



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Opening Remarks by the Minister of Basic Education,
Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the Council of Education
Ministers (CEM) meeting held at the Sol Plaatje Building,
Pretoria**

03 March 2022

Deputy Minister

MEC's

Director-General

HoDs

Senior Management

It is my pleasure to welcome all MECs, HoDs and senior education managers to the ordinary sitting of CEM in 2022.

I send my gratitude to all attendees, as these meetings allow us to make crucial decisions while also learning from each other.

We mustn't take our responsibilities as executive authorities for granted.

On our broad shoulders, we hold dreams and aspirations of generations.

As basic education mandarins, we must lead from the front in the national endeavour to improve the quality of basic education through deeds, not words.

It is vital that the basic education sector fires on all cylinders and put our country back on the growth path, end poverty and reduce inequalities that continue to bedevil our homeland.

I am beginning to see green shoots.

I am particularly enamoured by the progress made in the Eastern Cape Mother Tongue Education – Eastern Cape model and the Afrikaans teaching:

The Eastern Cape Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) Pilot is a runaway success.

The EC DOE initiated the Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) pilot, wherein 712 schools are using IsiXhosa and Sesotho as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) beyond the Foundation Phase.

Learners in these schools are taught Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology in their home languages, IsiXhosa and Sesotho.

This initiative was started in 72 Cofimvaba schools in Grade 4 in 2012 and incrementally in subsequent grades. And it was implemented up to Grade 7 in 2018.

The province scaled-up implementation to 1 025 schools in 2019.

The province is working with other stakeholders such as Rhodes University, University of Fort Hare, Oxford University Press, Pearson, and PanSALB to implement MTBBE.

Over the years, there have been several attempts to promote African languages as languages of learning and teaching beyond the Foundation Phase with no success at all.

Only English and Afrikaans are used as LoLT throughout the schooling system except in the Eastern Cape.

Through the Eastern Cape's Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Education initiative IsiXhosa and Sesotho are used as LoLT beyond the Foundation Phase.

We congratulate *abantu basezilalini* and urge other provinces to emulate the Home of the Legends.

On the whole, we are collaborating with NECT, Old Mutual and the Department of Sports, Arts Culture and Recreation to put a plan in place to promote African Language "Mother Tongue" Based Bilingual Education.

On Infrastructure

Under the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) and Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE), we have a budget of R2.4 billion for 2021/22.

The implementing agents reported that work to the value of R2.3 billion has already been certified.

All indications are that we will utilise the budget in full.

On ASIDI, we have achieved the following:

- a) In 2011, there were 328 schools made of inappropriate material that needed to be replaced.
- b) Of these, 290 have already progressed to practical completion. The remaining 38 are scheduled for completion before the end of March 2022.
- c) Water supply projects at 1 177 schools have already progressed to practical completion. The remaining 94 are scheduled for completion before the end of March 2022. Similarly, there were 1 271 schools in need of water supply.
- d) There were 1 028 schools in need of sanitation. Sanitation projects at 995 schools have already progressed to practical completion. The remaining 33 are scheduled for completion before the end of March 2022.

Some 373 required electrical connections. All of these schools have been served under the programme.

We have developed a complete set of appropriate toilets for the SAFE programme for 1 635 of the required 2 819 schools dependent on basic pit toilets.

The remaining 1 184 is scheduled for completion before the end of 2022/23.

Sadly, some provinces have only utilised 60% of their infrastructure budget by the end of February.

We have identified the following challenges:

We need reliable data on the current state of school infrastructure

We need to eradicate infrastructure backlogs relating to inappropriate structures, sanitation and water supply

We need to eradicate pit latrine toilets.

We need to repair schools damaged by storms immediately.

Yet, the current implementation mechanism is not delivering the results we require.

We need to consider an alternative approach to the delivery of school infrastructure.

The current procurement process is prolonged and cumbersome.

Gauteng Education has proved that you can obtain value for money by using community builders and local suppliers.

We need to find legal ways to procure such builders and suppliers.

The implementation agents seem to be overloaded with projects from various client departments hence the snail pace of delivery.

