

Basic Education Adjusted Budget Vote Speech for the 2021/22 Financial Year, Delivered Virtually by the Honourable Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the National Assembly, Cape Town

20 May 2021

Honourable Speaker / Deputy Speaker
Cabinet colleagues and Deputy Ministers present
Honourable Members
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the entire Basic Education Sector, we wish to thank the National Assembly for inviting us to table our **2021/22 budget** at this **2021/22 Debate on Vote 16 – Basic Education**.

2021/22 adjusted budget allocation, Vote 16 - Basic Education

Speaker and Honourable Members, I wish to remind the National Assembly about some of the realities the country had to face, consequent to the landing of the COVID-19 pandemic in our South African shores.

As much as the Basic Education Sector, working with its partners from teacher unions, national governance associations, civic society, and the public and private sectors to save the academic year of 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic had a devastating impact on our Sector. The analysis we have done using PERSAL, shows that in 2020, extending to February 2021, we lost about *one thousand, seven hundred* (1 678) educators. Unfortunately for our Sector, the MEC for Education in the Northern Cape, the Superintendent-General of the Eastern Cape Education Department, and the President of NATU, succumbed to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to say may their souls Rest in Peace.

Towards the end of the first quarter of the 2020 school calendar year, South Africa, like all nations of the world, was engulfed by the novel Coronavirus pandemic, bringing with it, and abnormal "new normal". This happened while we, as the Basic Education Sector, were either piloting or implementing our strategic policies, programmes and interventions, to propel the basic education system to greater heights.

Unfortunately, as a critical part of that unforeseen "new normal", were adjustments and reprioritisation of the State's prioritised programmes, and budgets. Consequently, the DBE and its statutory bodies endured budget cuts, similarly to other departments and their statutory bodies.

Therefore, Speaker, the adjustments that were effected to the 2020 MTEF budget allocations, which changed the **baseline allocations** for the ensuing MTEF period, have a direct bearing on the **2021/22 budget allocation** we are presenting today. We however, must thank the National Treasury for being considerate in this process.

- Firstly, the overall 2021/22 MTEF budget allocation is twentyseven billion Rands (R27.0 billion), an increase of 15.5% from the 2020/21 revised overall baseline budget allocation;
- Secondly, the *overall allocation for Condition Grants* is *twenty point seven billion* (R20.7 billion), an *increase of 20.2%* from last year's revised baseline.

Speaker, we wish to acknowledge the allocation of sixteen point two million Rands (R16.2 million) as the General Budget Support for the DBE's Systematic Improvement of Language and Numeracy in Foundation Phase; as well as the nineteen point nine million Rands (R19.9 million) allocated for Technology for Grade 7-9. These new allocations will go a long way in ensuring the roll-out of these two strategic programmes;

- Thirdly, the overall allocation for Earmarked Funding is three point seven billion Rands (R3.7 billion), an increase of 5.7% from last year's revised baseline; and
- Fourthly, Transfer Payments are allocated one point six billion Rands (R1.6 billion), an increase of 1.4% from last year's revised baseline.

 Fifthly, during the presentation of the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) in October 2020, the Minister of Finance announced that the Basic Education Sector was allocated seven billion Rands (R7 billion) to implement the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI). We branded this Initiative as the Basic Education Employment initiative (BEEI).

The **seven billion Rands** was equitably distributed as follows –

- one point two million Rands (R1.2 million was retained by the DBE for project management, support and monitoring oversight;
- just less than seven billion Rands (R6.9988 billion) was disbursed among the Provincial Education Departments additionally to their 2020/21 equitable shares, for the payment of stipends and UIF; saving SGB-appointed educator posts; saving educator posts in State-funded independent schools; project management at the provincial level; and the training of the youth; and
- ➤ Two point four billion Rands (R2.4 billion) of the specific allocation to Provincial Education Departments was earmarked to secure the SGB-appointed educator posts in fee-paying public schools, and educator posts in State-subsidised independent schools. These posts were under threat as schools were experiencing financial distress, as a result of parents being unable to pay school fees, because of the economic devastation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this initiative, 27 662 posts were secured.

