**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THURSDAY, 18 MAY 2023**

**VOTE NO 16 – BASIC EDUCATION**

***PROCEEDINGS OF EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMITTEE – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBER***

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 14:01.

House Chairperson Ms M G Boroto took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Budget Vote No 16 - Basic Education:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, colleagues, Cabinet colleagues and Deputy Ministers present, hon Members of Parliament, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, today we are presenting the 2023-24 Budget Vote 16, fully mindful of the reality that, at the heart of any development

within the Basic Education sector, must obviously be about *what learners learn*. This point is clearly articulated in our Action Plan, the National Development Plan, NDP, Regional commitment and also our Sustainable Development Goal 4, SDG 4.

It continues to be of great significance for South Africa’s

development that learning outcomes, according to reliable

standardised testing programmes, such as the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality,

SEACMEQ, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, PIRLS, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science

Study, TIMSS, that they have demonstrated continuously that our system is improving.

But equally, the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

on teaching and learning since 2020, continue to be a cause

for great concern. Chair, I have already requested our researchers to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 on our basic

education system, the lost ground, and the return of the schooling system to its earlier improvement trajectory. According to Professor Martin Gustafssohn, by the end of 2021, the average Grade 4 learner could read.

Therefore, there has been a loss of almost a year of learning due to COVID-19. These losses are similar to what has been witnessed around the world. Hon members will recall that after the PIRLS 2016 report was released, the Basic Education sector

embarked on a variety of interventions to improve the foundations of learning through reading. These interventions

were introduced under the slogan, *Read to Lead.* During the

2018 state of the nation address, Sona, again, His Excellency, President Ramaphosa, decreed that learners must be able to

*read for meaning by the age of 10 years.*

The Department of Basic Education assisted by the National Education Collaboration Trust, NECT, immediately responded to

the President’s call by co-ordinated broad consultations with critical stakeholders in the reading space, the product of

those consultations, was the National Reading Strategy, which

we launched in 2019. On Tuesday, 16 May 2023, the Department of Basic Education like all other departments of education

worldwide, received a report on the *2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study,* PIRLS 2021.

The PIRLS is co-ordinated on a five yearly basis, by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational

Achievement, IEA, and is the global standard for monitoring reading achievement at Grade 4, an important transition point in learners’ development as readers. It is important to note that PIRLS 2021, is the first international large-scale

assessment to report results after successfully collecting data post Covid, assessing 400 000 learners in 57 countries.

South Africa was *one* of the *three* countries in the African Continent that participated in PIRLS 2021, the others being Morocco and Egypt. So, from the continent, it was only the three of us. The PIRLS 2021 summarised the state of *global*

*learning poverty,* which is defined as *the share of learners who cannot read with meaning by the age of 10*. It also

indicated that learning poverty was estimated at 57%, post- Covid, a surge of up to 70% and 86% for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The overall reading scores of our Grade 4 learners, who participated in PIRLS 2021, dropped from *320 points* to *288*

*points*. Our Grade 4 girls performed better than the boys. The very same exercise assessed learners in Grade 6. Also, it confirmed that our learners achieved the score of *384 points*, with girls attaining *408 points*, and the boys attaining *359 points.* The noticeable upward shift between Grade 4 and the

Grades 6 and 9 systematically, Chair, is an indication that our system self-corrects, when learners stay longer in school and retain performance.

Because we take what the national, regional and international assessment quite seriously, we’ve agreed with the Deputy

Minister and the sector that will be embarking on report back

sessions with stakeholders to again study and understand the Covid results. Whilst acknowledging the devastating effects of

COVID-19, these assessment studies continue to sharpen our understanding and plans on improving our performance on *reading for meaning.*

The researchers and experts from government and research institutions, confirmed that indeed *reading for meaning* is a

complex exercise, as it involves a number of interlaced

variables, which range from *teaching skills, teaching resources, learner and teacher wellbeing, parental and*

*societal support, cultural contexts and nuances* in the children’s journey. Chair, we can confirm again that unlike the alarm that is all over, our kids can read in terms of oral performance. However, what they are not able to do, not only

as the only children in the world, is to be able to do all these other skills that are required at a higher level.

