

**Basic Education Budget Vote Speech, 2014/15 by Mrs Angie Motshekga, Minister of
Basic Education, National Council of Provinces, Cape Town**

23 Jul 2014

Honourable Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces
Honourable Members and colleagues
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen,

Chair, we thank you for this Debate on Vote 15, Basic Education.]

There is no doubt that South Africa is a better country today than it was 20 years ago. The lives of millions of our people have improved, but the quest to bring about a better life for all continues.

In his State of the Nation Address, President Zuma urged all of us to embark on radical socio-economic transformation.

Honourable Members, President Zuma has now launched Operation Phakisa through which government aims to implement its policies and programmes better, faster and more effectively.

The President made it clear that Operation Phakisa is designed to answer fundamental implementation questions and find solutions, as the country tries to address poverty, inequality and unemployment, among other challenges, as stipulated in the National Development Plan.

The National Development Plan and indeed the ANC Manifesto will guide our programmes. Our medium to long term plan outlines the work to be done between now and 2030.

The NDP states that education is a means to building an inclusive society and providing opportunities for South Africans, especially those who were previously disadvantaged, to realise their full potential. It further indicates that education provides the tools to people to solve their problems. The President confirmed in his State of the Nation Address that the ruling party continues to rate education as the apex priority for this government.

Consistent with that mandate we continue to open the doors of learning and culture with high levels of participation at 99% enrolment in compulsory basic education.

86% of our schools have been declared no-fee schools, and over 9.1 million learners are fed at school through the National School Nutrition Programme. Through the pro-poor package we will achieve R8.4 billion funding for non-fee paying schools to ensure that no child is left behind because of poverty. The per-learner amount for 2014 exceeds R1, 000.00 for non-fee schools.

Budget for 2014/15

Chairperson, today we stand here to account to the National Council of Provinces and to seek a fresh mandate from the Honourable Members for the 2014/15 programme. This we do on the back of the gains made in recent years.

The overall budget for 2014/15 for the Department of Basic Education is R19, 680 billion. Last year it was R17, 592 billion. This is an increase of just more than R2 billion. This, once again, confirms government's commitment to education.

The budget allocation to Provincial Education Departments is R186,147 billion. It will exceed R200 billion in 2015/16.

Umalusi is allocated R107.4 million in 2014/15 and will reach R112.7 million in 2015/16 to cover its expanded mandate.

The National Education Evaluation Development Unit (NEEDU) continues to do important work for the Department. For 2014/15, NEEDU is allocated R14.2 million.

Kha Ri Gude receives R634.9 million. This mass literacy campaign has impacted the lives of millions of our people. To this we have allocated R62.2 million.

Chairperson, provinces continue to transport thousands of learners and with support from the Department of Social Development and different partners from communities and different cooperatives, children in need of school uniforms are being supported.

Honourable members, all of us involved in this sector know very well that in order for us to improve the quality of our education outcome, instruction has to improve and that every child has to succeed, ensuring that no child is being left behind.

Again Chair, within the next 180 days a full report of how this is going to be done will be made public but these will include ramping up support services for learners such as remedial classes, psychosocial support, improved library and information services and other interventions.

On Curriculum

In the education sector, 2014 is an important year as it marks the full-blown implementation of CAPS throughout the education system. It is a year that sees the first cohort of Grade 12 learners sitting for a CAPS-aligned National Senior Certificate examinations.

This major development takes place in the wake of positive developments, when all signs finally show stability in the curriculum. Learner performance in the further education and training (FET) phase is a telling witness in this regard.

We will make more aggressive, radical changes and appropriate interventions to turn our education system around.

We will also provide more details on fresh start grades to systematically fix the system in the next five years.

The fresh start grades will be the senior phase where will systematically fix the challenges we know with the support of external partners. This phase has been identified as the most troubled phase from our annual national assessments, the higher than normal repetition, failure and drop-out rates.

The Fresh start programmes will continue in the other phases ensuring that within the next 5 years all the identified and known challenges are systematically addressed.

Radical transformation

Chairperson, the Basic Education department is undergoing some restructuring. This is consistent with the new approach needed to bring about radical transformation in the education sector.

In line with heightening accountability and enhancing service delivery, we have started to develop norms and standards in terms of section 3 of the National Education Policy Act of 1996. This will cover all services and deliverables that the sector is responsible for. The roles and responsibilities will be clearly delineated from national level through to classroom level. We will also use section 8 of the same act to ensure deepened monitoring. The time has come to place responsibility and accountability where it belongs. Provinces that do not perform will be held accountable.

The Council of Education Ministers held its first meeting two weeks ago and all the MECs agree that the time for radical transformation has come. A two-day education Lekgotla with all provinces will be held on August 1 and 2 in KwaZulu-Natal to detail and align our plans to improve quality and efficiency.

We will discuss, among other issues, the tracking of learner performance in order to ensure we decrease the drop-out rate and increasing retention levels in our schools.

