



**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MEC FOR
EDUCATION, MR MAC JACK ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 2020/21 BUDGET VOTE 4 AT THE PROVINCIAL
LEGISLATURE, KIMBERLEY,
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

17 JULY 2020

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker;

Honourable Premier of our Province, Dr Zamani Saul;

Honourable Members of the Executive Council;

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;

The Head of the Department and senior official of
Government;

Veterans of our beloved movement;

Comrades and Friends

Honourable Speaker, I am indeed honoured to deliver 2020/21 Budget Vote 4 to this dignified house during a month which we have dedicated to our global icon, Nelson Mandela. He believed that the future and the prosperity of this country are in the classroom.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it was Nelson Mandela the Father of our Nation that said: “Education is the most powerful weapon one can use to change the world”. Education is the most important tool that offers inner and outer strength to a person. Education is the fundamental right of everyone and capable of bringing any desired change and upliftment in the human mind and society.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years of his life and this did not dim the light of hope that he ignited in the hearts of freedom-loving South Africans. Nor did it extinguish the burning passion of his spirit to continue fighting for a just, equitable and democratic country and society and the world.

What a coincidence as we honour the life of Nelson Mandela, we also mourn the death of the great Daughter of the Nation, the late Ambassador Zindziswa Mandela, indeed ***isitya esihle asityeli***.

Honourable Members,

“I’m a Prisoner,

Somebody told me about it

When I was still a little boy

He said to me, crime does not pay

He said to me, education is the key, yeah (my emphasis)

As a little boy I thought I knew

What I was doing, yeah man

But today here I am in jail”.

These are the truthfully piercing words echoed by the late Lucky Dube.

Madam Speaker,

The reality is that Education is the key to many locked doors for many young people in our country. Lucky Dube in his song aptly encapsulates the solution to a hopeless young fellow who finds himself captured because of crime. It is worth mentioning that this sad reality of the 1980's still prevails today and therefore further on in the song he said, "***They won' t build no schools anymore, all they'll build will be prisons, prisons***".

Madam Speaker,

We have a choice, do we build schools or do we build prisons? The Department of Education guided by ANC policies has deliberately chosen the path of building schools and thereby developing our society through education.

Through this policy statement, the Department aims to re-position itself in order to respond to the vision of a modern, growing and successful Province. We have adopted the 5 year strategic plan (2019-2024), where we seek to create a cohesive response in line with the Provincial vision.

In this regard the Northern Cape Department of Education is going to pursue “Building the Elements of, Capacity for and Momentum towards a modern, growing and successful Education System in the Northern Cape”.

The Department is in the process of reviewing its current organizational structure to ensure that service delivery in the education sector is improved, District capacity is strengthened in line with the Presidential Proclamation on the District Development Model.

The dynamic nature of the education sector especially in the current climate calls for more research based decision-making and to this effect the revised organisational structure makes provision for focused capacity in Education Research and Development. This will ensure that the planning and delivery capacity in the Department is significantly improved based on the research findings that take into consideration the contextual realities of the Northern Cape Province.

Madam Speaker, it is important to highlight that we shall use these elements as building blocks towards the eventual realisation of our broader vision. The Northern Cape Department of Education remains committed to pursue and achieve its goal of Vision 2030 of improving Basic Education.

We furthermore recognise that the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results are an important indicator of the quality of our education system.

Whilst the nation rightly takes great interest in the NSC performance of our learners, we should all be reminded that we cannot only sit up and pay attention to our learners when they enter the Further Education and Training (FET) Band in Grade 10 or begin to concern ourselves when they reach Grade 12. We need to remember that good teaching and learning must take place from Grade R. The Department of Education recognises the necessity for the development of strong foundational skills. This therefore means that our efforts and investment are equally spread from the foundation throughout all the Grades.

Our core business remains to improve the overall quality of schooling outcomes so as to ensure that our learners are better prepared for further studies and work opportunities beyond their schooling years.

Honourable Members,

Our country is confronted by a global pandemic which affected the lives of many South Africans. The COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a myth or something distant, it is here and amongst us as the statistics reflects. It has disrupted the 2020 school academic year and caused major anxiety amongst educators, parents and learners as we re-opened schools on the 8th of June 2020, after the nationwide lockdown.

To date, Grades 6,7,11 and 12 learners have returned to school, with pressure mounting on the Department of Basic Education to close schools temporarily, after the country have reached its peak of COVID-19 infections. This is a decision that will be taken by the National Coronavirus Command Council.

