



**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MEC FOR
EDUCATION, MS. MARTHA BARTLETT, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 2017/18 BUDGET VOTE 4 AT
THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, KIMBERLEY,
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
WEDNESDAY, 14 JUNE 2017**

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker;
Honourable Premier of our Province, Ms Sylvia Lucas;
Honourable Members of the Executive Council;
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Members of the Traditional House;
Executive Mayors and Speakers of District and Local
Municipalities;
The Head of the Department and senior officials of
Government;
Leaders and representatives of the Organised Teaching
Profession;
Veterans of our beloved movement;
Representatives of the Governing party and Alliance
structures and other political parties;

Representatives from various media houses;
Communities tuned in through your Local Community
Radio Stations;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
Comrades and Friends

Honourable Speaker, we annually gather here to outline and inform this august house through this policy statement, the Education Plan our ANC led Government has for this financial year. Taking into account what our society, especially our learners need now and for the future, this policy statement will definitely seek to inspire hope, confidence and trust in our Northern Cape Provincial Government. The Northern Cape Department of Education will rise to the occasion.

The painful history in South Africa reminds us all here today of our sacrifices, families torn apart, individuals isolated from the society, promising futures destroyed, discrimination, oppression, inhumane living conditions and an education system not accessible to all.

Out of this unforgettable era, liberation heroes and heroines were born, who fought for those without a voice, human rights and became victims of the system of apartheid.

We remember these unsung heroes and heroines, as we continue to give effect to their ideals through our plans and vision for Education. It is therefore no coincidence that the year 2017 has been declared, “The year of OR Tambo”. Comrade OR Tambo was resolute that all our actions must be inspired exclusively by a desire to serve the people. The principles, practices and style of leadership of Comrade OR Tambo enabled the ANC to emerge as the vehicle through which we achieved the democratic breakthrough of 1994. We are inspired by the great intellect of Comrade OR Tambo and celebrate his life by appreciating the importance of mathematics and science. It should be mentioned, that he was barred from studying his first career choice, medicine, due to the discriminatory laws of apartheid. It is these injustices of the past, which propelled him and so many others to unite and bring about change in 1994 in South Africa.

He said: “Working together as fellow South Africans, we have it within our power to transform this country into the land of plenty for all, where the nightmare of apartheid will just be a faint memory of the past”. It is through his unwavering commitment and sacrifices that we today live in a South Africa that belongs to all. Comrade OR Tambo and many unsung heroes and heroines rose to the occasion!

Because of them, we live in a South Africa with an education system which is accessible to all. The life of every South African should be centred around Education and requires our collective involvement and active participation in every aspect of our children’s future. As we lay the foundation from a very early age, we do so with the understanding that our parents, our society, our communities and every South African are joining us in this venture to ensure a better future for our children.

Just like Comrade OR Tambo, we need our children and our communities at large to rise to the occasion. Taking into account the difficult circumstances OR Tambo was faced with, he rose above his circumstance and excelled as an intellectual.

Today, many of our youth may find themselves not in an ideal situation due to their socio-economic conditions, but they have access to Education, which will enable them to rise above their circumstances.

This month, we celebrate the 41st commemoration of the Soweto uprising which serves as a fresh reminder of the sacrifices made by the youth of 1976. As we appreciate their efforts, we resolve to work with the young generation of today. The youth of 1976 rose to the occasion!

The youth of 1976 earned this honoured title, the young lions, because of what they did to contribute to the liberation of the nation from apartheid and white minority rule.

The youth of today, however must earn this honoured title, the young lions, because of what they do to rid the nation of the legacy of apartheid, and end the scourge of the poverty and underdevelopment which continue to imprison many of our fellow citizens, both young and old.

We have the common responsibility to always recall and remember the events of 1976, so that the bravery and sacrifices of that generation of young people should serve as an inspiration to the youth of today, to become agents of change, to work hard and make a meaningful contribution to move South Africa forward. Our youth must rise to the occasion!

Honourable Speaker,

The Department of Education remains steadfast in our commitment to change the lives of our people and deliver a prosperous nation through Education. It is realised in the key priorities of this ANC led Government, that Education remains at the apex of its priorities. The ANC led Government is rising to the occasion.

Honourable Speaker, we started 2017 in a celebratory mood, resultant of the splendid performance of the Grade 12 Class of 2016. The overall performance of the Grade 12 Class of 2016 has been reported extensively at the start of the 2017 school year. Allow me to highlight just some of the achievements:

- 78.7% of Grade 12 learners passed the NSC examinations in 2016. This represents an improvement of 9.3% from the Class of 2016;
- Performance of progressed learners improved by 22.4% from 31.2% in 2015 to 53.6% in 2016;
- 26% of the learners who sat for the NSC examinations obtained Bachelor passes, which is an increase of 5% over the previous year and;
- All five (5) Districts recorded a pass rate above 70%, with the exception of the Namakwa District that achieved a phenomenal 91% pass rate.

We remain acutely aware of the enormous work that still needs to be done to ensure continued improvement in overall learner performance across the grades. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the Matric Class of 2016 and wish them well in all their future endeavours.

