

2025/26 VOTE 4

BUDGET SPEECH

MEC for Education **Abraham Vosloo**



MONDAY
28
JULY 2025
TIME: 10H00

KIMBERLEY
**NORTHERN CAPE
LEGISLATURE**
NORTHERN CAPE

**"A transformative and inclusive
education system that accelerates
the Northern Cape's journey
towards becoming a modern, growing,
and successful Province."**



A Modern, Growing and Successful Province - South Africa's New Growth Front



**Northern Cape
Department of Education**





**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MEC FOR EDUCATION, MR
ABRAHAM VOSLOO ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2025/26 BUDGET
VOTE 4 TO THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE,
KIMBERLEY
28 JULY 2025**

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;
Traditional Leaders Present;
The Head of the Department and senior officials of Government;
Veterans of our beloved Movement;
Distinguished Guests;
Comrades and Friends
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Madam Speaker, It is with deep humility and a profound sense of purpose that I rise to present the Education Budget Vote during this significant time, **Nelson Mandela Month**. As we commemorate the life and legacy of Tata Madiba, we are reminded that ***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*** These words continue to echo through our policies, our classrooms and our national aspirations.

This year marks **31 years of democracy**, three decades of transformation, of breaking down the barriers of apartheid and of building an education system rooted in equality, access and opportunity for all.

In 1994, we inherited a fractured system built on exclusion and injustice. Since then, we have made undeniable progress:

- We have **expanded access** to basic and higher education, especially in previously marginalised communities.
- We have invested in **infrastructure**, bringing water, sanitation and electricity to thousands of schools.
- We have introduced **curriculum reforms** to prepare our youth for the demands of a dynamic and digital world.
- And we continue to work tirelessly to **close the gap in outcomes** between urban and rural learners.

Honourable Members, while we celebrate our gains, we do so with clear conscious, fully aware of the challenges that remain. Our mission now is not only to expand access, but to **ensure quality, innovation and relevance** in every learning experience.

The Department of Education stands firmly aligned with the vision of a **modern, growing and successful Province**. This budget reflects a strategic shift: from compliance to impact, from legacy systems to digital transformation, from teaching for exams to educating for the future.

We are investing in the skills and talents that will drive economic growth, social cohesion and innovation in our province, because when we educate a child, we do not just build a career, we build a nation.

Madam Speaker, in delivering this Budget Vote, the total budget appropriation for the Northern Cape Department of Education for 2025/26 financial year is **R8.88 billion**. Of this appropriation, **R1,11 billion** is for the various Conditional Grants administered by the Department. The Budget of the Department is allocated within the following programmes:

Programme 1: Administration

The total allocation for this programme has decreased from R819 million to R789 million.

Programme 2: Public Ordinary School Education

The current allocation for this financial year, is R6.4 billion, which accounts for an increase of 5.60%.

Programme 3: Independent School Subsidies

The Province is funding five qualifying independent schools and the budget allocation has increased to R12.1 million.

Programme 4: Public Special School Education

The Department has allocated R 211 million for this programme to support learners with special needs. This represents a budget increase of 6.3% from the prior year.

Programme 5: Early Childhood Development

The budget allocation of the ECD programme has increased by 15.2% to R247 million in the current financial year.

Programme 6: Infrastructure Development

The budget allocation of this programme has increased by 4.3% to R747 million.

Programme 7: Examinations and Education Related Services

The allocation for this programme has increased from R160 million to R456 million mainly due to the inclusion of the additional allocations for matric support programme and the Basic Education Employment Initiative.

MATRIC SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Madam Speaker, our **matric support programmes** include **Lock-In Sessions, Saturday Classes** and **Lead Teacher** support. Holiday camps and **Psycho-Social Support** programmes will maintain academic momentum. **ICT training, live broadcasts** and **digital/printed materials** will enhance learning resources, while **quality assurance** involves **Curriculum Roadshows** and **School Support Visits**.

For **Grades 10 and 11**, the programme offer **structured revision, virtual content** and **teacher training** on modern methods. **ICT integration** will ensure effective use of educational technology for both learners and teachers.