Speaker and Honourable Members, it gives me pleasure to report that through this Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, we were able to create *more than three hundred and twenty thousand* (320 315) *employment opportunities*, from *more than eight hundred and eight thousand* (808 000) applications, for South African youth, between 01 December 2020 and 31 March 2021. Because of the popularity and the effectiveness of this Initiative, we acceded to requests to extend it until 30 April 2021.

The young people were placed in public schools across all the nine provinces, to assist as Educator Assistants and General Education Assistants. About *three thousand* (2 882), out of more than *seven thousand five hundred* (7 519) fee-paying schools targeted, applied to save posts of educators appointed by SGBs. More than thirty-one thousand (31 114) of such educator posts, were saved through the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative.

Speaker, we are duty-bound to account on the expenditure of these funds. We can report that **about five point five billion Rands** (≤R5.5 billion), which is **equivalent to 78%** of the budget, has been regularly spent on project management and support, stipends with UIF, securing SGB posts and those in State-funded independent schools, and the training of the appointed young people. The Provincial Education Departments utilised the remaining **one point five billion Rands** (R1.5 billion) towards the extension of contracts of about **two hundred and sixty-nine thousand** (269 000) young people for the month of April 2021. However, this was done after the approval by the respective Provincial Treasuries.

We are grateful to His Excellency the President and Cabinet for initiating the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, which enabled us to save SGB-educator posts, educator posts in State-subsidised independent schools, and more importantly, we were able to create employment opportunities for our young people. We are glad that a second phase of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative is being considered.

We wish to thank civil society, the public and private sectors, the NGOs, and our multilateral organisations for the roles they have played in ensuring a resounding success of this Presidential Youth Employment Initiative within the Basic Education Sector. We implore all our partners to continue with their selfless support of this Initiative in its envisaged second phase.

Strategic realignment of the Basic Education Sector priorities for the Sixth Administration

Speaker and Honourable Members, we must remind ourselves and the nation about the six (6) cardinal Basic Education Sector

priorities we had committed ourselves to, in order to lay a solid foundation for a quality and efficient education system, as well as to contribute in providing permanent solutions to the architecture of the education and training system of our country. We therefore, wish to remind this House that our Action Plan to 2024: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030, is giving expression to our cardinal Sector priorities, which is anchored on –

- the noble declaration of our world-renowned Constitution, that basic education is an alienable right for all;
- the directive of the National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030, which expects that "by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes"; and
- the need expressed in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA, 2016-2-25) "to orient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, kills, innovation and creativity required to nurture the African core values, and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional, and continental levels".
- reflecting the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG4, which calls for "an inclusive, quality and equitable education and lifelong opportunities for all".

Therefore, the Constitution, the NDP, as well as the continental and international conventions, provide the moral imperative and a mandate to Government to make the social justice principles of access, redress, equity, efficiency, inclusivity and quality educational opportunities, widely available to all citizens.

Speaker and Honourable Members, I will reflect on the progress we have made in three of the cardinal Sector priorities. Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule, will deal with the rest, time allowing.

The *first Sector priority*, I wish to address this House on, is the strategic relocation of *Early Childhood Development (ECD)* from the Department of Social Development (DSD) to my Department. This includes "strategically ramping up the provision of ECD, particularly the urgent implementation of the *two-years of ECD prior*

to Grade 1; and the provision of quality ECD programmes for 0-4 year-olds".