Full-time Return to Learning

I am pleased to announce that in **17,374** ordinary public schools (**98.5%**) and **4,387** special public schools (**99.8%**), learners return to daily attendance as of 07 February 2022.

Impressively in the Free State and Limpopo, all ordinary public schools returned to daily attendance as required.

Even more gratifying is that all special schools returned to daily attendance as required in six provinces (Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and Western Cape).

There were no significant differences in Quantile 1, 2, 3 and 5 schools regarding the number of schools that could not return to daily attendance.

Furthermore, it is encouraging that only 12 rural/farm secondary schools cannot return to daily attendance.

Over 90% of our teachers are back at school since the return of all learners to full-time attendance. This figure pertains to the first day of daily attendance.

Challenges of Daily Return to School

There is a problem of overcrowding in some schools.

In this regard, I have initiated a Special Intervention Programme (SIPOS) to alleviate the shortage of classrooms and furniture, leading to overcrowding in schools.

The Special Intervention programme aims to ensure the complete return to daily attendance and to implement the sector's recovery plan after two years of learning losses in schools.

The matter was exacerbated by the total return of learners to schools after two years of Covid-19, vandalism and storm damage to some schools.

Shortage of classrooms and desks undermine our post-Covid-19 recovery programme.

I am glad that society continues to be behind us on the return to full-time attendance of all learners to school.

However, some schools still rely on alternative or rotational timetables to educate thousands of learners, not because of Covid-19 but the shortage of learning space and furniture.

The building of additional classrooms is slow, affected by red tape and bureaucratic processes.

The supply of mobile classrooms was a quick solution, but it has its challenges.

For instance, we have received various reports of exorbitant prices paid for mobile classrooms.

The intervention programme that I have initiated involves the supply of additional classrooms to affected schools at a reduced cost and faster turnaround.

We bypass the conventional methods of procurement by appointing service providers.

The plan includes moving away from the traditional use of mobile classrooms to solve the classrooms shortage and respond to overcrowding challenges.

In this programme, funds are deposited to the school to build additional classrooms.

It has been a successful programme in Gauteng. And our DM had used the same method in Mpumalanga when she was still MEC.

I have set up a team-leading this project and exploring all the options to implement the programme legally and efficiently.

The team, which includes appointed provincial officials, will identify schools, set up conditions for schools, provide building specifications and clarify roles and responsibilities at all sector levels.

Strategies to address overcrowding issues: Best Practice

Strategies to address overcrowding include the following:

- Transferring of funds to schools for self-management of classrooms [Gauteng Province]
- The rehabilitation and refurbishment programme [Gauteng Province]
- Restoring dysfunctional and inhabitable learning spaces [Gauteng Province]
- Space audit is done to ensure best possible use of space [North West]
- Construction of new classrooms and schools [Northern Cape]
- Some schools are platooning while waiting for the provision of mobile classrooms [Free State]

Finally, I must reiterate for posterity that there's no 30 % pass to achieve a matric pass.

Here is how you pass matric:

- Admission to a Bachelors Field for Study:
- Must obtain at least 40% for your Home Language (Compulsory),
- Must get at least 50% for FOUR other subjects excluding Life Orientation,

- Must receive at least 30% for Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT),
- Must receive at least 30% for ONE other subject,
- Must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects.

Admission to a Diploma Field of Study:

- Must obtain at least 40% for your Home Language (Compulsory),
- Must receive at least 40% for THREE other subjects excluding Life Orientation,
- Must get at least 30% for the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of the tertiary institution (Higher Education Institution),
- Must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects

Admission to a Higher Certificate Field of Study:

- Must obtain at least 40% for your Home Language(Compulsory),
- Must receive at least 40% for TWO other subjects,
- Must get at least 30% for Three other subjects;
- Must obtain at least 30% for the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of the tertiary institution (Higher Education Institution),

- Must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects.

National Senior Certificate:

- Must obtain at least 40% for your Home Language (Compulsory),
- Must receive at least 40% for TWO other subjects,
- Must get at least 30% for THREE other subjects;
- Must pass at least 6 out of 7 subjects.

I thank you.