In delivering this Budget Vote, we shall also briefly, reflect on some of the key commitments made during the 2016/17 Budget Speech. Our 2016/17 Annual Report will accordingly, provide a comprehensive report on all our commitments made.

Provincial Education Summit

Honourable Speaker, as per resolution of the ANC Provincial Executive Council held in early 2016, a successful inaugural Provincial Education Summit was held from 13-15 June 2016.

The objective of this Summit was to gather key stakeholders under one roof, to reflect on the learner performance and the provisioning of quality public education and most significantly to chart the way forward towards continual realisation on what our education system requires now and for the future. The resolutions of this Summit have been developed into a concrete action plan and incorporated into the 2017/18 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which finds expression through the 2017/18 Annual Performance Plan. Some constitute the bulk of the department's part of the Provincial Programme of Action.

Accordingly, monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Provincial Education Summit forms an integral part of overall management within the department and will be accounted for periodically.

We thus call on all stakeholders, particularly School Governing Bodies and labour unions to play their respective roles in ensuring overall improvement in learner performance across the grades. Our stakeholders in education must rise to the occasion.

Our plans continue to be anchored on the **National Development Plan 2013: Our future- make it work** and the **Basic Education Sector Plan 2019: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2030**. In her foreword to the Basic Education Sector Plan 2019: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2030, the Honourable Minister of Basic Education, Mme Angie Motshekga, encourages us to work with “a renewed emphasis on curriculum coverage, improving assessment and strengthening quality, efficiency and accountability in our schools, districts and provinces, as well as in our administrative departments and sectorial partnerships”.

We commit to persistently invest all our individual and collective efforts to live up to this directive by the Honourable Minister.

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/ work opportunities post their schooling years.

Honourable Speaker, the 2017/18 total budget appropriation for the Northern Cape Department of Education is **R5.8 Billion**. Of this appropriation, R808 378 million is for the various Conditional Grants administered by the department. This includes the newly created Conditional Grant for Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities, details of which I will return to later in this speech.

We shall use this investment to ensure that all our programs are underpinned by overall focus on sustained improvement in **learner outcomes** from Grade **R to 12**; enhanced **accountability** at all levels of the system; greater focus on **basic functionality** of schools; protecting **time** for teaching and learning; improved **support** for teaching and learning; increased efforts on time on task; and **resource** provisioning.

Programme 1: Administration: R653 Million

This programme strives for overall effective and efficient governance within the department. We continually work towards improving our planning, internal controls systems, monitoring and reporting.

Audit Report

The Northern Cape Department of Education retained an unqualified regulatory audit report for the 2015/16 financial year. We reiterate our commitment to address internal control weaknesses and investigate and solve accounting and compliance-related matters as raised by the 2015/16 regulatory audit. Our Audit Improvement Plan has been reworked to specifically address these and other internally identified shortcomings in a comprehensive manner. Periodic progress reports in regard to same continue to be provided to oversight bodies, especially the Portfolio Committee on Education, Internal Audit and the Audit Committee.

No Fee School

In terms of our No Fee school policy, R223million has been allocated for the 2017/18 financial year. The budget has significantly increased from R212million in the 2016/17 financial year. A total of 189 601 learners are benefiting from our No Fee schools.

Fee Exemption

We have allocated an amount of R10million for an estimated 20 000 learners that will be exempted from paying school fees.

School Based Assessment (SBA)

Last year we have moderated all Grade 12 School Based Assessment (SBA) in all subjects. The aim thereof was to ensure continued improvement in the quality of the school based assessment which contributed to the success of the Grade 12 Class of 2016. To strengthen the monitoring of SBA, we have initiated the School Bag Audit programme. Officials conduct visits to schools to assess the curriculum coverage and School-Based Assessments.

This exercise targets specific grades in both primary and secondary schools.

The following are some of the focus areas of the School Bag Audit; book control, constructive comments, visibility of ticks, remediation, curriculum coverage, consolidation, revision, quality of notes, action verbs, cognitive levels and quality of learners' notes.

The School Bag Audit is one of numerous measures implemented by the department to ensure accountability within the system in order to achieve quality teaching and learning and build an efficient education system.

The School Bag Audit is an integral part of responding to the need for strengthening consistent monitoring in regard to the functionality of the basics at school level. We shall continue to intensify all our monitoring and support programs inclusive of the School Bag Audit.

We once more call on school principals, in particular, to ensure that their respective school management teams exercise what is primarily expected of them, i.e monitor curriculum coverage and SBA.

Literacy Strategy

To promote the culture of life-long reading, all schools must implement a formal reading programme which comprises of:

Drop All and Read Campaign

All schools must have a structured 30 minutes reading period per week. All teachers must ensure that the 30 minute reading period has definite outcomes. It is imperative that all teachers support the focus of the reading period since good readers will make good learners in all subjects.