Speaker, we must concede that the complexities of the ECD space, though not overwhelming, needed more time to substantively address. We had to contend with the legal and policy realities, organisational and structural arrangements, budget and employment imperatives, provisioning and programmatic challenges, among many. I am happy to report that we, as the two Ministries, have managed to crack the codes on many fronts in the ECD space. For instance –

- The systematic process for the relocation of ECD from the DSD to the DBE is at an advanced stage. The Office of the Chief State Law Advisors has granted us with the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System (SEIAS) certificate for the Proclamation to regularise the ECD relocation at the national level, which will be signed by His Excellency, President Ramaphosa; and have also granted us the SEIAS certificates for the Proclamations to regularise the ECD function shift at the provincial level, which will be signed by the nine Honourable Premiers. It is anticipated the ECD relocation from the DSD to the DBE will be effected on 01 April 2022.
- The Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) has been supporting the DBE and DSD to ensure a smooth and seamless relocation of ECD delivery; firstly, by conducting the ECD function diagnostic assessment to determine the resources (both financial and human resources) connected to the ECD function in DSD at the national and provincial levels; any data and assets associated with the ECD function; and secondly by conducting a readiness assessment for the DBE to receive the ECD function at both national and provincial levels.

The DBE has extended the GTAC's contract, to enable GTAC to finalise the *Diagnostic Report* by August or September 2021; and the *DBE Readiness Assessment Report* by October or November 2021. The GTAC has also been requested to assist and support the two provincial departments in the same work, they are currently doing for the DBE and DSD.

- Eight work-streams focusing on legal matters; human resource development and management; finance; infrastructure; monitoring and evaluation; governance, curriculum and services; communication; as well as health and nutrition are in the process of finalising their work. The submission of the work streams' reports is expected in June / July 2021.
- Speaker, we have noted the lack of accurate data in the ECD sector. The last *national audit* was conducted by the DSD in 2013. In preparation for the function shift, an urgent need was identified to have an in-depth knowledge of the magnitude of the ECD sector, both registered and unregistered ECD centres; and other forms of early learning programmes, including playgroups. A continuous comprehensive *baseline quality assessment of the ECD landscape* will be conducted, commencing in August 2021. A service provider has been appointed to conduct a *Census* on ECD delivery. This work will commence in July 2021, and the final report is expected in November 20021.
- The DBE has further developed a vision for ECD relocation and delivery. Among others, this vision acknowledges the long history of unequal provision of ECD in South Africa; and recognises the journey to achieve the objective of universal access to quality ECD programmes in the next ten (10) years (by 2030). There are five strategic areas that have been identified for improving the quality of ECD in South Africa, namely
 - curriculum-based early learning for all children from birth to 5 years, by implementing the National Curriculum Framework;
 - ECD programmes for all children from birth to 5 years, which entail a continuum of strategic ECD programmes;
 - the training and development for all those who are working in ECD for career-pathing with intensive, but flexible training opportunities;
 - strategic implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all ECD services, including a flexible funding, administration, management, governance and provisioning framework; and

- a strategic consultation plan with timelines, that will involve the broader ECD sector.
- Finally, to cater for the *two years of ECD prior to Grade 1*, section 3 on *compulsory attendance* of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996) is in the process of being amended through the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill. After the BELA Bill has been signed into law by the President, attendance at Grade R classes by children who are, or will be turning six (6) years of age, will be compulsory. Systematically, this will be followed by the introduction of compulsory attendance in Grade RR classes by children who will be, or turning five (5) years of age.

The **second Sector Priority** Speaker and Honourable Members, is that of "the strategic implementation of a curriculum with skills and competencies of a changing world in all public schools" –

Last year, I reported that we were preparing the Sector for the piloting of the Coding and Robotics Curriculum Grades R-3 and 7. Today, I wish to report that the draft CAPS documents for Grades R-9 has been submitted to Umalusi for appraisal and quality assurance. On 19 March 2021, we gazetted the draft Coding and Robotics curriculum for public comments. In preparation for training of officials, the appointment of service providers by ETDP-SETA has been concluded, and Service Level Agreements have been signed. We wish to thank the ETDP-SETA for making available seven million Rands (R7 million) for this training.

We are happy to announce that the Sasol Foundation, funded the orientation of the *Coding and Robotics* National Training Team (NTT), which was held on 08-19 March 2021. A state-of-the-art digital platform has been developed for training of teachers. Orientation materials, lesson plans and coding programmes, have been uploaded onto this digital platform.