However, we must indicate that the schools in our Province were not spared by this pandemic. Since the re-opening of schools, 62 schools (11.1%) have closed thus far, due to positive cases reported. Of these schools, 18 re-opened after it was disinfected and deep cleaned. The closure of schools is impacting on valuable learning and teaching, but is necessary to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The collaborative efforts between the Department of Education and the Department of Health have enabled schools to swiftly deal with positive cases and contact tracing. We follow a strict Standard Operating Procedure , in line with the National COVID-19 regulations and guidelines to ensure that health and safety of educators and learners. In total, 46 educators (0,43%) and 36 learners (0,10%) tested positive for COVID-19.

Honourable Members,

In delivering this Budget Vote, we shall also briefly reflect on some of the key commitments and achievements made during the 2019/20 financial year. Our 2019/20 Annual Report will, accordingly, provide a comprehensive report on all our commitments made.

The total budget appropriation for the Northern Cape Department of Education for 2020/21 financial year is R7.22billion. Of this appropriation, R853million is for the various Conditional Grants administered by the Department.

Programme 1: Administration R714million

The Department received a qualified audit opinion on the Immovable Tangible Capital Assets.

Section 38(1)(h)(iii) of the PFMA requires that disciplinary action be taken against officials whose action resulted in the Department incurring unauthorised, irregular and fruitless & wasteful expenditure.

At the centre of our approach within Department is to spend some time improving our systems and risk management approaches in order to detect the risks early and address the shortcomings accordingly. We will report on progress in this regard as we improve.

There will also be enhanced strengthening of the internal controls within the Department to ensure improved financial reporting. Consequence management will also be stepped up to improve governance and compliance with laws and regulations.

Programme 2: Public Ordinary Schools Education R5.44billion

No Fee Schools

The Government promulgated the introduction of no fee schools in January 2007 as a strategy to increase access to schools and improve the overall quality of education in schools. At the centre of this decision is the strong conviction to acknowledge education as a universal human right. .

In this regard we have, 406 no fee schools in quintiles 1, 2 and 3. This figure represents 74.63% of the total schools in the Northern Cape Province.

An amount of R232million has been allocated for this purpose and will be transferred in three tranches during the 2020 academic year.

Fee Exemption

As a strategy to further increase the access to public school by the poorest of the poor, across all the length and breadth of the province. The Public Ordinary fee paying schools in the Northern Cape exempted 29 380 learners from the payment of school fees during the 2019/20 financial year. This represents a total of 119 schools out of 138 total fee paying schools which applied for compensation for fee exemptions.

For the 2020/2021 financial year, an amount of R13million was allocated for approximately 29 000 learners which will be conditionally, partially or fully exempted from the payment of school fees.

Learner Admissions

The Northern Cape Department of Education will be going online with 2021 Learner Admission process. We regard the early enrolment of learners as a priority for the successful start of the school academic year. Over the years, the start of a new school academic year has become synonymous with parents queuing at schools and District offices, seeking placement for their children. For the past 2 years we have been administering the learner admissions electronically to pilot the system. This new system will enable parents to enrol their children from the comfort of their home.

The Department will officially launch the online admission system in August 2020. The learner admission period will be open for applications as from the 1st of September 2020.

Walk-in centres will be identified per district, with dedicated personnel to assist parents that do not have access to internet facilities and or inadequate data. The Online Admission System will assist in curbing late admission applications after the closing date, backlog of placements and also assist with social distancing and adhere to the Covid-19 regulations, particularly in preferred schools. It is important to indicate that NO school will receive learner admission applications for the 2021 school academic year. All parents/ guardians must make use of either the Online Admission process or our District based walk-in centres to complete the application for your child.

School Governing Body (SGB) Development

We are busy preparing for the 9th SGB Elections scheduled for March 2021. Our SGB Election Regulations will soon be gazetted for public comment. We urge all parents and community members to visit our website and make inputs to ensure that we improve on the effective and efficient governance in all our public schools.

E-voting (vote using a smart phone, tablet or laptop) and full day elections are possible options that we are currently exploring.

The Department will provide virtual training on the SGB Election Regulations to all District Officials, Principals and SGB Members during January 2021. This serves the purpose of empowerment, the facilitation of ease for the voting process and is within COVID-19 regulations

We call upon all Principals to ensure our governing bodies remain functional and meet regularly during this time of Covid-19. Schools have the option to co-opt parents with voting rights should vacancies exist on the SBG at any point during the term of the SGB.

We have also regulated to govern the code of conduct of governors; our education system needs governors that maintain high standards of ethical leadership.

