



Province of the  
**EASTERN CAPE**  
EDUCATION



**POLICY AND BUDGET  
SPEECH 2023/24**

Honourable Speaker of the Provincial Legislature  
Honourable Premier of the Eastern Cape Province  
Honourable Members of the Executive Council  
Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee of Education  
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature  
Mayors and Councillors  
Traditional Leaders  
Head of Department of Education  
Senior Management of various Departments  
Our Social Partners  
Organised Labour  
Members of the Media  
Distinguished Guests  
Educators and Learners  
Comrades, Fellow South Africans,



## Introduction and Policy Context

Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to present to this esteemed House, the 2023 Eastern Cape Department of Education's Policy and Budget Speech of the Sixth Administration under the stellar leadership of our Honourable Premier Oscar Mabuyane.

We table this Policy and Budget Speech within the framework of what the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 requires of all of us, wherein it states that by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learner outcomes. The performance of South African learners in international standardised tests, should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development and with similar levels of access. Education should be compulsory up to Grade 12 or equivalent levels in vocational education and training. The education, training and innovation system should cater for different needs and produce highly skilled individuals. The education system will play a greater role in building an inclusive society, providing equal opportunities and helping all South Africans to realise their full potential, in particular those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, namely black people, women and people with disabilities.

Our Education Sector Plan is closely aligned to government's NDP and reflects our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Moreover, our Strategic Plan and Education System Transformation Plan is aligned with the Eastern Cape Provincial Development Plan, which has a strong focus on

the effective provision of public services with emphasis on quality basic education provision and health services. Indeed, our work as the province is based on the notion of active citizenship and community-driven development across our schooling landscape.

We know that an important facet of the struggle against apartheid was its grassroots nature and its reliance on local democratic structures. South Africa's School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are an important embodiment of this tradition and should be upheld as a means of maintaining accountability to local communities. Our basic education charter promotes strong SGBs that play a key role in improving the quality of schooling. Yes indeed, Honourable Members, Education is a societal matter.

Our Provincial Development Plan Vision 2030 promotes universal access to primary education and secondary school education. This also includes access which must be accompanied by quality teaching and learning, and comprehensive support that improves the schooling experience and e-learning opportunities. The delivery mechanisms for these undertakings will be anchored by strong coordination and involvement of different stakeholders, including business, academia, NGOs, organised labour, civil society, parents, learners and citizens at large.

The percentage of individuals aged five years and older who attend school has been consistently high for the Eastern Cape. Data from Statistics South Africa for this term of government points to the fact that virtually all children of school going age are in school. However, the effects of the pandemic cannot be discounted hence work continues in the provision of key support mechanisms such as our

quality nutrition programme and curriculum recovery and support programmes and a number of district and school support interventions. This work will continue in the medium term. We know that learners who are in school have been shown to achieve at higher levels than learners who are not in school. I am most proud of our parents, learners and teachers who notwithstanding the devastating socio-economic challenges that many face across the province, have been able to ensure that the province's learner attendance rates remain high and above the national average. I thank you all our parents and learners. Indeed, this is the Home of Legends.

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address, states as follows: *Access to quality education for all is the most powerful instrument we have to end poverty. We need to start with children who are very young, providing them with the foundation they need to write and read for meaning, to learn and develop.....the performance of learners from poorer schools is steadily improving, confirming the value of the support that government provides to them. The consistent improvement in results shows that there is a silent revolution taking place in our schools.*

## Budget Context and Funding Framework

Madam Speaker, as my Colleague MEC Mvoko submitted to this esteemed House in his 2023 Budget Policy Speech presentation, *at the core of our priorities is education as it is one of the tools we use to build and transform our socioeconomic standing as a*

*country*. It is critical to note as; contained our national and provincial budget documents, funds allocated to Education and Health mostly address shortfalls in compensation budgets resulting from previous budget reductions.

Overall, the Department has faced severe budgetary pressures which had an impact on the department's ability to carry out some of its planned activities, coupled with delivery challenges experienced in different facades of its operational spectrum. Despite this, the notable Improvements in 2022, particularly on examination outcomes, should be seen in the context of a system wide Education System Transformation Plan of the Department, whose strategic thrust is to maximise opportunities of learners achieving a good pass in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations while improving performance in the whole system.

Madam Speaker, the Department's expenditure increased from R37.507 billion in 2019/20 to a revised estimate of R39.796 billion in 2022/23. The 2023/24 budget allocation increases slightly by 3.3 per cent to R41.128 billion mainly due to additional funds provided for personnel and norms and standards in the baseline. The breakdown of the budget by Education Programmes is as follows:

- Programme 1 - Total expenditure has increased from R2.910 billion in 2019/20 to a revised estimate of R2.961 billion in 2022/23. The budget allocation for 2023/24 increases marginally by 0.3 percent. Over the medium period, the implementation of South African Schools Administration and Management Systems (SA-SAMS) continues to be a focal area to ensure proper learner

tracking and credible data. The Department is to further enhance organisational systems through the provision of various office support services, replacement of obsolete ICT equipment and devices and the appointment of personnel.

- Programme 2 - Overall expenditure increases from R30.734 billion in 2019/20 to R31.007 billion in 2022/23. The 2023/24 allocation also reflects a positive 4.7 percent from the current revised estimate mainly from additional funding provided in the baseline. At least 1,521,833 learners in public ordinary schools are to benefit from the No Fee School Funding in terms of the National Norms and Standards Policy. Furthermore, additional funding provides for the adequate resourcing for quality LTSM provision for all learners inclusive of school support programmes to ensure access and equity.
- Programme 3 - Overall expenditure increased from R135.162 million in 2019/20 to a revised estimate of R157.897 million in 2022/23, whilst 2023/24 shows a decline of 30.1 percent due to fiscal constraints. The growth in allocation over the outer years caters for inflationary adjustments and the entire funding goes towards subsidies to registered schools.
- Programme 4 - Overall expenditure increased from R829.719 million in 2019/20 to a revised estimate of R1.049 billion in 2022/23, and continues to show healthy growth in 2023/24 and over the period, primarily due to additional

funding provide for personnel costs and increased grant funding.

- Programme 5 - Expenditure on aggregate, increased from R811.895 million in 2019/20 to a revised estimate amount of R1.014 billion in 2022/23. A significant provision is as a result of increase funding for ECD norms and standards, which will enable the acquisition of sufficient learning material and training services for practitioners.
- Programme 6 - The overall expenditure increases from R1.579 billion in 2019/20 to a revised estimate of R2.054 billion in 2022/23. The 2023/24 budget allocation decreases by 11 per cent due to the effect of higher revised baseline following the rollover allocation in the 2022/23 financial year to further support the implementation of the schools infrastructure programmes.
- Programme 7 - Overall, expenditure increased from R506.794 million in 2019/20 to a revised estimate of R1.548 billion in 2022/23. The 2023/24 budget allocation increases by 2.2 percent to R1.583 billion due to continued implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI)

Due to resource constraints, the Department had to decrease its headcount declaration of 53 605 posts in respect of its 2022 Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) to 52 817 headcount in 2023 for both Public Ordinary and Special Schools. The PPN makes provision for posts in qualifying schools for the appointment of school-based

educators for critical subjects, posts for substitutes, special intervention, curriculum and growth and other-tongue languages. Therefore, an aggregate amount of R89.144 billion is set aside over the 2023 MTEF to fund the PPN, of which R28.374 billion is allocated for the 2023/24 financial year.