Reading Clubs

We currently have 84 functional Reading Clubs in three districts:- Frances Baard , Pixley Ka Seme and John Taolo Gaetsewe. Reading Clubs in schools provide an enjoyable and easy way for learners to develop Literacy Skills. They offer learners a way to share books, experience, feelings, to explore and discuss difficult topics in a safe way.

Reading

The Northern Cape Department of Education has identified the first week of each term as Reading Weeks. In order for these reading weeks to be a success, schools must come up with innovative ways of celebrating reading. Learners and teachers are also encouraged to bring reading material, e.g. magazines, newspapers, comics, novels and poetry to school.

Spelling Bee Competition

The Northern Cape Department of Education has been participating in the Spelling Bee Competition since 2014. Spelling Bee is targeting learners in the Intermediate Phase, that is Grade 4 to 6. We wish to congratulate, nine year old, Mayuri Govender, who is with us today, and who receives home education in Kimberley on her outstanding achievement of winning the National Spelling Bee Competition. She will represent South Africa at the Africa Spelling Bee on the 26 to 30 September in Kenya. Indeed we are very proud of our little diamond, Mayuri Govender. Continue to do us proud and keep the Northern Cape flag flying high!

A total of 850 learners from 55 schools throughout the Province registered for the 2017 Spelling Bee Competition that will take place on the 8th of September in Kimberley.

Incremental Implementation of Indigenous Languages (IIAL)

Empirical research has proven that mother-tongue education during the first six years of schooling achieves far better educational outcomes than education in second languages. Section 6 (2) of the RSA Constitution observes that ‘because of the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people’ implores the state to ‘take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages’. It is in the light of this that the Basic Education Sector adopted the Incremental Implementation of African Languages. The department continues to provide resources i.e. additional teachers (in some instances, schools are urged to reallocate teachers with expertise where such exists), workbooks, train and provide ongoing support to these teachers so as to realise success of the IIAL.

Twenty eight primary schools throughout the province that did not offer an African language have introduced either Setswana or Isixhosa in grade 1 in 2016. These has since increased marginally to twenty eight (28) in 2017. Nineteen primary schools received an additional teacher to offer the language. The other schools are using teachers from their staff establishment to offer the language. All learners in Grade 1 at these schools are taught an African language. The schools will continue offering the language in Grade 2 in 2017.

Three (3) High schools that did not offer an African Language in the Frances Baard district has introduced Setswana at First Additional Level in Grade 8 in 2016. This has also increased marginally to four in 2017. Learners at these schools are given an opportunity to choose either Afrikaans or Setswana at First Additional Language. The schools will incrementally introduce Setswana in the other grades.

Honourable Speaker, despite government's investment in this area, the uptake of this initiative i.e. having more learners taking one of the two officially recognised indigenous languages, has not yet reached satisfactory levels. Whilst government will continue to honour its Constitutional obligation in this regard, the onus rests with parents/guardians and School Governing Bodies to seize the opportunity and ensure that learners experience the utter joy of being well conversant in one of the indigenous languages, other than Afrikaans.

We shall continue to intensify our advocacy measures through engaging parents/guardians, schools and SGBs to ensure increase in the number of learners offering one of the two provincially recognised indigenous African languages.

SA-SAMS & LURITS

Honourable Speaker, the Basic Education System has used both the Snap Survey and Annual School Survey to submit learner numbers to National Treasury for funding purposes.

As of this year (2017), the Sector will use the Learner Unit Tracking System (LURITS) as the only sector reporting system with regards to learner numbers. Accordingly, National Treasury will use learner numbers submitted via LURITS in determining education's Provincial Equitable Share (PES). It is in the light of this that we call on all school principals to ensure that they use SA-SAMS effectively to ensure the export of credible datasets for LURITS uploads. The centrality of ensuring 100% accuracy of learner numbers reporting from schools cannot be overemphasized.

We believe that the process currently undertaken by the Basic Education Sector and National Treasury will go a long way in ensuring adequate resourcing of education at a provincial level to give impetus to education being the apex priority of government.

Learner Admission

We have successfully concluded the learner admission process from 8 to 31 May 2017 for the 2018 school academic year. All applications that we receive after this period are deemed as late applications.

Last year, we received a large number of late applications from parents, which contributed to a number of learners only being placed at a school in January. This is not an ideal, as we want to commence with schooling on the first day of school in January 2018. Education is a right, and parents have the responsibility to ensure that every child of school going age, attend a school and have access to education. We trust that parents will fulfill this responsibility and provide their cooperation in this regard, so that the admission process will run smoothly.

Parents or guardians will be informed in writing by the school Principal from 7-11 August 2017 on the outcome of their application. Late applications for admissions shall be accommodated where school places exist, but not necessarily at the learner's school of choice. Learners whose parents have been transferred into the province shall apply directly to a school. No special treatment shall be given to these learners.

Additionally, **private/independent schools** in the province, particularly in the Frances Baard District is impacting negatively on the smooth running of the learner admission process for the subsequent school year. There are many instances where some of these private/independent schools do not cover all primary school grades i.e. Grade 1 to 7. This causes serious problems during learner registration, particularly in the major towns in the province as learners who were at these schools are then expected to be accommodated in public ordinary schools.