Honourable Chairperson, we will continue to promote universal access to education by ensuring that all children between ages 7 and 15 are in school. We will increase the number of Grade 12 learners who can gain entrance to university, moving incrementally from 172 000 in 2013 to 250 000 in 2019, and work to improve the quality and quantity of passes.

We will continue to eradicate mud schools and other inappropriate structures particularly in the Eastern Cape, and to provide the necessary resources needed for proper schooling to take place.

Our own internal assessments and international benchmarking assessments confirm that whilst progress has been made on access, equity, and redress, the emphasis in this administration will be on attaining quality efficiently.

The focus for 2014 - 2019 is consolidating achievements made so far and then driving home the theme of improvement on quality and efficiency throughout the entire schooling sector with a renewed emphasis on curriculum coverage, and the need to strengthen quality, efficiency and accountability in our provinces, districts and schools.

National School Nutrition Programme

Over 9 million learners in more than 21 000 quintile 1 - 3 primary and secondary schools benefit from the school nutrition programme. This increase is attributed to the successful extension of the programme to public secondary schools.

The conditional grant for the National School Nutrition Programme has increased by R288.8 million in 2014/15 to R5, 462 billion. It will reach R5.704 billion in 2015/16.

School Health Programme

Although the Department has made strides to meet the basic right to nutrition to millions of learners in schools, it has become necessary to consider a national de-worming programme linked to the NSNP, to maximise the health and cognitive benefits of school meals.

We will continue to enhance learner safety and well being by fighting drugs and substance abuse as well as youth criminality in our schools and communities in general.

Focus on History

A country that chooses to hide its heritage and historical footprints from its children takes the risk of having them repeat the mistakes of their predecessors.

We are currently conducting comparative studies and research on countries offering History as a compulsory subject. Research has shown that as a subject, History has a number of positive effects such as contributing to nation building, national pride, patriotism, social cohesion and cultural heritage.

Languages

We are working on a language development framework and we have prioritized the implementation of South African Sign Language investment. We have made progress in the development of African Languages including implementing the policy on the Incremental Introduction of African Languages. We are strengthening the utility and proficiency in English as the First Additional Language and the Language of Learning and Teaching through the strategy of English across the Curriculum.

Early Childhood Development

In respect of Early Childhood Development, the National Development Plan underlines the need for access for all children to at least 2 years of pre-school education. The ANC in its manifesto echoes this sentiment of making two years of pre-school education compulsory, and due to success in rolling out early childhood development programmes, legislative review to make schooling for young people aged 5 to 15 years compulsory is on the cards.

Honourable Members, the Department has made significant progress in increasing access to grade R. 16 909 of the 18 475 public primary schools have grade R classes with an enrolment of 779, 370 learners (2013 School Realities). The General Household Survey 2013 indicated that a total of 481, 000 5 year old learners were in preschool institutions.

The National Curriculum Framework for children under 4 (four) years will also be rolled out in registered Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres from January 2015. All preparations like practitioner training and supply of resources have already started and will be completed this calendar year.

Our interventions are bearing fruit

Honourable Members, the Department is committed to maintaining the improvement of learners in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results during this academic year and beyond and to strengthen strategies to improve the quality of passes to 171,000 in 2014 through the strengthening of existing strategies.

The growth from 67.8% in 2010 to 78.2% in 2013, as announced, which actually reads 80.8% after the supplementary examinations, is a challenge that the new administration must better, thus propelling us further towards better performance.

An amount of R30 million has been allocated in 2014/15 for the National Initiative to improve Learning Outcomes which will reach R40 million in 2015/16.

Annual National Assessment

Education experts point to the fact that the first five (5) years in education are the most crucial in the educational careers and outcomes for children. We will continue to strengthen learning in the foundation and intermediate phases and ensure that the senior phase provide a solid base for studies in Grade 10 to 12 or the Further Education and Training Band.

Mathematics, Science and Technology

Due to our focus on quality and efficiency, the recommendations of the Ministerial Task Team on Reading and Maths, Science and Technology have been integrated into our plans and excellent progress has already been made in implementing these recommendations.

The MST directorate and the office have been established in this regard.

Chairperson, we are focusing on raising the success rate and quality of passes in MST through various strategic interventions and partnerships. The Sasol-Inzalo partnership has resulted in the development of Hybrid Workbooks in Natural Sciences, Technology and Mathematics, in order to strengthen CAPS implementation in the senior phase.

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge Ms Mpho Letlape, the Vice President at Sasol Foundation and Dr David Phaho, the Head of Global Foundations who are both here today. We thank you for your continued support.

Learner Teacher Support Material

Honourable members, the Department of Basic Education has made great strides to positively change the learning and teaching landscape in South Africa over the years, with various research findings and reports bearing testimony to this. Expanded access to learning and teaching material has been at the centre of this positive shift.