Furthermore, the Department will continue to prioritize the rationalization and realignment of unviable schools for optimum resource distribution through the densification of schools for enhanced and effective school management and thus improvements in learning outcomes. The Department will continue to ensure the provision of an appropriate package of support to viable secondary schools in Quintile 1 to 3. Provisioning of quality education is the main rationale for rationalization of small and unviable schools. The second objective is improved financial efficiency and re-distribution of resources to where they are most needed. The process of rationalisation of schools is complex, therefore, the rationalisation process will be informed by a Provincial education plan, based on needs assessment and emerging trends. Infrastructure revitalisation and development will be aligned to the rationalisation process.

Key amongst the reprioritisation drive was to accelerate the eradication of pit-toilets, beautification of schools and fencing of various schools in the province in 2023/24 financial year. A substantial portion of infrastructure budget for 2023/24 budget is reprioritized to address sanitation backlogs. Further reprioritisation of the baseline budget was undertaken to increase funding provision for LTSM, School furniture, coding and robotics, vocational and technical equipment, agricultural schools,

maintenance of ECD centres and ICT in schools. The department will continue to implement cost containment measures in the new financial year to redirect funding to focus areas of service delivery.

## Improvements in Quality Teaching And Learning

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members, we are a system on the rise though it is important for us to also agree that making progress in the Basic Education Sector requires a continual focus on our long-term policy aims and objectives while we also deal with challenges and issues as they arise. For example, in the last 15 years, we have increased the number of learners passing NSC from 50% in 2008 to 77% in 2022. During the same period we have more than doubled the percentage of learners who become eligible to pursue their studies at the university from 14,5% to 36.8%.

The global competitiveness of the South African education system is also evident from the World Education Forum's report titled "Countries with the best education systems in Africa", consulted 38 African countries on the quality of schooling in each nation. From amongst the African countries, South Africa was rated as the 4th top country after Mauritius, Tunisia and Seychelles. We are aware of the challenges we have with regards to ensuring that reading and numeracy skills of South Africa's learners are comparable to similarly developing countries. We also need to ensure that that we systematically address the adverse effects that the pandemic has had on gains and improvements both in participation and performance. However, we also must acknowledge that South Africa was improving at a speed that is rapid by international standards in the period before the pandemic. To be more specific,

we know that the country's progress in reading among primary learners was the second-fastest, after Morocco's, among countries in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). As our Honourable Premier Oscar Mabuyane states in his 2023 SOPA address, *with our sustained investment in education, we are propelling our province towards the achievement of the term target of above 80%. **This is a story of good progress.***

Our basic education system policy framework and objectives are simple but critical. Our children and young people need to be better prepared by their schools to read, write, think critically and solve numerical problems. These skills are the foundations on which further studies, job satisfaction, productivity and meaningful citizenship are based. Our vision for education in the province is premised on basic principles such as ensuring that learners attend school on time, every day, and take their schoolwork seriously. That they have respectful relationships with their friends and teachers. Our teachers are well-trained, and continually improving their capabilities and are committed to giving learners the best possible education, thereby contributing to the development of the nation. We need to ensure that teaching takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum. Through responsible leadership, our school leadership must promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond. Our parents should be well informed about what happens in the school, and receive regular reports about how well their children perform against clear standards that are shared by all schools.

Madam Speaker, the Grade 12 class of 2022 was the 9th cohort to sit for the National Senior Certificate Examination based on CAPS

curriculum, with a significant increase in the number of full-time enrolments from 95 787 in 2021 to 101 588 in 2022. There is a gradual improvement in the quality of the School Based Assessment submitted to Umalusi for resulting, and a persistent emphasis on formative School Based Assessment over the last 4 years has paying off well. All said and done, COVID-19 pandemic posed an unprecedented challenge to the education sector as a whole, the 2022 Grade 12 class was not spared of the unavoidable teaching, learning and assessment disruptions in their Grades 10 and 11.

The NSC pass rate of the Eastern Cape has been improving for the past five year from 57% in 2015 to 59% in 2016 to 65% in 2017; 71% in 2018 and reached a record milestone of 76.5% in 2019, a downturn of 68.1% due to the pandemic in 2020, rebound to 73% in 2021 and reached 77,3% in 2022, the highest rate ever reached by Eastern Cape post 1994. This is an impressive 4,3% from the 2021 achievement. This is +0.3% achievement above the set target of 77%. This shifted the national standing of the EC performance from position 7 in 2021 to position 6 in 2022. Given the high enrolments in the class of 2022, the total number of children that passed the National Senior Certificate stands at 73 386 making it 6616 more learners passing in 2022 compared to 2021. Bachelor passes increased by 2.5 % from 34.3% in 2021 to 36.8% in 2022.

Subject performance, across spectrum, improved. Of the 53 subjects that were written, 23 subjects have shown an upward trajectory, 21 subjects dropped by low margins and 9 remained unchanged. High enrolment and gateway subjects, with no less than 10 000 learners for the specific subject, showed commendable

improvements. Furthermore, Centre Performance per centile improved quite considerably, with 38 schools performing at 100%; 0.1% of schools performing below 10% ; and 8% improvement in the number of centres passing at 90% and above, from 158 in 2021 to 233 in 2022. At a national level, the province continues to occupy the top spot on Mathematics participation, even though we need to improve performance in the subject.

Honourable Members, district performance in the overall took a new turn in for the best in 2022, with three Districts performing above 80%, and no District below 70% at all. Alfred Nzo West is top performing at 82.7%, an improvement of 9% from 73,7% in 2021; Buffalo City Metro was second at 81.5%, an improvement of 2.5% from 79% in 2021, and Nelson Mandela was third at 80.4% an improvement of 2,2% from 78,2%, in 2021. Chris Hani East District became the most improved District at 10% improvement, followed by Alfred Nzo West at 9%, as well as OR Tambo Inland at 6,5%. The correlation between District performance and quality of their passes is retained in 2022. However, 6 of the 12 Districts performed above the Provincial average of 36.4% Bachelor pass, and three of the six are newcomers in the top three spot, and these are Chris Hani East, Alfred Nzo West and OR Tambo Inland. BCM was the top District at 43.5% bachelor pass; Chris Hani East became second at 41.3%; and Alfred Nzo West became third at 40.5%. Not a single District was below 30% Bachelor pass rate in 2022, an improvement from the two in 2021 of Joe Gqabi at 27.3% and OR Tambo Coastal at 28%.

Honourable Members, non-fee-paying schools were the biggest weight pullers in the 2022 NSC results. Compared to other

Provinces, 75.5% pass rate in Quintiles 1-3 schools ranked Eastern Cape at No.5 in South Africa, while Quintiles 4-5 at 89.2% ranked the province No. 3 nationally. 74.8% Accounting pass rate in Quintiles 1-3 schools ranked Eastern Cape at No.2 in South Africa, while Quintiles 4-5 at 87.9% ranked at No.3 in the national pass rates. 44.9% participation rate in mathematics ranked Eastern Cape at No.1 in South Africa, albeit Quintiles 1-3 pass rate at 44.9% remains low. However, with Quintiles 4-5 at 73.2% ranked Eastern Cape at No.5 among Fee Paying Schools performance. 68.6% Physics pass rate in Quintiles 1-3 schools ranked Eastern Cape at No.6 in South Africa. 3.7% distinction rate ranked Eastern Cape at No.4 nationally while Quintiles 1-3 distinction rate at 3.1% ranked Eastern Cape at No.2. These improvements in the lower quintiles show that the implementation of policies that seek to ensure that education is equitable and accessible to all in the province is beginning to bear fruit.

While the Grade 12 pass rate has been widely discussed and praised, the overall pass rate in the lower Grades has also been consistently performing above 80% for the last three years. In 2020 the pass rates for Grades 1-9 stood at 82%, and it improved to 91.7% in 2021, and now stands at 92.3% in 2022. We acknowledge that the assessments in the primary phase is not standardised and therefore might not be a true reflection of learner academic competencies. To this end, the province will be piloting the Systemic Evaluation from 2024, which will be nationally standardised.