 During one of the speeches I made last year, I stressed my Department's commitment to the expansion of the programme to strategically implement a curriculum with skills and competencies for a changing world in all public schools. In pursuit of this I am pleased to announce the introduction of a new FET-level subject, *Marine Sciences*. This is a very welcome addition to the bouquet of subjects we already offer; and it is particularly relevant to our *NDP goals, since the Ocean Economy contributes over six billion US Dollars toward our country's Gross Domestic Product.*

In March 2021, the CAPS for *Marine Sciences*, was uploaded to the DBE website. The first cohort of thirteen (13) Grade 12 learners from South Peninsula High School, will be writing Marine Sciences as part of their 2021 NSC examination. Examination guidelines have been prepared and distributed, and potential experts who can be appointed as examiners and moderators have been identified. Since the 2019 pilot, we are happy to report that the intake in *Marine Sciences*, has since increased to more than *three hundred* (300) Grades 10 and 11 learners. As a high school subject offering, South Africa can be proud that the offering of *Marine Sciences* is a world first; as other countries only provide for Marine Biology and Oceanography to tertiary level students.

- Speaker, we are collaborating with the Department of Transport (DoT) to finalise the draft Aviation Curriculum to ensure that the draft curriculum is aligned with the CAPS Policy. The appointment of a service provider to develop Practical Assessment Tasks for this Aviation Curriculum, has been advertised. We are proud that the country will introduce another uniquely South African subject offering, that includes all the occupational work-areas within the Aviation milieu.
- Speaker, it is with pleasure to inform this House that Guidelines for the establishment and management of Focus Schools have been produced on time in December 2020, after extensive consultations. Focus Schools are being established to cater for learners with special talents and aptitudes across a wide range of scholastic endeavours. These schools will constitute legislatively distinct category of public schools that offer a specialised curriculum oriented toward eleven (11) learning fields. Some of these fields are Agriculture, Marine, Maritime and Nautical, Maths, Science & Technology, as well as Technical disciplines such Electrical, Occupational _ Civil as Mechanical Technologies.

- On Occupational Subjects, a total of 103 schools in all nine provinces, have been audited, to pilot the Occupational Subjects. The CAPS for Year 1-4 for Grades 8 and 9, has been developed, and submitted to Umalusi for appraisal and quality assurance. In preparation for the pilot, materials have been developed.
- Speaker, in 2019, we hosted the Roundtable with the Mobile Network Operators and other *Information Communications Technologies (ICTs)* players to map a plan for delivering of *ICT solutions to special schools*. Since then, we have provided 191 special schools with the ICT devices, assistive technologies, as well as appropriate software for teaching and learning. Vodacom has made available 140 devices; MTN 31 devices; Liquid Telkom 19 devices; and Cell C 1 device. Furthermore, all special schools have been provided with connectivity, though not broadband connectivity, as part of the USAO rollout.
- Last year, I had reported to this House that the Ministerial Task
 Team on the *Development of History for Grades 4-12* had
 developed the *History content framework for Grades 4-12*,
 including the review of topics including historiography; material
 culture and archaeology; African history; heritage and local
 history, including labour history; language, gender and culture
 history, inland history, and world history.

Since 2020, the Ministerial Task Team has been consulting with reference teams, comprising teachers and subject specialists on pedagogy, historical skills and assessment, to strengthen the *History content framework*. The Ministerial Task Team is currently engaged in a dedicated writing session, to sequence and package the identified content, to ensure alignment in terms of articulation, sequencing, progression, and conceptual development.

• The next area is that of the Incremental Introduction to African Languages (IIAL) strategy, was initiated in 2013 to strengthen the teaching of previously marginalised African languages, including isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sepedi, Sesotho, and Setswana in our schools. The IIAL targets two thousand, five hundred and eighty-four (2) 584) schools, that are not offering African languages. The IIAL was piloted in the Foundation Phase in 2014 and 2015 in *two hundred and sixty-four* (264) schools. This cohort of learners, who were part of the pilot, is currently in the Intermediate Phase.