FOCUS SCHOOLS

The **Focus Schools** in the province will expand to include **ICT Technology** schools, bringing the total to **33**. This network will cover five key areas: **Agricultural Schools, Technical Schools, Maths and Science Schools, a Marine Science School** and the new **ICT Technology Focus Schools**. This expansion aims to offer learners specialized pathways in sectors like agriculture, technology, sciences and marine studies.

The **Three Stream Model** will also be enhanced by adding **Agricultural Studies** at Grade 8 and **Electrical and Mechanical Technology** at Grades 8 and 9. The model will prioritize **Consumer Studies** subjects, providing a broader curriculum that better prepares learners for specialized pathways and technical disciplines.

CODING AND ROBOTICS

Honourable Members, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) initially planned to introduce Coding and Robotics as a standalone subject in the Foundation Phase (FP) in 2025, but the timeline has been revised. The system will be prepared in 2025 for **implementation in Grades R-3 by 2026**.

In March 2025, 42 officials from Grades R-3 was be trained as part of phase 1 of the project. Between September and December 2025, **3,500 teachers will be trained** on the approved curriculum.

Unplugged resources, aimed at strengthening learners' cognitive and motor skills, will be distributed in late 2025 or early 2026, **with R 4.5 million allocated for training, resources and mop-up sessions.**

Orientation and training for Grade 4 teachers will take place in 2026 in preparation for implementation in 2027. A National Task Team (NTT) will be established by July 2025 to address key implementation issues and funding models.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Madam Speaker, the Northern Cape is developing a **Provincial Inclusive Education Strategy** to ensure that no learner is left behind. In line with **Circular S28 of 2023**, the province is working to integrate learners with intellectual disabilities and those in special care centres into mainstream schools.

Key actions include appointing therapists in three priority districts, **partnering with Sol Plaatje University** for technical support, forming a Provincial Task Team to place out-of-school learners with special needs and training caregivers in Early Childhood Development. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to building an equitable and inclusive education system.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Technology is **transforming teacher development** in the Northern Cape by making professional learning more accessible, flexible and relevant. A total of **8,459 teachers** are registered on the DBE Online Teacher Development Platform, with access to 849 microlearning modules and guided Online Walkthroughs. This allows teachers to learn anytime and anywhere, overcoming barriers such as distance, limited resources and time.

The rollout of a Microsoft Licensing Agreement provides all teachers with free access to Office 365 Education, supporting digital learning and integration. Additionally, 554 school principals will be trained in September 2025 to lead digital transformation in their schools, ensuring sustainable and impactful use of technology in education.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

Partnerships with Universities and educational institutions are essential for improving learner outcomes, driving innovation and addressing resource challenges. The Northern Cape Department of Education has strengthened its collaboration with Sol Plaatje University, North-West University and the National Education Collaboration Trust.

These partnerships support targeted projects, such as the ***Teaching for All*** initiative with **Sol Plaatje University and the British Council**. In this project, 48 lead teachers will be trained across 24 full-service schools to later train 500 teachers province-wide, building capacity in inclusive education pedagogy.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NECT

The **Memorandum of Understanding** with the **National Education Collaboration Trust** will be strengthened to improve education at both district and school levels. The focus will be on **Mathematics instruction, Reading and Language development, Educational Management** and **Learner and teacher welfare**.

This collaboration aims to drive systemic improvements in education quality by enhancing these key areas that directly impact teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes.

BASIC EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

Honourable Members, on Monday, 2 June 2025, the Northern Cape Department of Education officially introduced the **Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI)**, creating employment opportunities for **4 838 young people** as **Educator Assistants** and **General School Assistants**. These roles provide vital support to schools, both inside and outside the classroom.

The BEEI is designed to empower unemployed youth by providing them with valuable skills and real-world experience. Training is provided in the following areas:

- Classroom support and curriculum management;
- Reading and literacy coaching;
- ICT skills for managing school administration systems such as **SASAMS** and **HRMS**;
- Basic school maintenance and operations

The Department would like to thank all School Governing Bodies and School Management Teams for their unwavering support in ensuring the successful administration process in the appointment of youth applicants onto the BEEI project. This initiative is a significant step toward **improving education outcomes while empowering the youth** of the Northern Cape to build brighter futures.