There are significant systemic improvements that are contributing to this upward trajectory. First is the cohort survival rate across

phases, which is a good proxy for stability. The cohort survival rate across Districts stands at 96%, meaning the Department has been able to move 96% of our learners from Grade to Grade, showing a significant drop in the attrition rates of yester years.

Second is the improvement in the number of learners that are age appropriate for their respective grades in the GET Band. 97% of learners aged 7-17 are age appropriate relative to their grades, a huge improvement to the yester year scourge of over-agedness in the system. This kind of stability is highly appreciated as it also shows much needed improvements in the Girl- Child survival up to Grade 12.

I am proud to highlight that in the National learner awards ceremony run by the National Minister of Basic Education, 3 Eastern Cape learners managed to grab the National awards:

- Quintile 1: Position 3: **OR Tambo Coastal**; Nonkenge Gwiba; Toli Senior Secondary School.
- Quintile 3: Position 3: **Chris Hani East**; Landingwe Khanyisile; Nyanga Senior Secondary School.
- Special School: Position 3: **OR Tambo Inland**; Tongile Athi; Efata Special School.

### **The Top 3 Premier Awards for the 2022 National Senior Certificate Achievers were:**

- First position: **Nelson Mandela Metro**; Claassen Kian; Grey Boys High.
- Second position: **Nelson Mandela Metro**; Ristow Daniel; Grey Boys High.
- Third position: **OR Tambo Coastal**; Nonkenge Gwiba; Toli Senior Secondary School.

I wish to applaud the principals, teachers, support staff, and parents for the work they continue to do. Schools are at the coalface of quality basic education delivery. What you do at the school level, is what matters the most. The future of our learners, and the prosperity of our nation, is in our hands.

The 2022 academic year had its own challenges that hindered smooth and effective curriculum delivery. The context was completely different from the normal and usual context. Teaching, learning, monitoring and evaluation had to take place under challenging conditions, which included, among others, recovering learning losses suffered during 2020 and 2021. Implementation of Recovery Annual Teaching Plans (RATPs) was coupled with exposing the 2022 Grade 12 class to intensive assessment activities. This was done to mitigate the impact of not exposing these learners to full scale formal examinations in their grades 10 and 11 due to COVID-19 disruptions.

Our Curriculum interventions are based on basic principles of improving curriculum performance. These basic principles are comprehensive data analysis (to identify strengths and areas of intervention), development of targeted/differentiated intervention programmes, and establishment accountability systems aimed at managing performance.

Honourable Members, the effects of the pandemic will remain with us for years. However, improvements in 2022 must be seen in the context of a system wide Education System Transformation Plan of the Department, whose strategic thrust is to maximise opportunities

of learners achieving a good pass in the NSC Examinations while improving performance in the whole system.

For the 2022 school year, curriculum interventions were done in three phases of “push and hold” activities, namely, First Push: Identify and remedy (during Term 1), Second Push: Cover all basics (during term 2) and Last Push: Consolidate and practice (during term 3 and term 4). The intervention programmes for the academic year included extra tuition classes (in the form of morning and afternoon classes, weekend classes and vacation classes), streaming of virtual lessons, provision of additional Learner Support Material, additional assessment activities (ranged from topic tests, mock exams and pre-June and pre-Trial examinations).

The intervention programmes for the academic year included extra tuition classes (in the form of morning and afternoon classes, weekend classes and vacation classes), streaming of virtual lessons, provision of additional Learner Support Material, additional assessment activities (ranged from topic tests, mock exams and pre-June and pre-Trial examinations). We had virtual classes which were aimed at extra support for teaching and facilitate learning in all subjects. During examinations time virtual revision classes were conducted for all subjects with special focus on Accounting, Mathematics and Science.

Madam Speaker, the implementation of Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) and Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) in the province remains a fundamental transformational policy imperative. The Department through its Education Language Unit and working together with DBE and

NECT have continued work in the development of a national implementation strategy for MTBBE which is earmarked to be rolled out in all provinces in 2025.

In the past financial year, the Department together with PanSALB have rolled out advocacy programmes for the involvement of all stakeholders in language transformation programmes. Furthermore, PanSALB has assisted the Department in a number of interventions including the production of LTSM in African languages. In the academic year 2022 the Department afforded bi/multilingual trial exams through versioned/translated papers in six (6) subjects viz Mathematics, Life Sciences, History, Physical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences and Accounting. The Grade 12 Bi/Multilingual Trial Examinations Question Papers for 2022 were versioned and written in isiXhosa and Sesotho. Notable achievements include:

- The Eastern Cape is the only province to provide Lesson Plans in isiXhosa and Sesotho for Mathematics in Grade 4 to eight (8) with intention to strengthen the Mother Tongue based Bilingual Education in these cohorts.
- In 2022 Grade 12 Trial Bi/Multilingual examinations, the following subjects were versioned in isiXhosa/Eng and Sesotho/Eng: Mathematics, Life Science, History Physical Science, Agricultural Science and Accounting, Eight-six thousand, six-hundred and twenty (86 620) learners benefited bilingual question papers in 12 districts education districts of the province.
- Mathematics workbooks for Grade 4-9 were versioned and edited in isiXhosa and Sesotho with new orthographic rules (spelling and writing rules in both languages effected).

- IIAL Grades 1-3 workbooks for isiXhosa and Sesotho book 1 and 2 were translated/ versioned and edited with the current orthographic rules effected.
- PPN post provisioning of seventy-four personnel (74) for IIAL implementing schools were created.
- Developed Circular 1 of 2023 in protecting the gains of the transformation agenda for social cohesion and nation building regarding Language Policy implementation.
- The NECT lesson plans for Mathematics and NSTECH in isiXhosa and Sesotho from Grade 4-7 Sesotho were translated/ versioned and edited.
- Furthermore, glossaries and terminologies were developed in isiXhosa, Sesotho for Maths and NSTech is ready for authentication and standardisation by PanSALB
- The Eastern Cape Department of Education established partnerships and collaborations with higher education institutions to train teachers on bi/multilingual pedagogy courses.
- The ECDoE was awarded PanSALB National Multilingual Awards for 2022-2023 as the best Department in the country to implement Multilingualism.

The ECDoE is leading the country and assisting DBE to establish the very first Language Unit for the Department of Education. The department is also serving in DBE task team to draft a strategic plan to roll-out Mother Tongue education in 8 provinces.

## Capacity Building Interventions

Madam Speaker, our educators are the largest single occupational group and profession in the province. Their role has strategic importance for the intellectual, moral, and cultural preparation of our young people. They work in extremely complex conditions, largely due to the pervasive legacies of apartheid, but also as a result of the new policies needed to bring about change in

education. Thus, this makes it especially important to offer continuing professional teacher development (CPTD).

The Department has a Provincial Prospectus that is endorsed by Education Labour Relations Council which serves as a guide for all trainings and capacity building efforts. We have trained 20 069 teachers in Mathematics, Science, Languages including sign language and other subjects during 2022/23 financial year. There were 612 newly appointed Principals that were inducted and training in various leadership programmes is being provided to 3000 SMT members of under-performing schools together with their feeder schools.

The Department held a successful Women Conference in the past year targeting 200 female Principals in all 12 Districts. There are 800 women leaders that are currently receiving leadership training. Over 2420 newly appointed educators will be receiving support and orientation so as to assist them to settle well in the teaching profession. In 2023/24 we intend training teachers on key intervention areas, including though not limited to, Foundation Phase Reading Methodology (3000); Foundation Phase Numeracy content and methodology (5200); Mathematics content and methodology (5200); Literacy/ Language content methodology (5200).