Support to Schools during Lockdown

We have provided support to schools across all phases during the Nationwide Lockdown which included the provision of Projectors and Edu-kite laptops to educators as well as a dedicated website that enables educator's access to all learning support material. We made use of our Community Radio Stations to broadcast Radio Lesson across all phases to mediate heavily-weighted and problematic subject content.

We have established WhatsApp groups specifically for grade 12 learners to communicate and share subject content with activities to be completed at home.

Reorganization, Trimming and Mediation of the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs)

In collaboration with the DBE, a process of reorganization and trimming of the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) was completed for all phases. In order to ensure that the developed ATPs are distributed, mediated with subject educators, an in-house portal and application was developed to provide support to Subject officials in the districts as well as all subject educators.

To date, a total of 6570 educators have visited the portal either through the webpage or the application. An opportunity for face-to-face engagement was also created to support educators where there were challenges with connectivity to access the e-resources. The application and website are continuously updated in-line with the phasing-in of grades.

Matric intervention programmes

Our Matric intervention support programmes such as Lock in sessions, Saturday classes, Itinerant and Lead Teacher programmes are underway in all Districts.

The Department is in the process of finalising logistics for the incubation of 3 000 Grade 12 progressed learners until the commencement of the National Senior Certificate Examinations. Subject specialists comprising of Provincial Subject Coordinators, Subject Advisors and recently retired suitably qualified and experienced educators will teach at the Camps. The camps will be administered as fully-fledged schools and the curriculum as well as School-Based Assessment will be completed at the individual venues.

Extended Spring Camps will be arranged for borderline learners struggling with key concepts, especially those offering the high enrolment subjects.

Psycho-Social Support for the 2700 Grade 12 progressed learners is underway in all Districts. The programme focusses on the acquisition of soft skills, cognition and the strengthening of academic performance. An application was developed to enable frequent reporting and to address challenges timeously.

Resourcing of schools through the Maths, Science and Technology (MST) Grant

We have supported selected schools through the MST Conditional Grant and resources that include Natural Sciences kits for Grade 4 – 12, Scientific Calculators, data projectors, visualizers, Physical Science workstations for both learners and educators as well as workshop equipment, tools and machinery was provided to schools. 3000 learners attending matric intervention camps as well as 900 MST educators and Subject Advisors will also be supported in the coming months.

The Department will continue to resource schools with a particular focus on Mathematics and Science.

The Department is currently working with TeachSA on the development of a Digital Portal with digitised lessons and assessments. Currently, donor funding is being sourced to augment funds to procure tablets for all Grade 12's from marginalized communities. This will enhance the ability of our learners to access the different e-resources available in the TeachSA portal.

Collaborative partnerships

In collaboration with University of Stellenbosch, tablets and laptops were provided to all top-performing learners in the province. These devices are loaded monthly with 10gig of day-time data and 20gig of night-time data in order for learners to access the virtual platforms of curriculum material. The data provided is used to access the Talent Development Programme (TDP)-online website of the University. The university is broadcasting real-time lessons to these devices and is also providing videos on all the content of Mathematics and Physical Sciences.

The department is also collaborating with the Sol Plaatje University to train our educators on identified content to enhance their teaching skills and improve learner outcomes in critical subjects. The Sasol Science Lab managed by the University has been deployed to selected schools to improve performance in Chemistry through the acquisition of skills and practical application of methodologies.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the approach to all teacher development activities had to be reviewed since all planned training and meetings were based on face-to-face interactions.

The training of Senior Phase educators in Mathematics and Natural Science which is funded by Sishen Iron Ore Community Development Trust (SIOC-cdt) and all scheduled training sessions by the University of Stellenbosch has now been postponed to January 2021. The possibility of doing a blended type of training (face-to-face sessions and online learning) will be explored depending on the challenges that may be posed by the pandemic over the first 6 months of 2021.

Teacher Development

The Teacher Development Directorate is in a process to produce a virtual training manual to be used by officials and educators on how to use the various virtual platforms for meetings. In the initial stage, an application was developed to orientate educators on the use of virtual communication platforms. The virtual training manual will strengthen the educators' ability to communicate with learners using the online platforms. Once the orientation to these online platforms and methods is completed the educators will integrate with existing online systems through our existing partnerships.

Partnership Initiatives to improve school management and leadership 2020 - 2022

In responding to the National Development Plan – Vision 2030, the Department of Basic Education initiated the Advance Diploma in Education School Leadership and Management (AdvDIP: SLM) that intends to change the landscape for development of aspirant School Management Team Members.