Speaker, we strategically decided to expand the list of South African languages offered as Second Additional Languages in the National Curriculum Statement. The additional languages are the *Khoi, Nama, San languages*, as well as the *South African Sign Language* (SASL); thus concretising the Constitutional mandate of promoting and creating conditions for the development and the use of all official languages. The DBE has made inroads in all the official languages; and the South African Sign Language, which enjoys the status of an official language in the Basic Education Sector; while the Khoi, Nama and San languages, are facing extinction.

Honourable Members, you may be surprised to know that there are *fifteen (15) non-official languages* that are listed in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). But none of them have their origins in the African Continent – a practice, we view as further perpetuating colonialism.

The introduction of *Kiswahili Second Additional Language* (*SAL*) in the National Curriculum Statement, will go a long way towards decolonising education in the South Africa in particular. It will promote social cohesion and also assist in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area – the world's largest free trade zone, which was launched in January 2021, to unify Africa as a single market to develop the African Continent. *Kiswahili* – the widely spoken language in the Continent, is projected to be the business language of the African Continent; and will play a significant unifying role.

Speaker, we were supposed to pilot *Kiswahili Second Additional Language (SAL)*, in Grades 4-6 in 2021-2023. However, our plans have been thwarted by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the primary focus for schools, is currently on the *teaching of Home Languages and First Additional Languages as fundamentals*.

The *final Sector Priority* I wish to reflect on Speaker and Honourable Members, is that of "Dealing decisively with the quality and efficiency through the implementation of standardised assessments at Grades 3, 6 and 9; and the offer of a General Education Certificate (GEC) before the Grade 12 exit qualification – a pronouncement of the first White Paper on Education and Training (1995), intended to reduce the failure and drop-out rates, and direct learners through different education and training pathways".

- Firstly, the policy framework for the introduction of the *General Education Certificate* (GEC) has been provisionally approved by Umalusi; and processes are underway to gazette, to invite public comments. A blueprint document on assessment options, linked to career-pathing and future work skills, has been developed. This blueprint will inform learners, teachers, parents and the system in general about the suitability of learners to undertake an academic, vocational or occupational track in Grades 10-12. Selected field trials on assessment components are scheduled for the 3rd and 4th school terms this year; piloting of the *assessment system* in 2022; and the *first roll-out of the GEC* is scheduled for 2023.
- Secondly, the DBE has drafted a National Assessment
 Framework (NAF), which will serve to coordinate all assessments
 conducted in the General Education and Training Bands. A
 basket of purpose-driven assessments from school entry (Grade
 R) to Grade 9, has been designed for implementation during the
 Sixth Administration. During the current year, evidence will be
 generated on emerging literacy and numeracy skills of Grade 1
 learners through an Early Learning National Assessment
 (ELNA).

Further system monitoring of learner performance on Reading Comprehension by ten (10) year-olds, will be administered through the *Progress in International Literacy Study* (PIRLS) study for Grade 4 in August this year; and by twelve (12) year-olds on Language and Mathematics through the *Fifth Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality* (SEACMEQ V) study for Grade 6 in September this year.

These assessment programmes provide valuable benchmarks against targets set out in our current Medium-Term Strategic

Framework (MTSF), and the DBE will be able to provide regular reports on the progress the Sector is making. In addition, the assessment and public examination system in the FET Band, is also being reviewed, so that it can be aligned with the National Assessment Framework.

• Thirdly, a significant intervention of the National Assessment Framework, is the roll-out of the *Systemic Evaluation* initiative, targeted at establishing key learner competencies in Mathematics and Languages at the end of Grades 3, 6 and 9; and establishing the enabling school and system support factors that contribute to the improvement of learning outcomes. The first cycle of the Systemic Evaluation, is scheduled for administration in October this year, involving almost *three thousand, six hundred and forty* (3 640) schools, and *one hundred and forty-five thousand six hundred* (145 600) learners across all nine provinces.