E-RECRUITMENT SYSTEM

Madam Speaker, Department of Education is embracing the digital era, where innovation and technology open up new avenues for progress.

One of the key advancements in this journey is the **introduction of digitised administrative systems and the integration of ICT in schools**, an initiative that brings with it endless possibilities.

Among these innovations is **our E-Recruitment System, GovRecruit**, a strategic move to modernise and streamline how we manage human resources in education. With GovRecruit, we are able to fast-track the employment process, from advertising and application to selection and appointment.

This system **enhances transparency and accountability** through automated tracking, audit trails and standardised processes. It also ensures broader reach, **attracting a wider pool of qualified candidates** and thereby improving the overall quality of appointments within the Department.

We are proud to announce, that our E-Recruitment System will be launched on Wednesday, 6 August 2025, when it goes live for the public.

READ TO LEAD CAMPAIGN

Honourable Members, the **Northern Cape Department of Education (NCDOE)** recently participated in a **DBE and NECT-led workshop** focused on developing **Reading Improvement Plans (RIPs)**. The workshop was part of the national rollout of the **Reading Manual, Handwriting Guideline** and the **Phonics Programme**, all designed to support teaching across **all 11 official languages**. These resources aim to **standardise** reading instruction from **Grade R to Grade 3** learners nationwide. Building on previous efforts, the Northern Cape has created a detailed plan of **training and support initiatives** to be rolled out in the coming months to improve early literacy across the province.

MOTHER TONGUE-BASED BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Madam Speaker, in **2025**, the **Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTbBE)** programme was launched in identified schools. **Grade 4 teachers in 173 schools** across four districts received training in **Mathematics** and **Natural Sciences**.

From **2026**, the focus will remain on **Grade 4** to build on the foundation, with an incremental rollout to integrate MTbBE in the **Intermediate Phase** by **2027**.

The **Department** is committed to enhancing reading instruction and ensuring all learners read with meaning by age 10, working closely with schools, communities and partners to improve learner performance.

SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL CHORAL EISTEDDFOD (SASCE)

Honourable Members, I was fortunate to attend the **2025 SASCE National Championships**, where **Northern Cape** learners showcased outstanding talent. The **Umthombo Wolwazi Combined** school from Pixley Ka Seme District placed **3rd** in the **Farm and Small Schools** category, **Baitiredi Technical High School** from John Toalo Gaetsewe District earned **2nd** in **Folklore** and **Reitlamile** High School from **Frances Baard** District won **1st** in the **Female Choir** category.

These achievements highlight the province's potential in the Arts, and the Department will prioritize **Arts development** this year. We are also exploring the inclusion of **Music** as a subject to provide formal training and more opportunities for learners.

NATIONAL TEACHING AWARDS

Madam Speaker, the Department is proud to announce that we have received a total of **510 nominations** for this year's **National Teaching Awards**. This number excludes an additional **57 nominations** received under the **new Provincial categories** introduced this year.

Our District and Provincial Adjudicators have commenced to interview all nominees and is in process. Starting on **Thursday, 31 July 2025**, we will begin hosting our **District Award Ceremonies**. The **Provincial Awards Ceremony** will take place on **28 August 2025** in **Kimberley**.

We look forward to celebrating the outstanding dedication and excellence of our educators across the Province.

LEARNER TRANSPORT

Honourable Members, the **2025/2026** budget for the **Learner Transport Programme** is **R221,6 million**.

All **Learner Transport** service providers were contracted for **12 months** in the **2024/2025** financial year. These contracts expired at the end of **March 2025**, but a further **extension until June 2025** has been granted as discussions between the **Department** and **Treasury** are still ongoing.

Due to the complexity of the process and the time required to comply with the law for contracting service providers, a recommendation has been made to extend the current contracts until the **end of the 2025/2026 financial year**.

Currently, **28,836 learners** are being transported daily from **305 schools**.

NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME (NSNP)

Madam Speaker, the NSNP aims to provide nutritious meals to all **Quintiles 1-3 schools** as well as **selected Quintiles 4 and 5 schools** accommodating learners from disadvantaged communities.