More stringent measures are being put in place for the approval of establishment of independent/private schools. This includes, amongst others, reviewing approval granted to existing private schools that do not cover the full primary grades.

Programme 2: Public Ordinary Schools Education

R4.1 Billion

This programme constitutes the core function of the department i.e. teaching and learning.

Accordingly, it represents 73% of the total Departmental budget for the 2017/18 financial year. The main focus of this programme continues to be on teacher and learner support for the realisation of overall improved quality of public basic education across the grades.

Teacher Development

One of government's initiatives in response to ensuring an increase in supply of newly qualified teachers is through the **Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme**.

Annually, prospective teachers are awarded bursaries to pursue their teaching qualifications funded by the state through the Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme. This is also an approach by government to ensure that learners make teaching their first career choice. Since 2012, a total of 765 Funza Lushaka Bursary recipients and graduates have been placed in various schools throughout the province. A total of 116 of these teachers were placed in schools in the 2016 school academic year.

Through this initiative and others we shall continue to ensure that we increase the overall number of newly appointed qualified teachers, especially in key subjects that have an acute undersupply of teachers.

A total of 20 Teach SA Ambassadors were placed in schools in February 2017. The majority of these potential teachers specialise in Mathematics and Physical Science. We once more call on recipient school principals to use this valuable resource for the intended purpose.

Honourable Speaker, during the 2016/17 Vote 4 presentation, we indicated our partnership with Sishen Iron Ore Community Trust (SIOC) and Rhodes University in accredited in-service training for teachers. A total of 84 of the initial 108 teachers are expected to graduate with a B.Ed Degree by the end of 2017. These teachers specialise in Foundation Phase, English First Additional Language (EFAL) and Mathematics. It is through investments such as this partnership, that we are able to enhance the competency levels of our teachers for overall improved quality public education.

Partnership with Sol Plaatje University

This year marks a historic milestone for the Sol Plaatje University. Its first B. Ed Degree graduates are expected at the end of the 2017 academic year.

We have already started engaging the University on the 34 prospective B. Ed Degree graduates with the aim of offering them permanent posts, preferably, nearest to their residential areas.

The University has also resolved to respond to the following three (3) human development challenges: the need for increasing the cohort of well-educated teachers who are able to enter the profession and contribute to improving the level and quality of school education in the Province; the repeated concern that the region has much opportunity for economic development but little human capacity in entrepreneurship to take advantage of such opportunities and the need to develop the intellectual capacity in ICT disciplines to contribute to the development and operation of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope project.

Honourable Speaker, whilst we are all eager to have Sol Plaatje University to respond to the above mentioned areas and many others, we must be mindful that the university needs to gradually build its capacity in all respects. We should therefore not be impatient and have unwarranted expectations within such a short timeframe. We must all be cognisant of the fact that the university opened its doors for learning a mere four (4) years ago.

We applaud the progress registered by the Sol Plaatje University thus far, and shall continue to collaborate with it in strengthening existing and establishing new partnerships. This we shall do for the continual improvement for the provision of quality public education within the province.

Twinning Agreement with the Namibian ||Kharas Region

The Northern Cape Department of Education attaches great importance to the ties that have been built between our province and the ||Kharas Region and we look forward to enhancing our relations further.

We will explore the possibility together with the Sol Plaatje University as part of their Indigenous Language Development programme, for the introduction of Nama in two schools in the Northern Cape, for the 2018 school academic year.

The twinning agreement between the Northern Cape Provincial Government and the Namibian Government will be key in this regard to ensure that our rich history and culture of Nama remains preserved in the Northern Cape.

School Governing Bodies (SGB)

Honourable Speaker, the 8th General Elections of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) will be conducted in the 2018 school year. This takes place from 1 to 31 March 2018. In terms of magnitude, the General Elections of School Governing Bodies are surpassed only by national general elections in the country. This shows the enormous work that goes into preparing and conducting the SGB elections.

Preparatory work has started in 2016 and the remaining part of the 2017 school year will be used to conclude all outstanding matters.

After intense consultation sessions with key stakeholders, we amended the Provincial SGB Election Regulations and issued a Gazette (Gazette No.35 of 2017) for the forthcoming SGB General Elections. We call on our broader communities, to seize the opportunity to avail themselves to serve on School Governing Bodies. We in particular, call on schools to identify progressive minded community members and use the co-option provision of the regulations to enhance the functionality of their respective SGBs.

We are investing R1.1million in the 2018 SGB General Elections. This investment will amongst others, cover; advocacy, training of all who would be involved i.e. officials, teachers and parents/guardians, launch (provincial & districts) and conducting the elections themselves.

We express our appreciation to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) for the role they continue to play in assisting the department's preparations and implementation of the General Election of School Governing Bodies.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to all school governing bodies' members whose term of office comes to an end after the 2018 SGB General Elections. We assure the new incoming school governors of our unwavering support from the department. Intense induction and ongoing training will be provided to ensure that they effectively execute their roles in working towards realization of quality public education.

Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign (QLTC)

The primary mandate of QLTC is to make education a societal matter thereby striving to make all our schools centres of excellence. It is disheartening to observe that in the main, QLTC structures are not functional and thus the impact is still not being felt as expected.

If we are indeed to make education a societal issue, all stakeholders must play their respective part as well in realizing the founding principles and pledges of QLTC.

In addition to being actively involved in ensuring overall improvement in the quest for provision of quality public education, QLTC structures are well positioned to also hold their respective schools, districts and circuits offices accountable in the realisation of this. It is in the light of this, that we shall continue to call on broader communities to play their meaningful role in ensuring all our schools are centres of excellence. The QLTC will be coordinated from the Office of the MEC, as per resolutions of the NC Education Summit 2016.

We observe with appreciation, the emergence of alumni associations in our schools albeit still at slow pace, especially at our Quintiles 1-3 schools. The emergence of alumni associations can only bode well for overall upliftment of our schools. We believe that the alumni should not serve as a parallel to SGBs, but could and would serve a better purpose by strengthening SGBs.

An integrated approach in this regard will be able to draw the community and other stakeholders in and get them involved in the quest for contributing to the welfare of the learners whilst demanding accountability from those entrusted to teach our children.

Honourable Speaker, raising the bar, which means **quality** and making sure that no child is left behind which means **efficiency** in our lifetime depend largely on the foundational skills and knowledge we build in the lower grades to ensure that **transformation** processes at the level of both the school and the classroom are achieved. We continue to strengthen our plans to address areas of underperformance in the system and ensure continued improvement of the education system.

ICT in Schools

We will continue to invest in ICT in order to improve overall teaching and learning. The ultimate goal of which is to integrate technology to enhance learning and teaching and therefore have improved quality public education.

During the 2016/17 financial year, in partnership with MTN SA Foundation we have opened six (6) ICT Labs at Okiep Primary School, Steinkopf High School and Bongani High School, Bongani Primary School, Vaal-Oranje Primary School and Gariep High School to the value of R3.7million. It is partnerships such as these that will contribute to the overall success of education in our beautiful Province.

The Northern Cape Department of Education in its commitment to ensure an improvement in learner performance, have procured Edukite hardware and software for Geography, Accounting and Business Studies (Grades 10-12). Edukite software and hardware includes laptops and data projectors that have been provided to 130 Geography teachers, 100 Accounting teachers and 100 Business Studies teachers to enable them to integrate ICT into teaching and learning.

In addition, 136 Social Sciences and 84 Economic Management Sciences (EMS) teachers were also provided with the ICT equipment aimed at building solid foundational knowledge for Geography, History, Accounting, Economics and Business Studies in the FET Phase.

These interactive resources will assist the teacher in content coverage and will enhance the interest and understanding of the learner in the subject.

The total investment for this equipment is R66million over a three year period, effective from this year. We believe that this and other related investments enhance our efforts for overall improved quality public education.

The Department has taken a decision to support all under performing schools with quality teaching by making use of its best teachers in the Province through the introduction of the Internet Broadcasting Project (IBP) that has contributed massively to the success of the Free State Department of Education.

It is in this regard that advanced engagements are underway with University of the Free State that is the backbone of the IBP Project in the Free State. By the end of the 2017/18 financial year, a world class IBP studio will be set up or established in Kimberley and all earmarked under performing schools will be provided with necessary IT equipment that will allow them to connect to the studio.

We live in a modern, ever-changing environment of which technology is an integral part of. We are confident that these initiatives will further enhance classroom teaching and the quality of public education in our schools.

School Management

Pursuant to enhancing competency and accountability, we now have compulsory induction training for all newly appointed School Management Teams (SMTs) before assumption of duty. We continue to provide training and ongoing support to all school management teams (SMTs) to ensure optimal functionality of our schools, with explicit emphasis on overall curriculum management, inclusive of School Based Assessment.

As we continue to invest in competency building, so shall we increasingly demand accountability across all levels of the Department.

As part of enhancing capacity in our schools, we have released a Gazette for CS-Educators promotional posts on the 5th of June 2017. These posts include principals, deputy principals and heads of departments at Public Ordinary and Special Schools. The total number of promotional posts in this Gazette is 321.

In keeping to one of the 2016 Provincial Education Summit's resolutions, School Management Teams will receive induction before assumption of duty. The newly appointed school management team members will be inducted and orientated during 02 – 06 October 2017. They shall assume duty at the start of the 2018 school year.

For 2017, we have held successful Autumn Schools during the April school holidays for the Grade 12 learners. The primary focus was on Progressed Learners, Borderline Learners, Top Achievers and the Talent Development Programme.

The objective of these additional tuition camps was to consolidate content of the first school term, facilitate the teaching of certain skills which are problematic through the deployment of remediation exercises.

A total of 2 272 learners were reached through the Autumn Schools programme. The targeted Subjects were Afrikaans HL, English FAL, Mathematics, Physical Science, Life Sciences, Geography and Accounting. Additionally, lock-in sessions were also held for Mathematical Literacy for up to 2000 learners whose performance both in Grade 11 and the first quarter of 2017 were not satisfactory.