Honorable Members, we are committed to the NDP vision of a capable and developmental state. Capable in that it has the capacity to formulate and implement policies that serve the national interest; developmental in that those policies focus on overcoming the root causes of poverty and inequality and building the state's

capacity to fulfil this role. To this end, the Department managed to train 10 006 school-based employees in various skills development programmes. In the implementation of school-based training and development programmes, priority has been given to Leadership and Management Training programmes, Financial Management, and ICT and Quality Management System (QMS) trainings. Trainings were also being implemented as per the skills needs of the department. In other levels of employment trainings were offered according to the needs of the office where one is placed and this was meant to ensure that employees are capacitated to perform the duties and responsibilities of the office they are placed under. These trainings included excel training, E-Persal records management amongst other programmes.

Districts are the coalface of quality basic education delivery and critical in school support interventions. Circuit Managers were empowered in 2022/23 to enhance the quality of monitoring and support to schools and that included training on the development of quality School Self Evaluation(SSE) and School Improvement Plans (SIPs) for them to coach and mentor schools. We had 2000 school principals participate in NECT leadership programmes. The Department implemented the Fundamentals of District Performance in collaboration with DBE the in Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Alfred Nzo East, Alfred Nzo West and O.R. Tambo Coastal.

Honourable Members, the Department remains committed in ensuring that the representation of women in strategic decision-making functions increases. There are a number of interventions and capacity building programmes for women principals, deputy principals and departmental heads underway. Whilst a lot of effort

and work has been done to ensure that the gender equity target of the department is met, we still have some way to go and we will accelerate work in ensuring we support and empower women leaders across the education landscape. The Department has developed and is implementing specialised leadership trainings meant for women to prepare them to take up leadership roles in the department. The representation of women in public ordinary schools has increased with 39% at principalship level, 47% for deputy principalship level and 71% at departmental heads level.

Madam Speaker, on the critical investment in our human capital, the Department offers bursaries to allow selected personnel and candidates to equip themselves with the Department offers bursaries to allow staff to equip themselves with the relevant knowledge and skills to cope with the present and ever-changing needs at the workplace. The Department also implements Bursaries to unemployed youth from previously disadvantaged backgrounds within the province as a means of opening up the new career path for the unemployed as well as allowing them to change their family livelihoods.

Under Programme 1, we have a total of 252 officials who were offered bursaries in various disciplines. From this cohort of 250 a total of 93 employees were enrolled for the Advanced Diploma in Public Management at Walter Sisulu University. This programme is meant to ensure that we have public servants who are knowledgeable in the prescripts of public service. I am also happy to announce to you Madam Speaker that Walter Sisulu University will be capping these 93 employees as they have managed to attain their qualifications.

For programme 2 bursaries a total of 855 school-based educators were being funded to study in various fields of study. Qualifications which are being studied include B.Ed. (Hon) Inclusive Education (188), Early Childhood Development (168) and B. Ed Autism Spectrum (300) and other various qualifications. The mentioned qualifications are being offered through a partnership with ETDP-SETA.

Under unemployed youth bursaries, the Department had 98 MEC bursary holders, these are youth who are recognised as top achievers in their Matric year and are studying towards various qualifications including Medicine. They are allowed to study at any university of their choice within the country. I am happy to announce that we have 9 students who have graduated in the 2022 academic year.

The Department was also funding students under the Mathew Goniwe bursary. The bursary is meant to ensure that there is a timely supply of educators, especially in areas considered to be priorities by the Province. Mathew Goniwe students were being funded under two categories which are the undergraduate level as well as the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The Department was funding 74 Mathew Goniwe PGCE students and 60 are set to graduate in May 2023. The Department also had 46 Mathew Goniwe undergraduate students in their books and 40 out of the 46 students will be conferred their degree in May 2023.

## Access for All: ECD, School Support, and Inclusive Education

During the State of the Nation Address in February 2019, the President announced that the responsibility of age 0-4 Early Childhood Centres (ECD) would be migrated from the Department of Social Development (DSD) to the Department of Basic Education (DBE), thus making ECD services to be from age 0 to 9. As of 01 April 2022 the Eastern Cape was able to assume full responsibility for the ECD function.

The rationale being that the period between birth and age 9 is a crucial and elusive window of opportunity, as brain development after this period occurs at a significantly slower rate and builds on the foundation established in early childhood, such that acquired competencies become cumulative. Similarly, addressing a lack of optimal cognitive and psychological development during this crucial period becomes increasingly difficult and expensive as children age. Consequently, the less it costs and the narrower the gap, the less intervention is required.

According to the Thrive by Five April 2022 Index Report, the Eastern Cape is home to 839 000 children under the age of 5, and 77% of the counted children live below the poverty line. 27.4% of the children in the province do not achieve the expected score for Social Relation with peers and adults. ECD can therefore be conceptualized as a social obligation to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

Due to the unavailability and poor quality of ECD services for

children from low-income families, ECD services offered by the Eastern Cape Department of Education are notable for their ability to bridge the poverty gap. In recognition of ECD as a public good, the combined evidence supports the argument that the government should invest in subsidies targeted at the poorest children in order to achieve the highest social return on investment. To ensure that all children receive an equal start in life, the entire country has to transform its ECD service delivery.

Despite the challenges the Department faced when the function was shifted, the ECDoE can be commended for its ability to ensure that the payment of centres has been seamless and that centres are paid in time to benefit the 83 150 children of the Province.

The province currently has 5 323 ECD centres in operation, with 2 786 of these centres registered and funded by the Department. 514 centres are in the process of registration and 2 025 are not registered as ECD centres. In the 2023/24 financial year, 390 centres are targeted for registration and support from intersectoral partners will expedite the processes.

In 2023 the focus for ECD funding is on three objectives:

- to expand coverage of services from 0-9.
- to ensure that poorer children, and children with developmental difficulties and/or disabilities are not excluded because of the cost of services; and
- to improve the quality-of-service provision across the province.

The policy recognizes that ECD cost structures include both fixed and variable costs, some of which are proportional to

the number of children utilizing the ECD services.

The purpose of the National School Nutrition Programme is to enhance learning capacity and promote access to quality education by providing nutritious meals to learners in quintiles 1-3 Public Ordinary Schools and targeted special schools. The impact of the Programme is linked to improved quality of life through access to lifelong learning. The National School Nutrition Programme is funded through a conditional grant and the output activities are aligned to the Division of Revenue Bill which are gazetted in the annual conditional grant framework. In 2023/24 the Department has been allocated a budget of 1 064 793 883.

lifelong learning. The National School Nutrition Programme is funded through a conditional grant and the output activities are aligned to the Division of Revenue Bill which are gazetted in the annual conditional grant framework. In 2023/24 the Department has been allocated a budget of 1 064 793 883 .

The National School Nutrition Programme is implemented using a decentralized model and provides resources to schools for the purpose of employing Volunteer Food Handlers, Procuring Food Items and Equipment, Procuring Gas/ Fuel. The National School Nutrition Programme in the Province of the Eastern Cape implemented strategic directives of addressing food and nutrition insecurity due to the increased levels of poverty. The breakfast programme started assisting schools through the Provincial Anti-poverty strategy which sought to identify the most vulnerable wards. In 2023/24, Breakfast meals will be provided to 10 27 007. The total number of learners that will be benefitting from the NSNP

in 2023/24 is 1 628 811, covering Quintiles 1-3 Public Ordinary Schools and targeted Special Schools .

Honourable Members, the Department will continue to increase the number of Public Special Schools throughout the province, particularly within rural areas. Currently, there are 24 Public Special Schools that are serving as resource centres and are providing specialised support to full-service schools and neighbouring. 26 Specialists in the form of Therapists and Psychologists were appointed through the LSPID Conditional Grant 300 learners in Autism schools to mitigate the shortage of specialists.

