



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**BUDGET VOTE 16 SPEECH BY DEPUTY MINISTER DR MR MHAULE (MP), AT THE OCCASION OF THE 2021/2022 BASIC EDUCATION BUDGET VOTE DELIVERED VIRTUALLY AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, CAPE TOWN.**

**20 MAY 2021**

**House Chairperson**

**Honourable Ministers, Deputy Ministers present**

**Honourable MEC of Education present**

**Honourable Chairperson of the portfolio Committee and Members**

**Leadership in the Basic Education Sector**

**Ladies and Gentleman**

**Sanibonani**

As we are all aware that this year, the country is celebrating Charlotte Maxeke under the theme of ***unity, renewal and reconstruction***. The significance of celebrating this brave woman in this occasion is timely. Charlotte Maxeke was the first South African Black woman to graduate with a university degree, a BSc degree from Wilberforce University, based in Ohio in America. Mme Charlotte demonstrated to us that

education would ever remain important, especially for women and girls; as it enables families to escape the poverty trap, and reduce the dependency syndrome.

This is what I call the radical renewal of society. In her pursuit of reconstruction, she and her husband started a school in Evaton. This is a showcase of a woman who was passionate about education and development; not only for herself, but the community at large.

This courage and spirit is also emphasised by Government's continuing efforts and commitment towards improving the lives of South Africans, by restoring and growing the economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic; which has exacerbated other challenges the country has been experiencing, including our quest to provide quality basic education to all South African children.

**Honourable members**, our Minister at the start of this Budget Vote Debate, announced and broken down the MTEF budget allocation for the 2021/2022 financial year for Basic Education, which has gone up by 15,5 percent from the revised 2020/2021 overall baseline allocation. We welcome this increase, as it will go a long way towards assisting us to meet glaring challenges, aggravated by the devastating disruptions that were suddenly

thrust upon the Basic Education Sector by the COVID-19, as articulated in our adjusted budget last year.

Subsequent to the declaration by President Cyril Ramaphosa of the National State of Disaster last year, it became evident and immediate that the Department of Basic Education needed to get on its feet to find alternatives, in order for learning and teaching to continue taking place. This was done very successfully in collaboration and support from this very House, educational stakeholders, and guided by the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) in ensuring the safe return of teachers, learners and support staff to school under the Risk Adjusted Differentiated Strategy.

**Honourable Chairperson,** in response to the COVID-19 impact, the Department, working with sector partner and stakeholders, put new strategies in place. These include the following: a partnership with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and UNICEF to mobilise support for learners and educators. Through this partnership, Child-line was then appointed to provide telephone counselling to learners.

The NECT is also conducting training for ward committees on the Basic Counselling Skills Guide for COVID-19 Responders

in communities around the country to strengthen community responses to COVID-19 affected families. It is anticipated that children in schools will also benefit from this community response.

We also collaborated with the John Hopkins University as well as University of Johannesburg (UJ) to provide training on the ***Common Elements Treatment Approach (CETA)***, in order to capacitate the Basic Education Sector in providing psychosocial support to learners and educators. CETA is an approach strategy, that combines various psychotherapeutic tools for the treatment of mental health problems – such depression, anxiety, substance use, trauma, and stress-related disorders.

This training is aimed at non-mental health professionals to enable them to assist individuals and groups in resource limited settings. This approach involves education, skills building, talking about difficult memories, and problem solving.

CETA uses an apprenticeship model to ensure quality and support. The training is targeting Learner Support Agents (LSAs) who have been placed in schools in various districts. The initial target group to be trained will be forty (40) National

Master Trainers, made up of officials from the education sector and various partner organisations.

**Honourable House Chairperson**, we are pleased as a Department, that the allocation for ***Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring*** has increased to R2,34 billion, which is an increase by 10,3 percent from the 2020/21 baseline. This will certainly assist to boost the Department's stable and progressive curriculum, that is not only internationally benchmarked, but also transformative, and fully incorporates 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and skills for a changing world.

Our curriculum implementation is indeed supported and enhanced with various materials and resources that have been developed and distributed to schools. These include, a catalogue of evaluated and approved textbooks for all the grades and subjects; workbooks, reading resources for reading corners in classrooms and mobile libraries in some cases.

In response to the 2019/20 SONA mandate, of ensuring that ***every 10 year-olds can read for meaning by 2030***, the Department has conceptualised the ***Integrated Reading Sector Plan***, which has informed the development and implementation of Reading Strategies in all provinces. Central to the Sector Plan, is the ***Primary School Reading***

***Intervention Programme*** (PSRIP), which comprises 4 sub-programmes; namely, the *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)*, the *Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS)*, the *Read to Lead Campaign*, and the *National Reading Coalition (NRC)*.

We remain grateful for the partnerships that have been formed to enable the Department to make inroads in this important area. These include, the **NECT**, the **ETDP SETA**, **UNICEF**, the **USAID**, the **World Bank**, **corporates**, **companies** and numerous **NGOs**.