The Talent Development Autumn Camp was a first for the Northern Cape, with the Top Achieving Grade 11 and 12 learners in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology and the University of Stellenbosch.

Winter and Spring schools will follow the same approach as we prepare our Grade 12's for their final and most important Examination.

Honourable Speaker, we are of firm belief that the above and all other focused activities will ensure that all Grade 12 learners are afforded continued support and guidance in preparation for the 2017 National Senior Certificate examinations.

Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) Strategy

The participation of learners in Maths, Science and Technology remain a great concern. It is in light of this that we have repositioned our Mathematics, Science and Technology Strategy (MST Strategy). As of 2017/18 financial year, the MST Strategy will have a special focus programme on Grades 4 and 7. The aim of this is to increase the participation rate for Mathematics in Grades 10 to 12 by providing strong foundational skills for Mathematics in Grades 4 to 7 with special focus in Grades 8 to 9.

The Provincial Mathematics Plan (which is an integral part of the SMT Strategy) has been refined to ensure the realisation of this.

The Provincial Mathematics Plan is anchored on six pillars, namely: advocacy and communication; curriculum coverage and school based assessment; teacher development; learner support; resourcing and parental involvement. The 2017/18 Annual Performance Plan and MST Strategy clearly outlines key deliverables to be realised in this regard.

We are of firm conviction that the measures outlined above and other initiatives, place the province on the right path towards increasing both participation and overall learner performance in Mathematics, Science and Technology across all grades.

Programme 3: Independent Schools Subsidies R9.16 million

The 2017/18 budget for the Independent Schools is R9.1million and is expected to grow to R10.2million by 2019/20 financial year. This will be transferred to six Independent Schools that we subsidize. We continue to monitor these schools to ensure compliance to policies.

Programme 4: Public Special Schools Education

R140 million

Honourable Speaker, government's investment in this programme increases from R116million in 2016/17 to R140million in the 2017/18 financial year. This substantial increase in overall budget is attributed to the newly established Conditional Grant for Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities.

During the 2016/17 financial year, we had a total of 2 145 learners placed in our 12 Full Service Schools across the province. Training was provided to 1 968 teachers in inclusive support programmes. A total of R10 million is being spent on renovations and rehabilitation at Elizabeth Conradie Special School to facilitate access to both the school and hostel.

We continue to work in collaboration with the departments of Health and Social Development in for screening, identification, assessment and support programme (SIAS) which focuses on screening learners in the foundation phase to see if they have hearing, visual, intellectual and any other learning impairment.

This is an integral part of the broader psychosocial support in schools i.e. To identify learners with learning barriers timeously. The importance of early identification of learning barriers in learners cannot be overemphasised. Failure to do so adversely affects prospects of learning in higher grades.

Through this programme, we ensure that health professionals, social workers, teachers, caregivers and parents collaborate their efforts to address health, social and educational needs of learners with learning barriers.

In the main, the budget for this programme will be used to continue provision of training and support to 2000 teachers in inclusive education programmes, this include teachers in mainstream public ordinary schools.

A total of fifty (50) professional posts amongst these are Remedial Teachers, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Speech Therapists and many others, are allocated to provide the requisite support to both teachers and learners.

Government recognises that amongst the learners with barriers to learning, there are those who need multidisciplinary support because of their high intensity needs. The intense specialised support needs of these learners cannot be adequately funded from the equitable share alone. It is in the light of this that government has introduced the Conditional Grant for Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities.

This is aimed at responding more effectively to the needs of children with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability (SPID) so as to ensure their meaningful participation in education. The total budget for Conditional Grant for Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities amounts to R2million in 2017/18 and is estimated to grow to R7.3million by the 2019/20 financial year. This appropriation shall be invested so as to afford the learners with severe to profound intellectual disabilities a fair chance to develop health, social and educational needs.

For the 2017/18 financial year, the following are the concrete deliverables for the Conditional Grant for Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities will be the provisioning of 31 laptops and printers, toolkit and training for teachers.

Programme 5: Early Childhood Development (ECD)

R99.26 million

This programme aims at the provisioning of quality ECD services in both Public and community based sites in the Province, to ensure that those who enter Grade 1 are well prepared for schooling.

Honourable Speaker, the National Development Plan (NDP) acknowledges the centrality of **Early Childhood Development (ECD)** in accelerating development both in terms of the holistic development of the child as well as the development of a country with regard to its economic strength in later years.

We continue to register significant strides with regard to access to Grade R. A total of 381 public ordinary schools are offering Grade R to 19 221 learners.

We are supporting 55 ECD Community based centres offering Grade R to 2 349 learners. A total of 150 Grade R practitioners are in their final year to complete an ECD NQF Level 6 Diploma at the University of the North West.