The Department of Basic Education have allocated a total of 50 School Management Team Members (SMT) to be part of this initiative in the Northern Cape in partnership with the University of Stellenbosch.

Sol Plaatje University will also offer a School Leadership and Management Programme from 2021 to all interested Educators that are already on Post Level 2.

ICT RELATED PROJECTS

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects that we intend tackling include the following and this in view of COVID-19 pandemic:

- Provision of a cost effective, reliable and efficient connectivity to all public ordinary and Special Needs schools in the province;
- Procurement of Video Conferencing equipment and related software for the Department;
- Development and use of eMemo for the Department.

SA-SAMS & LURITS

The South African-Schools Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) continues to be the preferred Schools Administration Management System in the Province by all Public ordinary schools, including all the Special Need Education schools (SNE). This is evidenced by the fact that all 556 Public ordinary and SNE schools make use of SA-SAMS and this trend is the same for the independent schools. Of 40 independent schools in the Province, 38 of them make use of SA-SAMS. This is an important milestone given the fact that the use of SA-SAMS as the administration and management system facilitates the integration between SA-SAMS and the Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System (LURITS). This situation has resulted in the Northern Cape being one of only two Provinces that have successfully secured a hundred percent upload of all Northern Cape schools to LURITS for the current academic year.

Programme 3: Independent Schools Subsidies R10.67million

The South African Schools makes provision for independent schools and there are only 40 of these schools registered in the Northern Cape Province. 6 of these schools qualify for subsidies, and the Department will continue to monitor and support these schools. The presence of these schools also eases the burden of overcrowding in some of our public ordinary schools and is welcomed.

Programme 4: Public Special Schools Education R184.5million

We have seen significant increase in this programme. This programme was allocated R158million in 2018 and has since increased to R184.5million in 2020. This allocation caters for learners with special needs in 11 special schools across the Province.

Madam Speaker, this is a clear demonstration of our commitment towards learners with special needs.

The Conditional Grant for Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (LSPID) was introduced in 2017/2018 financial year. The strategic goal of this new grant is to ensure that learners with severe to profound intellectual disabilities, who are not in special or public ordinary schools, but in special care centres, access quality public funded education and support.

This grant is in the 4th year of implementation and the Northern Cape Department of Education has recruited an additional transversal itinerant outreach team (comprised of specialized therapists) based in the ZF Mgcawu District office during 2019/20, thus amounting to 8 specialists in the Province. The revised Learning Programme for Children with Profound Intellectual Disabilities has commenced and to date these children and parents have been issued with Progress Report Cards for the very first time in their lives.

In addition, 33 assistive devices have been procured in close collaboration with the Department of Health, as part of our efforts to enhance these learners' participating in learning and teaching.

We anticipate that the will gradually increase from R13,76 million to R14.6million by the end of the MTEF period.

Programme 5: Early Childhood Development (ECD) R110million

Major strides have been achieved in ensuring that children have access to quality ECD centres. 98% of Primary Schools in the Province are offering Grade R.

The enrolment of Grade R learners in Public Schools has increased from 16 307 in 2014 to more than 20 000 in 2020. This was made possible by the implementation of various strategies such as Fun Days, Road Shows and information sessions with parents.

Significant progress has been achieved with regard to the Grade R practitioners' Conditions of Service. Practitioners are currently paid according to their qualifications and through PERSAL.

70 Grade R Practitioners are currently studying towards a Diploma in Gr R Teaching Qualification with the North West University (NWU). The sessions are conducted online due the advent of the pandemic. The NWU is also offering a B.Ed. Foundation Phase qualification for 20 practitioners through donor funding (ETDP SETA, Globeleq and SIOC-cdt).

In partnership with the Department of Social Development we established a strategy to coordinate the ECD function shift to the Department of Education. As a result, different provincial work streams were established in order to provide technical support to the coordinating committee.

Programme 6: Infrastructure Development

R606million

The right to water and sanitation was officially recognised by the United Nations General Assembly as a human right on 28 July 2010. This was under article 11.1 of the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, therefore implying that the provision of water and sanitation at school is espoused and pursued according to this Convention.

Therefore the supply of water to all schools is of the highest priority for the Department, as the Northern Cape Province has several of its towns and villages severely affected by drought.

Due to the drought and access to limited water supply, 140 schools have been identified with water supply deficiencies, varying from a lack of water to water infrastructure maintenance, including the quality of water. The Department has made provision to assess all the identified schools to provide them with basic water supply.