Through these partnerships, we have been able to ***train more than 30 000 teachers*** on how to more effectively teach reading for understanding; who in turn, supported about 1,5 million children, since the inception of the PSRIP. We have also upskilled more than 7 000 Senior Management Teams (SMTs) to be able to support their teachers.

As part of the ***Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI)***, which the Minister has fully detailed, which has also placed ***23 000 young South Africans as Reading Champions*** in schools in all 9 provinces, to be part of our massive reading revolution drive.

Emerging evidence shows signs of success in the establishment of a reading culture, in that there is an increase in the number of classroom / reading corners established, particularly in primary schools; increase in the number of books read, and stories told weekly; there is voluntary participation of learners in reading activities, as well as the involvement of parents in the reading development of their children. We want to acknowledge the contributions of our partner organisations led by the National Reading Coalition, which enabled us to maximise our gains and increase our efficiencies, by supporting the training and mentoring of these young people.

Furthermore, we have heeded the ***President's call for a Reading movement, by establishing the President's Reading Circle, through hosting Virtual Reading Clubs.*** We are doing this, in collaboration with the NECT under the banner of ***Read to Lead.*** This is done to encourage reading, and to promote dialogue around topical and social issues that emerge from the stories. Five sessions have been held monthly, starting in December 2020. All South Africans are invited to join these exciting monthly events, which happen every last Thursday of the month.

**Honorable Members**, our ongoing collaboration with partners, will continue to ensure that more video lessons and TV

broadcast lessons are developed for learners to watch after school, on weekends, and over school holidays.

Baseline surveys are conducted at intervals, to determine learners' pre-knowledge and to assist in planning and delivering extra lessons and additional support. Schools have been required to develop school-based recovery plans based on those baseline surveys.

We have reduced the number and types of formal assessment tasks to create more time for teaching and learning. As I mentioned, the June examinations have been removed as a compulsory component in Grades 4-12. In Grades 4-11, the examination has been replaced by a test to ensure the focus is on teaching and learning.

In terms of ***Teachers and Human Resource Development***, we believe that teachers are our most important asset in the education of our children. A collective agreement was concluded at the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), *Collective Agreement 1 of 2020: Concession* process to follow, for employees with comorbidities. This was aimed at providing concessions for educators employed in terms of the Employment of Educators Act (Act No. 76 of 1998), who are



affected due to risk factors for severe Covid-19, and to give guidance to evaluate and manage vulnerable employees.

**Honourable House Chairperson**, we have adopted hybrid teaching models using our national broadcaster, including its radio stations, to ensure learning continues whilst applying rotational attendance models currently in place. Just last week, we began the process of repositioning the DBE-TV channel, currently on Channel 122 on Open View, as well as the DBE YouTube channel, in order to increase viewership of learner support content on the channels by incrementally introducing even more interesting content, including DBE news.

Schools are also experimenting and innovating, using social media platforms, such as WhatsApp for contact, teaching and learning when learners are not physically at school. The monitoring and reporting on learning time-loss recovery progress will be implemented at all levels – at school, district and provincial levels, in order to identify bottlenecks, and intervene appropriately.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, the past year was very hard on the infrastructure programmes. There was no construction in quarter 1 due to the hard lockdown. Even quarter 2 was tough as we still experienced restrictions on the number of workers

per site and restriction on the travelling of workers between provinces.

Despite all of this, we managed to make significant progress in the provision of school infrastructure during 2020/21. To be more specific:

- a) We completed **34 new schools** to replace inappropriate structures;
- b) We completed **water supply projects at 101 schools**; and
- c) We completed **sanitation projects at 298 schools**.

In this regard we wish to express our gratitude to our valued partners with **China, South Korea** and the **United States of America**, working through their Embassy representatives, for extending a helping hand to provide urgent **water and sanitation facilities** in different schools across the country.

**Honourable Chairperson**, in the last few months, the sector and South Africa has seen an alarming spike in violent-related incidents in our schools. We are taking this matter extremely seriously; hence I will be launching the **School Safety Intervention Initiative** at a school in Orange Farm, south of Gauteng on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. The Initiative is an intensive inter-Departmental campaign between several Departments

working with the DBE – Health; Social Development; Justice and Constitutional Development; Home Affairs; SAPS; Communications and Digital Technologies; Sports, Arts and Culture, and other entities, such as the Films and Publication Board.

Officials are already on the ground to ensure proper planning and success of the launch. It will be a culmination of a nationwide promotion of the ***National Schools Safety Framework***, and an awareness campaign in schools and communities.

**Members**, in conclusion, I must thank and commend the resilience of our teachers, our learners, school management, parents, community leaders and valued partners for trusting us with our mandate of providing access to quality basic education for our children, while also ensuring the protection of the lives of all within the schooling community and the Sector during these difficult times of COVID-19.

**Ngiyabonga**