (2019-2030) with active participation of all Education Departments. As a result, all nine Education Departments developed their MST implementation plans and high impact interventions prioritising their provincial context in terms of MST Grant Schools, Skills for a Changing World, Three Streams Model (Occupational Subjects), Focus Schools, etcetera.

This is why we have the Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu Science Centre, also known as the Cofimvaba Science Centre. Established through a partnership with the Department of Science and Innovation, which provided primary funding for its construction and for developing science engagement programmes, the Centre aims to:

To conduct science awareness programmes to schools and the broader community and also promote MST (Mathematics, Science, and Technology) and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education by:

- Making science appealing, relevant, and accessible to boost scientific literacy and spark interest in related careers.
- Developing an informed public that actively engages with and participates in national science and technology discourse for the benefit of society.
- Promoting science communication to improve science engagement in South Africa.
- **MST Teacher Development and Science Laboratory Services:** This includes training teachers and Subject Education Specialists (SEs) on conducting experiments, supporting schools without laboratory facilities, and providing necessary assistance.
- **Science Laboratory Equipment Loan Scheme:** Managing an inventory of lab equipment to lend to schools lacking laboratory facilities.
- **Streaming of Recorded or Live Lessons:** Offering streamed
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AVIATION SCHOOL PROJECT

We aim to leverage the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to ensure efficient and effective resource allocation and collaboration which will result in the optimal development and operation of the aviation school. The primary reason for using the PPP framework is to foster collaboration, enabling the exchange of skills and knowledge across various sectors. This collaboration is crucial for successfully delivering specialised infrastructure projects, highlighting the significance of partnerships between the private and public sectors.

We are currently engaging the Provincial Treasury to support the Department in this process and my office will be soliciting the support of other sister departments to fast-track the process in the coming year.

CONCLUSION

Honourable Speaker, Education is a societal matter that needs all of us to be dedicated, committed and vigilant in the face of the high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Madam Speaker, I would like to express my gratitude to the Acting HOD Ms Maasdorp and her Management Team for ensuring that the mandate of the Department is executed despite the many challenges that we face as a sector.

I salute the people of the Eastern Cape for keeping our schooling system across the province working and functional despite formidable challenges. Your exceptional deeds of valour and sacrifice will always be an inspiration to the Home of Legends.

A special thanks to the Legislature (MPL) for their rigorous oversight and exemplary support for basic education in the province.

Lastly, special thanks to my family for their unwavering support.

I THANK YOU

FD Gade

MEC for Education

Eastern Cape Department of Education

CONFIDENTIAL

EASTERN CAPE EDUCATION BUDGET OVER THE 2024 MTEF

Programmes	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total Budget over the MTEF
	Medium-term estimates (R'000)			
Administration	3,129,370	3,244,451	3,337,955	9,711,776
Public Ordinary School Education	34,421,342	35,737,316	37,148,513	107,307,171
Independent School Subsidies	103,769	120,464	125,885	350,118
Public Special School Education	1,231,085	1,306,603	1,338,527	3,876,215
Early Childhood Development	1,118,974	1,223,938	1,271,038	3,613,950
Infrastructure Development	1,848,180	1,833,205	1,922,558	5,603,943
Examination and Education Related Services	588,702	638,271	683,481	1,910,454
Total	42,441,422	44,104,248	45,827,957	132,373,627
Compensation of employees	33,718,648	35,156,821	36,171,304	105,046,773
Goods and services	3,587,376	3,380,659	3,564,686	10,532,721
Transfers and subsidies	3,993,833	4,289,906	4,756,157	13,039,896
Payments for capital assets	1,141,565	1,276,862	1,335,810	3,754,237
Total economic classification	42,441,422	44,104,248	45,827,957	132,373,627