So, in our continuous consultations, and from the lessons

learnt from the regional and international assessment, there is an emerging view that we should also reduce the 10 pillars

that we have, to really link them up to teachers, literacy,

age appropriate, cultural material and the involvement of parents. Chair, having spoken about the pillars, let me go

back to the budget. Chair and hon members, allow me to highlight the following, in relation to Budget Vote 16 of Basic Education.

We’ve been allocated R538,8 million for administration, we’ve been allocated R3,5 billion for *curriculum, policy and support****,*** we’ve been allocated R1,5 billion for *teacher*

*education, panning, information and assessment* has been given R16.6 billion, *educational enrichment services* have been

allocated R9,5 billion. Secondly, Chair, we have also been allocated for conditional grants, which are grants that goes to different agencies and provinces with an increase of R9,5 billion.

For maths and science, we have been given R433 million. *For infrastructure delivery* we have been given R13,9 billion, for accelerated school infrastructur*e,* we have been given

R2.1 billion, for *HIV and Aids* we have been allocated

R241,7 billion. For National School Nutrition Programme*, NSNP*, we have been allocated R9,2 billion. *For* Learners with Severe

to Profound Intellectual Disabilities*, LSPID,* we have been

allocated R260 million. Thirdly, *there are also* earmarked funds given to the sector *which have* increase with

6,3 million, Funza Lushaka gets *R1,3 billion.*

*Umalusi* gets R162,9 million, the *National Senior Certificate Learner Retention gets* R58,1 million. The *National Education*

*Collaboration Trust, NECT,* is allocated R121 million.

*Workbooks*, which includes Braille workbooks for visually

impaired learners, have been given R1,1 billion. The *SA*

*Council of Educators, SACE*, has been given R15,6 million. The

*Presidential Employment Stimulus Package* has been given

R6,9 billion.

For *Information Communications Technologies****,*** *ICTs,* have been allocated R14,4 million, and for *Early Childhood Development*, ECD, in addition to the allocated funds, which still resides

with Social Development, we have been allocated R200 million. Chair, we must remind this House and the nation at large, about the six Basic Education sector priorities we had committed ourselves to, in order to be able to continue laying

a solid foundation for a quality and efficient education system.

Also, to contribute to providing permanent solutions to the architecture of the education and training system of our

country. Because of time constraints, Chair, I will leave the details to the Deputy Minister. I just want to focus on the

*Early Childhood Development,* ECD. Since the ECD function shift from the Department of Social Development to the Department of

Basic Education, we have been hard at work in the process of crafting and implementing innovative strategies, to strengthen

the foundations of learning.

The department conducted a number of studies, the *National*

*Census of Early Learning Programmes* in 42 000 ECD centres known in our country. The census highlighted the vast access challenges in South Africa, and we are in the process of developing a new publicly planned, co-ordinated and funded mixed ECD provisioning model, which is based on our social

inclusive principles of *access, equity, redress, inclusivity, efficiency,* and *quality.* To regularise and align the function, we are working with the Department of Social Development to amend the Children’s Act.

We are also working with the Presidency’s Red Tape Reduction

Team to identify areas of streamlining registration processes;

and enabling greater collaboration with local government. The second study we had conducted, is through what we call, *Thrive*

*by Five Index Baseline,* to assess the quality of ECD programmes in a nationally representative sample. The study revealed that only *45****%*** of the children in our country, are

currently attending ECD programmes.

Those that are attending, only 45% of them are on track. The

study revealed that about *50%* of these children who are

attending these ECD programmes, *will not thrive when they reach the age of 5*, and 6% of them are chronically stunted and

also have major malnutrition. The third study we conducted in collaboration with the National Treasury and the World Bank, is the *Public Expenditure and Institution Review,* PEIR, which determines the funding on ECD programmes by the different

spheres of government, and the different departments on the prioritised ECD outcomes.