For Pre Grade R, a total of 200 caregivers will be trained and provided with ongoing support on the National Curriculum Framework. Additionally, stimulation packs will also be provided to these centres to ensure that learners have access to quality programmes. Parental sessions and learner fun days for 500 learners across the Province will be held to maximise active involvement of parents/guardians and to promote ECD Programmes in the Province.

For Grade R in both Public Primary Schools and Community based ECD Centres, we shall consolidate our efforts in monitoring and supporting on the assessment and Phonemic Awareness Programme, conduct emergent handwriting skills and reading skills, empowering practitioners on teaching patterns, functions and algebra; parental sessions on the Grade R

curriculum and training of practitioners on basic concepts in Mathematics.

A total of 620 Grade R practitioners in Public Ordinary Schools and 88 practitioners in subsidised Community Centres will be supported in curriculum delivery. Additionally, we shall monitor the extent of utilisation of workbooks, and other resources and classroom practices. We are of a firm belief that consolidation in these areas, more so in Grade R, will enhance the laying of a formidable foundation resulting in effective learning in subsequent grades.

The plans we have in place will ensure, that we not only expand our reach of universal access to Grade R, but more importantly, improve the quality in Grade R.

Programme 6: Infrastructure Development R623.57 million

Honourable Speaker, the delivery of school infrastructure remains a crucial performance indicator towards the provisioning of quality public education.

The exponential increase in the School Infrastructure Conditional Grant enables us to work towards the eradication of backlogs in educational infrastructure across the province.

The magnitude of the school infrastructure backlog still remains enormous, however, we are making steady progress in addressing these. The construction of two replacement schools, Phillipvale and Kitlanyang Primary Schools have been completed during the 2016/17 financial year.

We have also successfully completed the construction of two hostels at Lesedi High School (Batlharos) and Batlharo Tlhaping Secondary School (Mothibistad), and they are ready for handing over.

Additionally, the following are some of the concrete school infrastructure deliverables achieved:

- 67 classrooms;
- 4 administration blocks;
- 2 ablution blocks;
- 9 specialist rooms;
- 6 nutrition kitchens;

- 7 ECD Classrooms;
- 38 rehabilitation and renovation (maintenance) projects;
- 23 sanitation projects;
- 57 water projects;
- 6 electrical projects and;
- 45 fencing projects that were completed.

A total of 48 mobile classrooms were delivered to relieve pressures of overcrowding as experienced largely in Frances Baard and John Taolo Gaetsewe Districts.

This is however a short term solution towards our plans to build in brick and mortar.

Honourable Speaker, the Department within the 2016/17 financial year has been inundated with sanitation emergency projects within the Pixley Ka Seme District. These projects mainly occur due to outdated infrastructure and the calcination of old pipes. The Department has up to date allocated R11.8million within 2017/18 in order to address the identified sanitation challenges.

However, due to the peculiarity of the soil in that area as well as the outdated infrastructure, we are anticipating more emergencies in that district in the upcoming year.

The 2017/18 School Infrastructure budget will in the main, see to the continuation and completion of some projects started in previous financial years. The following are some of the key infrastructure deliverables to be completed during the 2017/18 financial year:

- 56 classrooms;
- 36 ECD Classrooms;
- Construction of new ablution blocks and upgrades to sanitation at 30 schools;
- Water Supply upgrades at 75 schools to ensure facilities meet the minimum suitability standards and;
- 3 specialist rooms

We, too have key multiyear capital projects, some already underway others still to commence within the 2017/18 MTEF period.

The six (6) new schools are:

1. Barkly West (Frances Baard)
2. Redirile (State of the Art school - Frances Baard)
4. Steynsville (Pixley Ka Seme)
5. Wrenchville Primary JTG
6. Dithakong (John Taolo Gaetsewe)

The four (4) replacement schools are:

1. Greenpoint Primary (Frances Baard)
2. Karos (ZF Mgcawu)
3. Khiba Middle School (John Taolo Gaetsewe)
4. Kitlanyang (school and hostel; John Taolo Gaetsewe)
5. Loxton Primary School (Pixley Ka Seme)

Within the 2016/17 financial year, the Department placed much emphasis on the repairs and renovations of hostels within the province and spent R51.2million on this programme. The provisioning of proper hostel facilities remains a priority, thus a further budget of R39.5million is allocated towards hostel refurbishment in the 2017/18 financial year.

School furniture

Honourable Speaker, every child matters and every child must succeed. A conducive environment for learning and teaching is therefore imperative. During 2016/17, we delivered a total of 6798 chairs and 760 desks throughout the province. We aim to provide a total of 4470 chairs and 484 desks to schools in need within the 2017/18 financial year.

However, we also urge schools to replace and fix their furniture using Section 21 allocated funds. Prompt fixing of learner furniture will ensure that future generations are adequately provided for and enable the department to invest more money towards other areas aimed at realising the continual improvement of quality public education.

Programme 7: Examinations and Education related Service R142 million

As is the norm, investment in this programme mainly goes to the administration of both internal and external examinations.

Over the years, investment in this programme has amongst others, ensured that we run an incidence free and thus a credible National Senior Certificate examination.

