

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 5807. [994]**

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**5807. [994]. Mr S W Mkhize (MK) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

**[Question submitted for oral reply now placed for written reply because it is more than quota (Rule 137(8))]**

Considering the current backlog, poor budget prioritisation, and huge underspending in the 2024-25 financial year, what are the reasons that school infrastructure, which is part of five strategic priorities, is without performance targets and indicators articulated in the Annual Performance Plan of her department?

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##### **Response**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) wishes to clarify that the absence of expanded infrastructure performance indicators in the 2025/26 Annual Performance Plan (APP) does not indicate a lack of priority for school infrastructure. Instead, it reflects a structural shift in the management and reporting of infrastructure delivery following the budget reallocation approved by National Treasury, which transferred the implementation of new school infrastructure projects fully to Provincial Education Departments (PEDs).

In terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996) and the Government Immovable Asset Management Act, 2007 (Act No. 19 of 2007), the provisioning, maintenance and management of public school infrastructure are functions of provincial governments. The role of the DBE, as the national department, is to set policy and technical frameworks and monitor, evaluate and support provincial performance against established norms and standards.

In limited instances, the DBE has implemented identified projects through programmes such as the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) and Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) initiative. However, these programmes are coming to end in line with the budget reallocation approved by National Treasury.

Accordingly, the DBE's infrastructure-related indicators in the 2025/26 APP are focused on completion of these programmes, namely:

- 4.1.1: Number of schools provided with sanitation facilities per year (Target = 50); and
- 4.1.2: Number of classrooms built through the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) per year (Target = 30).

In addition to the above, the DBE's 2025/26 APP also indicates that the DBE will facilitate the following interventions to address overcrowding in public schools:

- Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the Norms and Standards on Public School Infrastructure;
- Supporting PEDs with applications to the National Treasury for additional infrastructure funding; and
- Monitoring and support PED delivery on infrastructure plans.

Beyond these targets, the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG), which represents R48.9 billion over the 2025/26–2027/28 MTEF, is the primary conditional grant

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mechanism funding provincial infrastructure delivery for schooling. The EIG supports the construction, upgrading and maintenance of public-school infrastructure to meet the Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure, 2024.

In addition, R2.1 billion from the School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant (SIBG) has been allocated to complete outstanding sanitation and classroom projects before its full incorporation into the EIG in the 2026/27 financial year. Thereafter, all public school infrastructure funding and performance reporting will be consolidated under provincial implementation and accounted for through their Infrastructure Asset Management Plans (IAMPs).

To strengthen oversight and accelerate equitable delivery, the DBE continues to support provinces in implementing the 10-Point Infrastructure Strategy developed by the DBE, which focuses on:

- Standardising school designs and cost-optimisation models;
- Strengthening provincial capacity through technical mentoring and support;
- Enforcing improved planning and budgeting through the Education Facilities Management System (EFMS);
- Enhancing monitoring of project lifecycles and gateway reviews;
- Introducing stronger consequence management measures for underperforming service providers; and
- Establishing clear accountability frameworks for maintenance and asset management.

The DBE's oversight and support responsibilities therefore include:

- Supporting PEDs in planning and budgeting through the Education Facilities Management System (EFMS);
- Monitoring provincial performance and compliance with conditional grant frameworks under the Division of Revenue Act (DoRA);
- Conducting regular bilateral meetings and technical reviews with underperforming provinces to improve delivery and address underspending; and

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- Leading the review of the Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure to strengthen accountability, maintenance and long-term sustainability.

The 2024/25 Annual Report reflects that infrastructure underspending occurred primarily at the provincial level due to delayed contractor performance, adverse weather conditions, procurement bottlenecks and disruptions by external forums. These challenges are being addressed through strengthened fiscal oversight, improved intergovernmental collaboration and capacity-building interventions.

In conclusion, the Minister of Basic Education has reaffirmed that the provision of safe, dignified and well-resourced schooling environments remains one of her five key priorities for the current administration. Infrastructure investment is central to achieving this goal. The DBE will continue to drive the implementation of the 10-Point Infrastructure Strategy and exercise rigorous national oversight to ensure that provinces deliver on their mandates, that every learner is taught in a safe and enabling learning space, and that the education system progressively eliminates all historical and emerging infrastructure backlogs.