Clearly, the current model of funding ECD programmes as NPOs,

must be reviewed. The ECD programmes must ensure that children are ready to enter formal schooling. Therefore, it is

important that a new holistic and inclusive model, which

includes all communities of trust in the ECD space, the state departments, whose line functions have direct constitutional

obligations leading them to children. So, hon members, the other priority is a cluster of critical topics from our quest

to strengthen our curriculum, focusing on the implementation of a *curriculum with skills and competencies for a changing*

*world in public schools.*

It is known that the department had taken a bold and strategic

decision to actively move from a predominantly academic curriculum, to one that is varied and inclusive. This ground-

breaking move came in the form of the introduction of a multiple pathway education delivery approach of the Three- Stream Curriculum Model. This was primarily driven by the department’s quest for a responsive curriculum, to the demands

of a rapidly changing education and skills development sector of the 21st century.

Significant strides have so far been made in the introduction

of critical aspects of this innovative programme. The introduction of the two additional teaching and learning

routes, the vocational and the occupational streams, has

created additional learning pathways towards the attainment of the National Senior Certificate, NSC, in the schooling system.

However, critical milestones realised in the Three-Stream Curriculum, Chair, Model, is that 35 occupational and

vocational subjects, with their learning and teaching support materials, LTSMs, for implementation in 74 schools have been in pilot.

This year, we have increased the number to 1000, 104 public

ordinary schools and focus schools have been selected. Parallel to our quest to strengthen the curriculum in the

General Education and Training, GET, Band, has been the piloting of the *General Education Certificate*, GEC. This *General Education Certificate*, which is an integral qualification in the implementation of the Three-Stream

Curriculum Model was initially piloted for assessment in 277 schools.

We have increased the pilot to 1 000 schools, including 126

schools of skill. We are also working with the Department of Higher Education and Training to ensure articulation. There is

another priority, Chair, which I want to highlight about the

school infrastructure, which is delivered through the Education Infrastructure Grant, EIG. In some provinces, this

Education Infrastructure Grant is augmented with the respective province’s equitable shares allocations, in

addition to the work the Department of Basic Education.

I would like to move quickly and speak about what I think is a concern to most South Africans. On the question of sanitation

appropriate which was launched in 2018. In 2018, initially,

there were about 3 898 schools which needed assistance. When we went to verify, we confirmed 3 398. Already 2 722 schools

have been provided with sanitation appropriate, and 673 are remaining. We can also confirm that in this financial year, it will be completed.

Following critical evaluation of the infrastructure challenges and lessons learned from previous delivery strategies, the department has crafted an *Infrastructure Ten-Point Plan.* It will accelerate the roll-out of school infrastructure. This

strategy was recently workshopped and adopted by the Council for Education Ministers, CEM. Again, I won’t go in all the

details, but I can say that CEM have recommended that the

department, with its provincial counterpart, must establish dedicated workstreams should focus on the following:

*Preparation for school infrastructure procurement documents,*

*ensure the alignment of designs and specifications of school infrastructure, develop school norms and standards, advise on*

*recruitment of skills and ensure that the maintenance of school, which is another problem, is a norm. Also, develop*

*compliant approaches on the enforcing consequence management*.

Chair, we have noted that with these plans, the sector will go a long way in addressing the serious challenges the sector

faces in *school infrastructure.*

In conclusion, Chair, as a nation, we must continue to celebrate the Class of 2022, for clearly demonstrating that with dedication, focus, resilience and working hard, the

sector will recover from the COVID-19 setbacks, rebuild better and reboot itself to its pre-Covid trajectory. As we continue to confront our ongoing challenges in the sector which include, but not limited to learner performance, schools and

district offices, infrastructure, resource constraints, school safety of learners, learners and teachers’ well-being.

Also, the parental involvement, the sector is indeed poised to face its challenges. We must always remember, and I hope the

howlers in the DA can listen, Dr Mokhubung Magubane once told us that “*the future is embedded in the present, as the present*

*bears imprints of the past.*” We have seen this observation in the PIRLS 2021, where the performance of Afrikaner and English

learners is recorded highest compared to African languages, because of the past which *bears its imprints also on the current.*

*So,* in conclusion, Chair and hon members, allow me to thank

our local, regional, continental and international partners, sister departments and their state institutions, business, and civil society organisations, for their selflessness and professionalism in the variety of the roles they continue play in the sector. I wish to single out the SACE, Umalusi, NECT,

our various teacher organisations, the national school governing bodies, SGB, associations and the principals’ associations.