Since the inception of the National Senior Certificate in 2008, government has in essence been running two Grade 12 final examinations annually, namely; the Senior Certificate and National Senior Certificate. The Senior Certificate as a qualification will be offered until 2020 and thereafter, the NSC would be the only qualification offered to both full-time and part-time candidates. It is in the light of this that we urge all those who still wish to complete their Senior Certificate qualification to do so within the timeframe provided. Post that period, the National Senior Certificate will be the only examination available to all who want to complete Grade 12.

This programme also does a quarterly analysis of learner performance from Grade 1 to 12. This analysis is used to further inform existing interventions and support to both teachers and learners so as to improve overall performance across the grades.

The 2017 Grade 12 preparatory examinations will be written from 1 to 31 September 2017. The National Senior Certificate (NSC) final examination will be written from 23 October to 28 November 2017. On the 04th January 2018, the Minister of Basic Education will announce the 2017 NSC examination results. The Provincial Education Departments will release their matric results on the 05th of January 2018.

With all the support that we have given and continue to give, we are confident that the Grade 12 Class of 2017 will also do us proud.

Support Programmes

National School Nutrition Program

A healthy body cultivates a healthy mind. Through this programme, we are able to provide a decent meal to 205 525 learners in Quintile 1 to 3 schools through the Conditional Grant. An additional 56 354 learners in Quintile 4 to 5 schools also receive a daily meal through the equitable share. A total of R180million is allocated for 2017/18, constituted of R161million from the NSNP

Conditional Grant and R19million from the Equitable Share allocation.

Learner Transport

A total number of 29 115 learners are benefiting from school transport on 400 routes across the Province. We are busy engaging the Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison to discuss the migration of this function back to the Department of Education. We are working on a management plan for the relocation of this function which is envisaged to take effect on 1st April 2018.

School safety

The Department of Education and the Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison is in the process to finalising the School Safety Protocol that will seek to formalize engagements to all schools to address safety related matters. There is nothing more important to us, than the safety of every learner.

We do realise that there is an increase of violence, especially against our children, and therefore we will scale up all efforts to ensure that our schools remain crime free.

South African School Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE)

Since its inception, SASCE targets learners who are passionate about music and whose talent has never been denied a public platform on which to shine. It is with the help of programmes such as SASCE that the Department of Education is able to contribute to the mitigation of learner engagement in inappropriate activities such as drugs, alcohol and adverse activities that manifest itself.

Young choristers from the Northern Cape took to the stage and participated in the South African School Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE) competition, from 5 May - 10 June 2017.

SASCE is now in its 17th year, and remains one of the most crucial school enrichment programmes that promotes unity in diversity, national reconciliation, a new South African National Identity, social transformation and social cohesion among learners.

A total of 10315 learners from 142 schools to participated in this year's SASCE competition in the Northern Cape.

Our provincial winners will represent the Northern Cape from 4-7 July at the nationals in Randburg. We wish them well and trust that they will do the Northern Cape proud.

Honourable Speaker,

In conclusion, in no uncertain terms, we remain confident about the provision of quality learning and teaching as we continue to improve education in our beautiful Province.

This ANC led Government is working tirelessly to construct a better future for our youth to ensure their dreams become a reality by delivering a skilled and educated workforce that will enable them to contribute to the development and growth of our economy.

Honourable Speaker,

I would like thank all the unions that operate in this sector and all our dedicated teachers for their outstanding role in assisting the Northern Cape Department of Education into taking our combined efforts to greater heights.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the HOD, Mr GT Pharasi, the senior management and staff of the Department of Education for their leadership, continuous support, dedication and hard work to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of our people, through Education.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the collective leadership of the ruling party, the ANC, for the necessary guidance and for providing the much needed direction. Thank you for your confidence and trust bestowed in me, to fulfil my responsibilities in this important portfolio.

The Premier of this Province, Ms Sylvia Lucas for her leadership, and all my colleagues in the Executive Council for their support and invaluable inputs made since I took office.

The Legislature and its committees have continued to assert their oversight role and I thank them for constructive engagements.

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

Lastly, a gift of knowledge cannot be stolen and can bring you to the top of your dreams. The greatest treasure that one can achieve is in Education.

Education is like a seed on fertile soil, if the seed receives enough sunlight, water and air, it will grow to a mature tree, which will provide fresh fruit and shelter; a tree that will bear a lot of fruit, which you can share with everyone.

Collectively, this is our tree and all of us must show our commitment to take care of this tree.

As a nation and a province, we have so much more to do. Our nation needs your help, our province needs your help, our communities need your help and our children need your help.

I ask you to hear my remarks as a call to action.

I ask you to rise to the occasion for higher expectations, to elevate the teaching profession.

I ask you to rise to the occasion in support of all learners in our beautiful province as we prepare them for success.

I ask you to rise to the occasion to continue improving the quality of the education system.

I ask you to rise to the occasion to strengthen your participation, involvement and commitment towards the work of the Northern Cape Department of Education.

I am excited to do this work together with each and everyone of you in our Province.

We need you!!!

I thank you!