Moreover, the Department is also increasing the capacity of Public Special Schools to accommodate learners with high-level support needs. The Department will make sure that the education, training, and innovation system caters for different needs and accommodate all learners to produce highly skilled individuals.

The Hangklip Primary school hostel in Queenstown has been identified for a Special School to accommodate learners on the Autism spectrum and part of Gali Thembani to be a school of skills. In the 2023/24, the Department is targeting to enrol 10500 learners in special schools and all of them will be supplied with assistive devices.

The Department will continue to work closely with the Department of Transport and Provincial Treasury in ensuring the effective implementation of the scholar transport support programme for our learners. 103 000 learners will be benefitting in the current financial year.

The Department has re-launched the District Quality Teaching & Learning Campaign (QLTC) that is cascaded to the level of Circuits as well as schools in most Education Districts with the assistance of DBE. This is viewed as achievement as it is in line with the realisation of Vision 2030; African Agenda 2063, Africa Charter, Chapter 2, 9 & 10 especially Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is the signatory of the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) MOU with ECDoH and ECDSO for further integration in implementing health activities in schools and communities. The collaboration in the current year is on Measles vaccination, COVID-19 and HPV vaccination, general deworming and Vitamin A administration to learners who are 05 Months to 18 years of age.

There is Mobile Health Bus which offers specialists medical staff that provides all the screening services for Grades R, 1 and 4, for Public Ordinary and Special Schools. These learners are screened for sight, hearing, and oral health. This does not exclude learners identified by educators from other Grades, including those who might be needy but are not captured in the Departmental Data Capturing System that is school based.

Peer Education clubs are established and supported to assist learners to be able to cope with pressure points in their schooling life. Key to mention is the ability of the ECDoE to conduct the Boys/Amakrwala camps pre and post visit to initiation schools, in collaboration with the House of Traditional Leaders (HoTL) and

Municipalities. This is yet another effort to remodel the youth for sound relations in their schools, families, and communities. As part of strengthening Peer Education, the Sub-Directorate School Health and Life Skills is piloting in 2023 the establishment of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in five hot spot schools with hostels and five hot spot schools without hostels.

Also earmarked for 2023 is Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) training and Learner Pregnancy Prevention and Management Policy (LPPM) advocacy to Life Orientation and Life Skills Educators in the seven non-pilot Education Districts namely ORTI, CHE, CHW, JG, AE, AW, and SB, using the Scripted Lesson Plans (SLPs). The advocacy is done to School Management Teams (SMTs) and School Governing Body members.

## Resourcing Basic Education

Madam Speaker, the Department delivered 100% on LTSM for the 2023 academic year, which covers Textbooks, Stationery and Workbooks as well as Graded Readers to grades 1 to 7 learners. The supply, usage and retention of LTSM must be a collaborative effort by all stakeholders and supported by districts, school leadership teams, teachers, learners and their parents.

The Department has reprioritized its budget allocations for the 2023/24 financial year to ensure that priority is given to learners and schools. Funding for schools will therefore be funded at an affordable rate per learner wherein all learners will be funded as per gazetted norms and standards. Furthermore, additional funding for schools also allows for the adequate resourcing of textbooks and

stationery (LTSM) and also the timeous delivery of books to schools.

We aim to develop, support and resource the agricultural schools by ensuring that there is skilling and capacitation of the school communities, learners and educators. Key is to ensure that over time there is appropriate funding and provision of the necessary resources, both physical and human as well as appropriate infrastructure for effective farming activities.

The establishment and resourcing of Agricultural schools remains a key policy imperative for the Department. The Eastern Cape Province is one of the poorest provinces in the country, consisting mainly of rural areas. As a contribution towards food security and farming skills, the Department, through agricultural schools, commits to continue to improve the resourcing of existing agricultural schools towards meeting the requisite minimum enterprizes that distinguishes this category of focus schools.

## E-Learning and Partnerships

The ECDoE has in the past three years developed an online Learner Support System with a sound depository of Learner Support and Teaching Material. These were uploaded on the department's websites together with previous years' question papers. Districts and schools were helped to access these with considerable ease through the ECDOE websites at [www.eccurriculum.co.za](http://www.eccurriculum.co.za) and [www.ecexams.co.za](http://www.ecexams.co.za).

Madam Speaker, the Department has taken the initiative of e-learning to greater heights. For the 2022/23 financial year, the Department was able to secure several partnerships with entities such as Cell C, MTN, Snapplify and Click Foundation, Old Mutual, STATSSA, SETA, and Nudle Group. These partnerships assisted the department in resourcing schools with ICT devices for teaching and learning, and access to educational software.

Honourable members, The National Development Plan (NDP) highlights the importance of partnerships between education and stakeholders across society. The province enjoyed support from various organizations that provided support in various districts. These organizations include Maths & Science Infinity, Jenn Consulting, NECT, Eskom/ TracSA and Kutlwanong. These organizations focused on various support areas and key subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Languages, Life Skills and also E-Learning solutions. Eastern Cape Gambling Board assisted with the provision of Science kits which assisted in subjects like Physical and Technical Sciences. These partners were helpful in the organization and coordination of extra tuition classes and with Differentiated Additional Learner Support Materials.

Other partnerships like Snapplify – will give learners access to their e-library having access to an array of content as from 2023. On the other hand, Click Foundation is operating in 26 schools and giving access to a Literacy and Numeracy programme – providing each school with an ICT lab with tablets loaded with their reading eggs software. Additional 40 schools will be added in the programme in 2023.

MTN donated 50 tablets to a school Mdibaniso in Amathole West for Grade 12 to have access to the MTN online school. Moreover, Cell C donated a computer lab to Gobizizwe Agricultural High school in OR Tambo Inland. Also, Old Mutual runs a literacy and numeracy programme in 50 GET schools, divided among 25 schools in Amathole East and 25 schools in Chris Hani East. This programme is implemented by Jumpstart and Class Act and come with e-Learning element as tablets and educational digital content is being used in these schools.

We also had the pleasure of STATS SA donating 8000 tablets, which were distributed in 14 schools per district. Enduku JSS in Chris Hani East District was one of the 1st schools to receive STATS SA tablets on the 9th of February 2023. These were launched together with Coding and Robotics resource roll-out. On aggregate STATS SA donated Fifty (50) tablets per school for the 168 schools across the districts which are currently being distributed. On top of these tablets, 108 schools will receive SETA donated tablets, comprising of nine (9) schools per district, with a consignment of 80 tablets per school.

Madam Speaker, all these tablets are to be utilized for teaching and learning purposes only. The other roll out to benefit 116 schools is the E-Leaning solution, which will be the deployment of the smart classroom solution inclusive of multigrade, special schools and mainstream schools from Primary to High Schools. Initially, 300 schools were planned, but due to budget constraints - 116 schools have been approved will be resourced with an E-Learning solution (e-Library solution). This E-Learning solution (E-Library) to be used

as rotating mobile solution amongst teachers and learners in each targeted school. In lieu of embracing the 4IR the E-Teaching and Learning Directorate facilitated virtual lessons in collaboration with Subject specialists and expert teachers in support of Grade 12 Class of 2022- 15 Subjects were supported- 325 schools had access to the virtual lessons – lesson broadcasted through 3 provincial broadcasting studios and MS Teams. The other remote learning platforms were used to broadcast lessons through Community Radio Stations and National Radio Stations – Umhlobo Wenene and Tru FM, Woza Matric Channel on DSTV 122 and 319, Telematics Facebook Page. The Department has extended the Virtual Reality project to Year 1 2023 and targeted 11 Technical schools; 1 Cofimvaba Science Centre and 4 Maritime schools

## Infrastructure Provision

The Department has made positive progress in the implementation and completion of a number infrastructure projects across the province. It is noteworthy that a hostel at Thembisa Special School in O.R Tambo Inland has been completed and handed over. The Department's investment in this facility reinforces its vision of providing an inclusive, high-quality basic education system. Furthermore, basic services have been provided to schools, with 23 schools receiving water supply, 13 receiving electricity, and 12 receiving sanitation, while the Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) has delivered 182 in the Province in 2022/23.