A Call to recommit to building a solid and resilient foundation for a quality and efficient basic education system

Speaker and Honourable Members, we have repeatedly presented national and international evidence that learning outcomes in our entire basic education system have been on an upward trajectory. However, we are mindful that the gains we have made, are currently threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The gains in learning outcomes, are as a result of our deliberate and scalable strategies, programmes and interventions to expand our schooling system, which addressed various aspects of need, inequity, and poverty. Our strategies, programmes and interventions include, but not limited to curriculum and assessment reforms, continuous and pointed teacher development programmes, the provision of appropriate learning and teaching support materials, our focus on values education and psychosocial services, the provision of fit-for-purpose school infrastructure, and our strategies and programmes for the reading revolution in our country.

Speaker, despite the gains in learning outcomes we have realised, we are currently faced with mounting evidence from our researchers of significant and continuing learning losses due to the irregular patterns of attendance by learners at school. The educational and social

impact of this, is significant; and will be felt in years to come. At the same time the COVID-19 pandemic has not abated, as various provinces experience rising levels of infections, which may indicate the start of a predicted third wave of the pandemic in South Africa. COVID-19 cluster outbreaks that are reported at some schools, exacerbate the situation.

We strongly contend that it is time to open structured deliberations on the full return of primary school learners to regular, rather than the staggered attendance; but this must be done under carefully controlled and constantly monitored conditions. We are of the strong view that the long-term cost of generational learning losses must be avoided, without significantly increasing the risk of increasing infections among educators and learners.

The choices we have are clear. We need to grasp the nettle firmly, and build a better, stronger, and more resilient system. We cannot afford to do more of the same, we need to focus. Our data, information, and monitoring systems need attention, so that they are fit for purpose at the learner, school, and subject level. The foundational skills of reading and numeracy are essential for skills, knowledge and development.

As we continue to build the for future – yes the future that must recognise and go through the "new normal", we must recommit to building a solid foundation for a quality and efficient basic education system, from Early Childhood Development (ECD), through the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases, to the Further Education and Training (FET) Band.

We must refocus our energies on the *six cardinal Basic Education Sector priorities* we have identified. At all times, we must remind ourselves about what President Ramaphosa said in his 2019/20 SONA – that we must "reimagine and build the South Africa we yearn for, a South Africa of our dreams". There is no doubt in our minds, that our country has indeed ushered in the "new dawn", a period characterised by selfless public service, hope and renewal; despite the "new COVID-19 normal".

Conclusion

In conclusion Speaker and Honourable Members, I wish to report that we recently concluded the most difficult, but very successful School Governing Bodies (SGB) elections in all our public schools. Because schools had to strictly observe non-pharmaceutical COVID-19 protocols, we had to explore election modalities we had never used before. We are now in the process of inducting and providing orientation and training to approximately *two hundred and fifty thousand* (250 000) elected SGB members on their governance roles and responsibilities. We must applaud our officials, principals, teachers, support staff, parents and learners for running such successful SGB elections. When we all hold hands, success is guaranteed.

We wish to thank our international partners, sister departments and their State institutions, business, and civil society organisations, for their professionalism and the variety of the roles they continue play. I wish to single out the SACE, Umalusi, NECT, our teacher unions, the national SGB associations, the principals' associations, national organisations responsible for learners with special needs, as well as independent schools' associations for their wise counsel and impeccavle resilience.

I wish to thank the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, the Whippery, and the Honourable Members of this august House, especially our Chairperson and the Honourable Members of our Portfolio Committee. You definitely continue to conduct yourselves in compliance with the decorum of Parliament and this House; but continue to engage with us robustly and constructively.

We cannot forget to acknowledge the members of the Council of Education Ministers and their respective Heads of Departments. We continue to march on our journey to quality basic education as a cemented and socially cohesive unit of executive and administrative authorities in the Sector.

Finally, I wish to thank the Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule; the Director-General and his army of senior officials, the entire Ministry staff, and my family for their selfless support and cooperation.

I thank you