Textbooks and Workbooks

Since 2011/12, the sector has spent R7, 7 billion on the roll out of textbooks for the implementation of CAPS over the last 3 financial years. 2014/15 has been targeted as the year by which the sector will be moving towards one textbook, per learner, per subject.

The sector has developed, printed and delivered 204 million Grade R to 9 Language and Mathematics workbooks to 24,000 public schools, twice a year since 2011 and will continue to do so in the coming years.

Low retention and retrieval of these valuable resources has militated against the provision of a textbook for each learner per subject at the commencement of the school calendar year.

Budgets provided in PEDs for the 2014/15 financial year and beyond are therefore used to provide top-ups for damages, non-return and shortages as a result of the inward migration of learners.

Following a national screening process a single core textbook will be listed for each subject on the national catalogue to ensure universal coverage. There will no longer be eight titles per subject simply because the high costs involved demand a more rational and cost-effective approach.

Millions of textbooks and workbooks have been delivered to schools; the focus from here onwards will be to continue to monitor utilisation to improve learning outcomes and impact. Parents, educators and officials have an important role to play to ensure that the tax payers' investment in the future of our children is not wasted.

Ministerial Committee on the NSC

I have received the Ministerial Committee Report from the team that was chaired by Prof Brian O'Connell, the outgoing Vice Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape. I am currently studying the report and I will make an announcement shortly on the recommendations that I will take forward. This should be done soon after presenting it to the Council for Education Ministers.

The allocation for 2014/15 for workbooks is R896.7 million and for textbooks the estimated budget is R4.2 billion allocated to PEDs.

School Infrastructure

The total allocated infrastructure budget for 2014/15 financial year is R 10.1 billion and this includes a portion of Education Infrastructure Grant amounting to R 6.9 billion. The Education Infrastructure Grant increases to R9.4m in 2015/16, R10m in 2016/17 and R10.5m in 2017/18.

Teacher development

The old cliché that says every education system stands and falls on its teachers is very true.

Honourable Members, everything to do with teachers from their conditions of service, their recruitment, deployment, utilisation and development including their general professional development and conduct occupies a high position in our list of priorities. The Department of Basic Education and Department of Higher Education and Training, through various bilateral engagements and initiatives, are working together to strengthen this very important area of our work.

The Funza Lushaka Bursary scheme has increased from R424 million in 2010/11 to R893.9 million in 2013/14, when 14 500 bursaries were awarded.

The Department has reviewed the current Integrated Quality Management System, in consultation with teacher unions, and developed a revised instrument the Quality Management System for school based educators. For the current year, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is allocated R42.2 million.

We are conducting research on the inclusion of Grade R teachers in mainstream and the impact this will have on the post provisioning model and their conditions of service.

Fellow South Africans,

Strengthening Districts for better outcomes

Schools are a centre piece for our entire scope of work as the Department of Basic Education. Education districts have a pivotal role in supporting schools, improving their functionality and developing the country's education institutions in order that national learning outcomes are achieved.

Our district monitoring unit has been strengthened and will now comprise a branch which will focus more carefully on capacity, systems and processes required to strengthen district planning, management, support, reporting and accountability for improved quality basic education.

Education Collaboration Framework

The Education Collaboration Framework that we set up in July last year has started bearing fruit in the education system. Through the National Education Collaboration Trust, that coordinates the

implementation of the ECF, we profiled all of the 21 target districts to understand, in detail, the challenges in both the district offices and the schools.

Over 120 members of communities, teacher unions, traditional leadership and businesses have been mobilised into district steering committees who are working with the district offices, schools and communities so as to drive improvement activities in the target schools.

We invite more South Africans to join hands around these ideals and to participate in supporting schools and districts targeted by the NECT in order for them to achieve more swift and in-depth improvement.

Honourable Members,

School Governing Body (SGB) ELECTIONS

We have just emerged from the country's successful elections in May this year. Over 250 000 governors are elected every three years to serve in our public schools, united by a common purpose, to make education a real societal issue.

School Governing Body Elections will take place from 6 to 28 March 2015 and we encourage all parents to support the elections by standing as candidates or by participating as voters in the SGB elections as voters.

Without parental and community support, education can never be a societal issue as envisaged by government.

Tributes

I wish to thank Deputy Minister Surty, Chairpersons of the Education Portfolio and Select Committees and their respective members, education MECs, HoDs and our Acting DG, Mr Paddy Padayachee, for their support. We are grateful to teachers, principals, parents, learners, SGBs, individuals, officials and staff members for advancing the nation's educational goals.

We have enjoyed productive collaborations with various ministries and will strengthen these in the coming financial year.

Conclusion

There is good progress in respect of delivery in the current electoral mandate.

If we continue to improve at the speed we have done in recent years, the lives of ordinary South Africans will be fundamentally transformed and we will face a brighter future.

We are resolved, with provinces, to step-up monitoring and evaluation, to improve accountability, and to enforce better planning for faster implementation and more lasting change.

I thank you.

Issued by: [Department of Basic Education](#)