The education infrastructure program received a 29.7% increase in its adjusted final budget in 2022/23 financial year compared to last year. This funding in the province is the largest single in-year

investment made in the past ten years. With this budget, the Department completed three major schools in the province: Vukile Tshwete Secondary School in Amathole West, Mqhokweni Primary School in Alfred Nzo East, and Sophatisana Senior Secondary School in Buffalo City Metro. Furthermore, 26 schools have received a total of 254 classrooms, with 4 schools receiving 16 specialist classrooms. Another five schools are expected to be completed this year.

Honourable Members, for the coming financial year, the construction of previously abandoned projects is on course with ten major projects of above R20million in construction, these include Ntukayi Senior Secondary School in Alfred Nzo East, Khayaletu Special School in Buffalo City, Sitoza Senior Secondary School in Chris Hani East and many more in pursuit of building the necessary appropriate infrastructure. As indicated by the Premier, Government has prioritising the building of a new hostel in Healdtown Comprehensive School under Amathole West.

The Department is committed to dealing with backlogs around sanitation and increasing the number of schools which meet the minimum infrastructure requirements. In 2023/24, the Department is targeting to build 31 Grade R classrooms. Further investments on infrastructure will be delivered through the ASIDI Programme which is a prerogative of the DBE. The province is also targeting to offer the following services to schools: 100 schools with fencing, 50 schools with decent sanitation, 20 with electricity infrastructure and 280 with water infrastructure.

## Education Contribution to the Provincial Economy

The department is hosting 258 ETDP-SETA interns placed in schools and all district offices. ETDP-SETA interns are placed under various categories including social workers, professional graduates, IT, finance, special needs programme and general assistants. These interns are strategically placed within the department, professional graduates include researchers and internal auditors whilst social work interns are social workers placed in special schools as well as district offices.

The Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) has become the flagship programme in terms of alleviating youth unemployment due to its capability of benefiting youth in every corner across the Province. In the 2022/23 financial year PYEI appointed youth from April 2022 to August 2022 with 31 103 unemployed youth benefiting. Another major achievement by the PYEI is the completion of training for handyman/women training. I am proud to announce that the handyman/women training was first introduced by the Eastern Cape Province, and it has gained interest from all PYEI implementing PEDs. The department managed to produce 1200 handyman/women and these youth have been equipped with a skill that they can use beyond the initiative by setting up their businesses in the community. I am also pleased to announce to you that the PYEI project is continuing with Phase 4 already commenced on the 1st of February 2023. The department is expected to appoint 40 100 youth in the PYEI Phase 4.

I am proud to share with the House that in efforts of ensuring that beneficiaries of our Military Veterans are supported the Department



recruited bursary holders for Military Veterans. The Department successfully recruited 15 beneficiaries across 5 Districts in the Province. As I stand here Madam Speaker, 5 out of the 15 beneficiaries will be conferred with their qualifications in May 2023. The driving force of the Eastern Cape economy rest in the youth, which makes youth development and capacitation a priority. The department has the mandate to contribute to poverty alleviation in the province besides its core business of providing quality education for all. In its endeavours to alleviate poverty and capacitate the unemployed youth, the department has come up with various programmes that address Social Inclusion, social capital and safe communities, Human Development, Food and Nutrition Security Initiatives and Income Security Initiatives. Various initiatives have been implemented by the department for the youth including Internships, EPWP, Bursaries and Presidential Youth Employment Initiative. Under the Departmental internship programme 761 unemployed graduates were placed under various workstations, EPWP managed to create 1 868 employment opportunities against 1 061 which was attained in the previous financial year meaning EPWP increased its employment opportunities by 57%. EPWP programmes include safety patrollers, school gardeners and cleaners, social behaviour change agents, interpreters, walking buses, caregivers in special schools, data capturers, and farm assistants. In the 2023/2024 financial year, the Department under EPWP will create 2 372 work opportunities which means that there is additional 504 unemployed youth.

One of the pillars of our Education System Transformation Plan is the contribution of the Department to economic growth and development of the province. The Department is adhering to the

Local Economic Development Framework (LEDF). Designated groups and SMME's have been targeted in the procurement of goods and services up to the threshold value of R1m by the Department for the past 2022/23 financial year with 95% allocated to SMME's, 87% allocated to the youth, 51 % allocated to Women and 2.2% allocated to Military Veterans.

Furthermore, the departmental policy makes provision for the appointment of SMME's so as to promote local economic development and SMMEs through subcontracting which resulted in SMME's benefitting yearly in the LTSM process. More specifically, forty (40) SMME's benefitting through textbook distribution, Six Local Economic Development (LED) Partners through the provision of stationery, two local Stationery Manufacturers, Fifty-five (55) SMME's benefitting through stationery distribution.

Through the National School Nutrition Programme, the Department will create employment for 12 661 Food Handlers. They will be getting a stipend of 1 700 a month. We have also targeted 1200 SMMEs for provision of NSNP. This will help in alleviating poverty in our communities and also contribute to reduction of unemployment.

## Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy

Honorable Members, the first priority in 2023/24 is to improve the quantity and quality of learner performance across the system. This will be done through a comprehensive Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy (LAIS). The plan seeks to translate key policy pronouncements and strategic goals set by the Department into specific activities which can be implemented at various levels



of administration. The plan is driven by targets which are based on the amount of work which can be done at various intervals in the course of the academic year. In 2023/24 the target is to propel the Province to 80% and above, with no lower grades performing below 90%. The objective of the LAIS Programme are as follows:

- To rollout a programme of action for LAIS over a period of three years.
- To deal decisively with the factors that cause the Education system in the Eastern Cape to have poor learner outcomes.
- To promote collaboration particularly at district level
- To promote the sustainability of the gains of LAIS by assisting the underperforming schools while motivating the good performers to soar to greater heights.

Performance improvement will not change the quality of results if Maths and Science performance is not altered drastically. In 2023/24 the Department will provide undivided attention to Maths and Science improvement through a dedicated provincial strategic framework. The Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (MSTE) is directed at increasing the participation of learners in MST subjects and improving performance in Mathematics and Science. It is also aimed at increasing and enhancing human resource capacity to deliver quality MSTE.

The Department in its strategic outlook, will pursue 4 strategic aims, viz:

- To provide quality learning for all learners through relevant MST Curriculum and Interventions

- To improve Teacher Demand, Supply, Utilization, Development and Support
- To Improve Provision, Management and Effective Utilization of Resources
- To Improve Partnership to Enhance Quality MST Education

Honorable members, the Department is committing to reduce the number of underperforming circuits and schools by 5-10% to achieve the target of 80% NSC results pass rate. This will be done through the following interventions:

- Employment of Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors.
- Strengthening of monitoring, support and accountability to underperforming school principals in line with Circular D2 of 2017.
- Strengthening of support given to School Management Teams (SMT) on Instructional Leadership, through collaboration with NECT
- Strengthening of accountability sessions for circuit managers as per the provisions of approved Circuit Management Framework.
- MEC Outreach Programme which provide dialogue with school principals.
- The implementation of Fundamentals of District Performance Programme will continue in Chris Hani West, Joe Gqabi & Sarah Baartman and O.R. Tambo Coastal in 2023/24 financial year.