A total of **270 505 learners in primary and secondary schools** learners from Quintiles 1-3 and targeted Quintiles 4-5 schools are receiving a nutritious meal daily. These learners are in 498 schools across the Province.

The NSNP is funded through a conditional grant of **R274,1 million** and an additional **R19 million** from the equitable share is allocated for identified Quintile 4 and 5 schools for the 2025/26 financial year.

SCHOOL SPORT

Honourable Members, the **MoU** between the **Department of Education** and the **Department of Sport, Arts and Culture** promotes regular school sports participation to support **social cohesion** and the “**healthy body, healthy mind**” concept.

The Department aims to increase participation, especially in **township schools**, through **advocacy** and **district visits**. A new **registration tool** from DBE will help track school sports participation.

The **Girls Sport** and **Farm Schools Festivals** are a priority for the **2025/26** financial year. **Track and Field** and **Cross-Country Athletics** will be fully funded by the Department, as they are outside the MoU.

2026 ONLINE LEARNER ADMISSIONS

Madam Speaker, our Online Admission System continues to set the standard nationwide, **serving as a benchmark** for effective and efficient learner admissions.

The application period for the intake in the 2026 school academic year was open from 14 April to 23 May 2025, during which we received **a total of 30,409 applications** for Grades R, 1 and 8.

The placement process for these learners will commence on **Thursday, 31 July 2025**. Parents and legal guardians will receive SMS notifications informing them of the outcome of their child's placement.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Admissions Teams at both Provincial and District offices for their unwavering commitment and hard work. Their dedication ensures that all placements will be concluded by the **end of November 2025**.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

Honourable Members, the **Basic Education Laws Amendment Act No. 32 of 2024** took effect in January 2025, bringing changes to **Grade R provision** in South Africa.

The **Department** aims to provide all children with access to high-quality Grade R programmes promoting cognitive, social and emotional development.

Key focus areas include:

- **Grade R Expansion:** Five new schools and fourteen additional Grade R classes were opened, increasing learners from **20,203** to **21,482** in 2025.
- **Practitioner Appointments:** **763 practitioners** have been appointed, with **657 on three-year contracts**. Some have received upgraded positions and stipends based on qualifications.
- **Qualification Standards:** 53% of Grade R practitioners now meet the minimum requirement of **NQF Level 6**.
- **Training Initiatives:**
 - **23 Pre-Grade R practitioners** are studying a Bachelor of Education.
 - **150 practitioners** are trained on **ECD NQF Level 4**.
 - **Bursaries** awarded to **156** for Grade R teaching and **166** for Foundation Phase education.
 - **146 Grade R practitioners** are being trained in foundational **Maths** and **Language** skills.
- **Programs for Improvement:**
 - **Strengthening the Teaching of Early Literacy and Language in Grade R (STELLAR)** and **Jolly Phonics** programs to enhance early literacy and language.
- **Challenges:** Approximately **3,907 Grade R learners (StatsSA)** remain unaccounted for. More funding is needed for classrooms, resources and practitioners.

The **Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive**, conducted by the **Department** and the **Department of Basic Education**, aims to:

- Provide an **online registration system** via the **ECARES** system
- Simplify the registration process
- Introduce a "**Bronze**" **registration status** for unregistered centres to begin the process towards full or conditional registration.

To date, **268 ECD centres and playgroups** have been registered on the system. In the **first quarter of 2025/26**, **14,837 children** in **ECD centres** were funded.

The **G20 South Africa 2025 Provincial Education Indaba** will be held 7-8 August 2025 to engage stakeholders and improve **Early Childhood Development (ECD)** provisioning.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Madam Speaker, in the **2025/26** financial year, **R746.9 million** will be invested through the **Education Infrastructure Grant**, focusing on:

- **R119.3 million** for **maintenance and repairs**.
- **R465.3 million** for **new schools** and replacing **unsafe infrastructure**.
- **R74.1 million** for **upgrades** and expansions.
- **R23.1 million** for **rehabilitation**.
- **R65.1 million** for **non-infrastructure support** (e.g, mobile structures and furniture).