Since the start of the National Lockdown, 105 schools have been either vandalised or broken into. The reparation work has commenced with most schools completed. The Department is exploring the provisioning of security to schools and the installation of alarm systems to curb the occurrence of vandalism.

In terms of our capital projects the Department will continue to focus on additional classrooms and ablution facilities as well as the new and replacement schools that are nearing completion in order to assist with social distancing and basic sanitation.

Planning for Special Schools in the Pixley Ka Seme and ZF Mgcawu Districts will commence in the 2020/21 financial year.

The Department is in the process to address inappropriate structures built from materials such as asbestos. It is anticipated that five (5) of the replacement schools and replacement of inappropriate structures will start construction within the 2020/21 financial year.

In order to address overcrowding in existing school as well as to accommodate for learner growth, various schools have been identified for the construction of additional Infrastructure.

Programme 7: Examinations and Educated related Services R148million

The November/December National Senior Certificate (NSC) and Senior Certificate Examination will be a combined examination of the May/June 2020 and November 2020 examinations.

We are pleased to announce that 24 360 full time and part time candidates will therefore sit for the combined NSC/SC November/December Examinations in the Northern Cape.

The Examination commences on 9 November 2020 and will conclude on 23 December 2020. Marking will start on 6 January 2021 and will end on 23 January 2021. We have identified 4 marking centres in Kimberley.

Learner Transport

A total number of 24 544 learners are benefitting from the learner transport programme. In facilitating further access to education, the Department provides transport services to the learners without any costs to the parents – it is a 100% subsidy.

The term of all learner transport contracts ended in December 2019. Learner Transport Operators are currently engaged on a month to month basis until the embargo on the public tendering by National Treasury is lifted.

National School Nutrition Program (NSNP)

The objective of the programme is provide targeted learners with a nutritious meal daily, so as to contribute to enhanced learning capacity.

Through the NSNP we are able to provide at least one nutritious meal to 267 427 learners in 503 primary and secondary schools. Through this programme, we are able to provide a decent meal to 239 322 learners in no fee schools through the Conditional Grant.

The Department continues to provide through the NSNP a decent meal to all learners even during lockdown, which they can collect from their nearest school.

Love Your School Campaign

A well-maintained school provides a safe and attractive learning environment for learners and teachers. School beautification projects can offer much more than physical improvements to the school buildings and grounds. Through cleaning and painting the outside and inside of the school and by planting water-wise plants, the learners can take advantage of educational, personal development and community building opportunities.

The Love Your School Campaign was launched by the Premier Dr. Zamani Saul on the 24th of January 2020 at Moshaweng High School, in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District. Schools are a microcosm of society and therefore we must start changing people's attitude and behaviour towards our schools.

Through this programme we want to promote environmental actions that take into consideration sustainable living practices. Becoming environmentally conscious starts with one small action, and one small action can go on to inspire global change. We as citizens of the Northern Cape have to work hard to restore and maintain Mother Nature's majesty.

We should remember that education is not the responsibility of government alone, it is a societal responsibility. Let's all work together to keep our schools clean, safe and protected from any form of vandalism.

Honourable Members,

As I conclude my policy statement for the Northern Cape Department of Education during these uncertain times, allow me to echo the words of a well-known South African musician, Vicky Sampson, in her song "African Dream":

“Cause in my African dream, there's a new tomorrow

My African dream, is dream that we can follow

Now when the night begins to fall

I listen for your call, I listen for you heartbeat

Alone my dream is just a dream

Another false illusion, a shadow in the night

All I want is for our hearts to be beating just as one

To silence the confusion

Then the pain and the illusion will disappear again

And we will never run

'Cause in my African dream, there's a new tomorrow...”

Lastly, I would like to thank the ANC for the confidence and trust they placed in me, by putting me in charge of this important portfolio. Our Honourable Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul and my colleagues in the Executive Council for their continuous guidance and support in navigating the Education system in the Northern Cape to greater heights.

Let me also take the opportunity to thank the Provincial Legislature and all its Committees for their oversight responsibility and constructive engagements in the execution of our mandate.

I thank all the unions who operate within the education sector and all our dedicated teachers for their outstanding role in enabling the Northern Cape Department of Education to deliver quality learning and teaching in the Province.

I must indicate my sincere appreciation to the Head of the Department and the Senior Management for their commitment and sterling leadership, even when the whole country were in lockdown, they were the ones at work and preparing for schools to reopen.

I also want to thank my family for all their unwavering support, without which I would not be able to manage this important portfolio.

I thank you!