Honourable Members, ECD is the foundation of our schooling system. The first priority for 2023 is the establishment of a viable

Institutional framework for the rollout of ECD programs, and key tasks will include:

- Establishing a provincial institutional structure that defines roles and responsibilities.
- Setting up multi-sectoral ECD implementation teams at Head Office and District levels,
- Developing the capacity of community ECD centre management teams and create a management manual for ECD centres.
- Establishing data management, information and reporting systems based on key ECD indicators for the province that can be integrated into the national information system (EMIS, SASAMS)
- Aligning the Eastern Cape ECD M&E strategy with that of the National DBE and DPME
- Implementing awareness campaigns on ECD

Secondly, the Department will prioritise increasing equal access for all 0-6-year-old children to early stimulation, meaningful and effective education, enough nourishment, quality health care, and safety, with special emphasis on:

- Integration of nutrition, child protection, and primary health care into existing infant and toddler health and nutrition programs.

- Integration of family ECD package into training for health professionals and educate community leaders and parents about the significance of ECD and child protection.
- Expansion of community-based mother and child primary health care services.
- Development of screening techniques to detect children with special needs and developmental delays and incorporate intervention programs for children with special needs and developmental delays into ECD programs.
- Provision of ECD infrastructure and equipment in order to establish a standardised model of an ECD centre per sector (community-based, school-based, and centres for children in vulnerable circumstances).
- Establish ECD pre-service and in-service training (accreditation and professional development) and generate ECD textbooks and a tutors' guide.
- Integration of ECD supervision, mentoring, and monitoring support into the induction training for all sector officials.
- Educate communities on child rights and protection, particularly the prevention of child abuse.

Lastly, we are prioritising the design and rollout of a variety of high-quality, developmentally-appropriate ECD programs that support the care, safety, and development of children, focusing on their cognitive development in terms of emergent numeracy concepts

and language acquisition, with an emphasis on reading readiness. Focus will be mainly on:

- Establishing a dynamic, text-rich environment that promotes the early development of literacy
- Promoting access to age-appropriate reading material
- Through Departmental LTSM process, is the acquisition of stimulation material
- Capacitating practitioners on cognitive development resources and use thereof

However, only an improved Inter-Sectoral Collaboration programme will strengthen implementation progress of the ECD targets to improve the educational circumstances of children in the province.

## Reading for Meaning

In June 2019, the President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, announced in his State of the Nation Address, that one of government's "five fundamental goals for the next decade" is that all children should be able to read for meaning by age ten. In response to the call by the president, the Eastern Cape developed a Reading Strategy and a Campaign to improve reading that will be implemented over the next 8 years starting from 2022 to 2030.

The Department has secured a total budget of R24 million for the first cohort of 400 schools to purchase grade appropriate readers for Grades 1-6 to support reading in 2023/24. This will be

supplemented with intensive training to approximately 4 000 educators Grades 1-6 on how to teach reading in all the Home Languages of the province. As the Department invests in this project for the next few years it is hoped that the province will reap the benefits of learners who are able to read with meaning by the required age and as we improve reading, we know that we will also improve learning in the lower grades which will ultimately have benefits for learning in the higher grades.

Madam speaker, there is much that be said about performance improvements, but the key is in the reading capabilities and culture of reading in general. The Presidential call for all children to **'read with meaning'** by the age of ten has led to the launch of an Eastern Cape Reading Strategy in 2022. The strategy goes beyond the call of ensuring ten year olds that can read, but extends itself more to include the reading needs of all learners from Grades 1-9. The need has become more dire in the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic. The strategy seeks to:

- build best practice in the teaching of reading and language skills
- encourage an enthusiasm and desire for reading.
- improve the reading ability of learners so that they are able to contribute to economic growth.
- build teachers' capacity to provide top quality teaching in all grades.
- provide teachers with the necessary reading resources to teach reading effectively.
- provide the foundation of digital literacy that will enable learners to embrace the technological world.

The overall design is based on a *Campaign* model and a detailed *Strategy*. The *Campaign* part suggests an ongoing community driven and home embedded campaign that keeps the strategy alive by celebrating it at regular intervals so that we do not forget its importance. The *Strategy* part assumes that schools are drivers of implementation, and the Department provides support.

In line with professional capacity development needs of teachers, the Department will be launching an Eastern Cape Reading Academy, an online Teacher Training Model whose purpose is to train, develop and support Foundation Phase teachers on the methodologies and strategies of teaching children to read with meaning. It's implemented on the Moodle platform where it practically demonstrates these methodologies with the use of videos that are part of the course content.

Furthermore, the Department is preparing the system for 2023 to roll-out IIAL in Grade 4 and MTBBE in Grade 8. The DBE sector plans agree on following matters to champion a meaningful implementation on use of isiXhosa, Sesotho, promotion of the use of South African Sign Language (SASL) and Khoi & Nama language as languages of teaching, learning and assessment.

## Skills for a Changing World

In line with emerging technologies that include the internet of things, robotics and artificial intelligence, the Department is piloting a Grade R-9 Coding and Robotics Curriculum Framework to address a broad range of requisite competencies. This new subject is aimed



at creating digitally literate learners equipped with the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes fit for the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution and beyond. For 2023/24, the Eastern Cape is piloting a Coding and Robotics curriculum in 136 schools, made up of 25 schools in Grades R-3 and 111 schools offering Grade 7.

### **Challenges:**

- Eastern Cape Province is deeply affected by rationalization and some schools are closed down due to numbers.
- This is the biggest challenge as we have to change schools time and again and this affects smooth progress in terms of implementation.
- Multigrade schools are struggling to implement Coding and Robotics as they are unable to attend workshops.
- Advocacy of Coding and Robotics to newly selected schools and Grade 8 and 9 school managers has not yet taken place and as such schools are not implementing yet.

### **Successes:**

- 60% of piloting schools have received Coding and Robotics kits and mediation has taken place to all schools.
- Mirae Robotics has established an online support for all the schools that have received kits and teachers are in touch with the facilitators to ensure effective utilization of kits in schools.
- Two Eastern Cape schools have reached the finals of the Sita Coding and Robotics challenge and will be representing the Province in Mpumalanga, March 2023.

The plan for the SITA CSR's High School Robotics Challenge aims to help Grade 8 and 9 learners who are part of the schools engaged

in the Coding and Robotics pilot project, develop and enhance knowledge in the robotics space and enable them to develop skills in this area. Out of the 100 schools that entered the competition Nationally, 2 schools from Eastern Cape made to the top 20, namely Ntapane J.S.S. in OR Tambo Coastal and Zinyosini S.S.S. in Alfred Nzo West District

Honourable Members, the Three Stream Model is aimed at increasing the number of learners participating in quality skills programmes and the number of schools offering a core skills-based curriculum. The Department is conducting a pilot project in 10 public ordinary schools to introduce the technical occupational stream. The pilot begun in 2021 with an intake of grade 8 learners and proceeded to grade 9 in 2022. The 10 schools introduced at least 1 technical occupational subject from the list of 13 approved subjects and “drop” one GET subject: either Technology, Creative Arts and/or Economics and Management Sciences. The pilot is enabling the province to determine a full-scale roll-out of the technical occupational curriculum to further public ordinary schools in 2023.

The development and expansion of skills is another priority area for the Eastern Cape. Investment in a Vocational or Occupational pathway is seen not only as a means of giving learners a good start to their future but is also a means of developing learners to support themselves, their families and economy of the province. It is clear that a basic academic qualification today is not enough to find meaningful employment as is evident in the high unemployment rate that is being faced by many graduates today. With the advent of the fourth industrial revolution (4th IR) it has become imperative

for young people in particular to constantly reinvent themselves in order to stay relevant in the job market.

The Eastern Cape Government is therefore committed to levitating the notion of the Three Stream Curriculum Pathway as it will create opportunities for many learners to pursue careers that can benefit both the individual and the economy. To this end the Department is proud to announce that for the first we have secured a budget of R25 million for schools with Occupational and Vocational subjects to improve and augment the infrastructure and equipment used in Occupational and Vocational subjects before the implementation of the skills subjects from Grade 8 in 2024/25.