Key Projects:

- **Redirile State-of-the-Art School** (R233 million) and **Barkley Rooirand Primary** (R120 million) were completed in 2024/25.
- **Frances Baard: R179 million** for **Rietrivier Primary** (50% complete).
- **John Taolo Gaetsewe: R720 million** for 4 new schools.
- **ZF Mgcawu: R537 million** for 4 asbestos replacement schools.
- **Pixley Ka Seme: R271 million** for asbestos replacements at 3 schools.

Special Schools:

- **New special schools** are being planned in **Pixley Ka Seme** and **ZF Mgcawu** districts.

Additional Support:

- **EPWP** grants support job creation and community development.
- **ECD Infrastructure Grant: New inclusive ECD Centre at Vaal-Oranje and Riemvasmaak** (R3.6 million) to serve 90 children.

This investment in infrastructure, improves **access** and **safety** in schools.

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

Honourable Members, the Department of Education remains committed to protecting the **credibility and integrity** of examinations in the Northern Cape through the use of **cutting-edge technology**.

Since the inception of the **National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination**, the Province has maintained an outstanding record, with **no major irregularities reported**.

To uphold this standard, the **safeguarding, scanning, and tracking** of examination material, as well as the **safety of frontline officials**, will continue to be a top priority.

The **2025 National Senior Certificate Examination** will commence on **21 October 2025** and conclude on **27 November 2025**.

In preparation for this critical period, the **Annual National Pledge Ceremony** will be held on **Friday, 17 October 2025**. This significant event will see all **Grade 12 learners, parents and officials** signing a pledge of commitment to uphold the principles of honesty and fairness, ensuring an **irregularity-free NSC examination**.

Marking of the examination scripts will take place from **27 November to 12 December 2025** and the **results will be released on 13 January 2026**. As we approach this important time, it is vital that all learners are **emotionally supported** and encouraged throughout the examination period. The Department urges parents, teachers and communities to stand behind our learners, assuring them of **continued guidance and support**.

As I conclude, let us remember that every challenge we face in education, whether it's mastering a difficult subject, improving our schools or transforming entire systems, may seem impossible at first.

History has shown us time and again that with perseverance, collaboration and belief in our collective potential, what once seemed unreachable becomes a reality. Because as Nelson Mandela so wisely said, ***'It always seems impossible until it's done.'*** Let this be our reminder to keep striving, keep learning and never lose hope in the power of education to change lives.

Let this Budget Vote be a declaration, in honouring Nelson Mandela's legacy, we will leave no learner behind. We will continue to transform our education system into a powerful engine for equality, prosperity and dignity.

I call on all school communities and especially parents, to support the Class of 2025 as they prepare for the most important Examinations of their life.

Honourable Members,

I extend my sincere gratitude to my political home, the **African National Congress (ANC)**, for placing their trust in me to lead this critical portfolio. I am deeply honoured by this responsibility.

I wish to express my appreciation to our **Honourable Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul**, for his steadfast leadership and support, as well as to my colleagues in the **Executive Council (EXCO)** for their guidance and collaboration throughout this journey.

I also extend my thanks to the **Provincial Legislature**, particularly the **Portfolio Committee**, for their diligent oversight and constructive engagement in helping us fulfil our mandate.

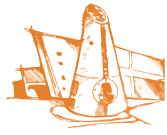
To the **School Governing Body (SGB) Associations, Teacher Unions**, our Stakeholder and Partners across the Province—thank you for your dedication and commitment. Your partnership has been instrumental in advancing the quality of education in the Northern Cape.

I am especially grateful to the **Ministerial Office**, the **Head of Department**, and our **Senior Management Team** for their leadership, commitment and tireless efforts in pursuit of our shared vision for education.

Lastly, and most importantly, I thank my **family** and the many individuals who support and pray for us as members of the Provincial Executive. Your encouragement and unwavering belief in our work give us the strength to carry out our responsibilities with purpose and determination.

Thank you.

2025/26



VOTE 4

BUDGET SPEECH

MEC for Education **Abraham Vosloo**

"A transformative and inclusive education system **that accelerates the Northern Cape's journey** towards becoming a modern, growing, and successful Province."



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A Modern, Growing and Successful Province - South Africa's New Growth Front



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