Plans are also in place to train educators in the new Occupational Subjects and the Department still pursuing ways to bring specialist educators and artisans on board to teach the practical components of the Occupational subjects. It is also the intention of the department to provide bursaries to qualified artisans to complete the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) to be able to formally teach in schools.

In line with our Framework for Skills for a Changing World, the province is further expanding the training of both educators and learners to respond to emerging technologies including the internet of things, coding and robotics and artificial intelligence". The Department has to this end invested in training and equipment in Grades R-3 in 25 schools and in Grades 4-7 in 111 schools and have plans to extend the training of Coding and Robotics to more schools in the new financial year.

## Digital Transformation and E-Education

The Department will finalise the [www.ecdoe.online](http://www.ecdoe.online) platform, this will be a provincial Learning Management System (LMS) with content cutting across all grades and this will be finalized in a period of Five years (incrementally including grades and selected subjects- starting with exit Grades Grade 12, 9, 6 and 3 in 2023-24, then all other selected subjects and all Grades in the outer years 2025-2027. Through E-Teaching and Learning Strategy will see deployment of an E-Learning solution (E-Library Solution) to 130 schools as per 2023/24 budget allocation (inclusive of multigrade, special schools and mainstream schools from Primary to High Schools). The E-Learning solution in each school is to be used as a rotating mobile solution amongst teachers and learners in each targeted school – the solution will provide: 20 : 2-in 1 devices (notebooks) in a mobile lockable trolley, 1 - C3 content server (pre-loaded with DBE content, 1 Visualiser, 1 Data projector, Speakers, Interactive white board (depending on budget)

The deployment of Smart Classroom will be extended to 12 more schools in the province 1 per District in 2023, over a period of two years (2024-2025) number of schools to be at least 3 schools per District. The Department will provide digital content software from Grade R-12 so as to support schools that have been resourced with tablets and other ICT devices for teaching and learning in 2023/24 financial year. In 2023/24, 142 schools will be trained on ICT professional development. The other cohort of school to be trained – is from all schools to be resourced in 2023/24 = 130 schools + 12 schools = 142 schools. The Department will revamp two virtual broadcasting studios: Cofimvaba Science Centre and Mandla



Makupula Education Leadership Institute with stable connectivity and modern broadcasting equipment- cameras, production system, sound proofed microphones, desktop LED screen/computers, sound proofed walls, production room with sound proofed glass, carpeted floors, studio furniture and air conditioner. The Department will also revamp the studios to ensure quality lessons broadcasting as part of E-Learning solution.

Information Communication Technology is a key focus and the biggest drive and investment is now towards integration, effecting change management to achieve improved electronic administration through maximised usage of the Office 365 suite. The Department will explore more opportunities for new educational technologies and search ways to utilise ICT in improving our administration systems, supporting teachers and learners at schools. Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) will continue to serve as a central hub for data management, and its goal is to position the system to serve as a more proactive source of data for the Department, assisting it in making quick and informed decisions across the sector.

Honourable Members, as our Sector Plan states, appropriately planned and utilised, digital learning can lead to high learning outcome achievements. The Department of Education has developed and will operationalise its Digital Transformation Strategy to utilise digital technologies to improve learning outcomes for the province for the next 5 years. This will entail the deployment of digital technologies for education including virtual learning, electronic distribution of learning materials and collaborative platforms for learning.

Madam Speaker, as part of the programme to improve school functionality in our public schools with a focus on school administration and enhancing curriculum delivery and management; the Department, through its Education System Transformation Plan and Digital Transformation Strategy, has embarked on a project to roll out supported ICT Services in 2 000 schools in the province. The support is inclusive of all ICT infrastructure at schools and is thus structured to enable effective and efficient physical and remote ICT support. The project is targeting to have a minimum 500 schools fully enabled and benefiting from the ICT Support Services by the first quarter in the coming financial year and the Department aims plan to have 2 000 schools fully supported in the medium term.

## Educational Partnerships

Madam Speaker, the Department successfully hosted its first ever Partnership Indaba last year 27 – 28 October 2022 themed “**to invest in education is to invest in the future**”. The purpose of the Indaba was to:

- To appreciate and acknowledge the role partners play in the Department.
- To identify key areas of collaboration for partnerships.
- To enhance the quality of education given to learners through partnerships, through variety of means such as; enhancing public relations, seeking additional funding, and jointly working towards a particular cause or issue.

Partners and potential partners ranging from industry players, Higher Education Institutions, Education Stakeholders, Community

Organisations, NGOs, sister departments and all stakeholders with interest in basic education were invited and attended. Madam Speaker, a smart classroom was donated by Nuddle Group, a company specialising in digital education. The smart classroom was launched on 3rd March 2023 at Richard Vara Technical High School. More pledges were also made to collaborate with the Department in the delivery of improved quality education in the province.

Madam Speaker talks with the @43 Air School have also been resuscitated to look at the best partnership model for provision of quality aeronautical and maritime education in the province. In 2023/24, the Department plans to hold partnership engagements with different industries in the province to identify opportunities that can benefit learners of the Eastern Cape and reduce unemployment in the province.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education and the Automotive Industry Development Centre EC have agreed on a plan that seeks to collaboratively support learner education in a way that creates value chain from basic education to active economic participation. In particular, the two institutions identified Mathematics as the main enabler towards the realization of this goal. The subject will be supported from senior primary, grade 9, and secondary schooling system, grades 10-12 for intervention. Through this intervention, it is envisaged that by the time learners write NSC they will be both academically and emotionally prepared to take up career opportunities in the technical disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The official launch of the partnership will take place in July 2023.

## Conclusion

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to our partners, Trade Unions, SGBs, parents, teachers, learners, and all department officials who are working tirelessly to ensure that teaching and learning is taking place in a safe environment. As we enter into this new financial year, let's continue to soldier on, working together to take teaching and learning in our province to a higher level of world class education. Together we can do it.

Madam Speaker, a word of gratitude goes to:

The HOD and Departmental staff for technical guidance and support

My family for their untiring support

**I THANK YOU**

FD Gade

MEC for Education

Eastern Cape Department of Education

**2023 MTEF BUDGET ALLOCATION**

Programme Allocations	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Budget Allocation over 2023 MTEF
	Expected Outcomes	Medium-term estimates			
Administration	2 961 840	2 970 509	3 067 999	3 207 354	9 245 862
Public Ordinary School Education	31 007 924	32 453 782	33 079 709	34 643 178	100 176 669
Independent School Subsidies	157 897	110 345	115 299	120 464	346 108
Public Special School Education	1 049 956	1 118 730	1 230 454	1 307 224	3 656 408
Early Childhood Development	1 014 917	1 062 238	1 119 076	1 218 924	3 400 238
Infrastructure Development	2 054 851	1 829 305	1 782 388	1 862 239	5 473 932
Examination and Education Related Services	1 548 621	1 583 341	592 766	619 318	2 795 425
<b>Total</b>	<b>39 796 006</b>	<b>41 128 250</b>	<b>40 987 691</b>	<b>42 978 701</b>	<b>125 094 642</b>
<b>Economic Classification</b>					
Compensation of employees	30 665 327	31 558 779	33 027 336	34 529 411	99 115 526
Goods and services	4 794 433	4 456 440	3 029 426	3 375 561	10 861 427
Transfers and subsidies	3 116 168	3 919 413	3 414 823	3 697 041	11 031 277
Payments for capital assets	1 220 078	1 193 617	1 516 106	1 376 688	4 086 411
<b>Total economic classification</b>	<b>39 796 006</b>	<b>41 128 250</b>	<b>40 987 691</b>	<b>42 978 701</b>	<b>125 094 642</b>