Also, the national organisations responsible for learners with special needs, as well as independent schools’ associations

for their partnership and support in the sector. We wish to

thank you, Chair, also the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, the Whippery, the hon members, our chairperson and the hon members of our portfolio ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... siyabulela, Sihlalo ngesikhokelo...

*English*:

... for their engagements and guidance. We cannot forget to

acknowledge the hon MECs in our provinces, their respective Heads of Departments, and their officials for their counsel

and dedication to the cause. Finally, I wish to thank the Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule; the Director-General and his team, the entire ministry staff, and my family for their ongoing co-operation and support. I thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Thank you, hon the Minister. Hon members, before I call on the next speaker, I just want to highlight that the monitor that is supposed to guide you in terms of time, we are still working on it. It is not connected. I don’t know what the problem is, but they are trying to sort it out. At the same time, we have our own time here.

So, it will only be you who is disadvantaged down there, but please, don’t worry. ... [Interjections.] ... No, don’t worry, I have never cheated, I have actually given you more time most of the time. So, don’t worry about it. Hon members, we now recognize the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, hon Mbinqo-Gigaba.

Ms B P MBINQO-GIGABA: Hon Chairperson, let me greet the Minister, Deputy Minister, members of the ANC that are here and those that are watching us, notwithstanding that progress in the basic education sector requires meticulous efforts and focus on the Sixth Parliament mandate, the National Development Plan, NDP, targets and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, MTSF, priorities. I stand to precede by siting that, and I quote:

Basic education is a national priority, and every child is a national asset that deserves quality education.

The ANC has placed education as an apex priority for self- liberation. We have a duty to empower the people to reach their full potential as envisaged in our Constitution. The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education considered the Budget Vote 16 together with the Basic Education 2023-24 annual performance plan and its statutory bodies, Umalusi and the SA Council for Educators, Sace.

Chair, allow me to start with the intended impact of the legislative interventions of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill, a Bill that will transform the landscape of the education system in South Africa. The Bill seeks to enhance the organisational efficiency of the basic education system, to improve school governance, leadership and accountability, transforming education services and protecting vulnerable groups to ensure learner wellbeing and access to learning. The portfolio committee activities from 2022-23 and 2023-24, put a strategic focus on the processing of the Bill. The process has provided Members of Parliament with an opportunity to list, to discuss, to reflect and to deliberate

on the key aspects of the Bill. Key issues emanating from the Bill were raised and highlighted and we ensured the public that they are going to get an opportunity to make their views and voices to be heard. As per the legislative mandate of Parliament to enhance public participation, the committee has done progressively well to invite the public to make written and oral submissions. We invited the public to Parliament for oral hearings in November 2022 and from February 2022 the committee has embarked on provincial public hearings. To date we have completed about six provinces, and we are left with three. I must say that we are going to deliver that process here very solid as the ANC.

The committee ... [Interjections.] ... you are led by us, keep quiet. The committee also received briefings on key priorities including the outcomes of the National Senior Certificate, NSC, examination results. The results have improved and the Department of Basic Education, the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the learners, the teachers and school support must be commended for the progressive improvement on the NSC results.

Hon Chair, over the last four years in line with the committee mandate, the committee has conducted monitoring and oversight visits to all provinces focusing on the state of school readiness. Our major focus was on status of school infrastructure, the grants, water and sanitation. This august House will recall that during COVID-19 it negatively impacted schools and we had to spend time on curriculum recovery as per the state of the national policy priority. As the committee we can confirm to the House that issues of delivery, learning and teaching materials were made available with the exception of a few delivery which were late.

The information and communications technology, ICT, is in the plan, however it is still challenge for the Department of Basic Education to ensure that all schools have ICT. We need to continue to strengthen our ICT development and protect our schools and learners from the ranges of theft of ICT and devices.

Regarding improvements in progress and in mathematics, science and technical subjects to address the skills for a changing world, there are milestones that the department is achieving. However, Maths and science is an area where learners need

resources the most for improvement in the subjects. Teachers are trying an they need resources to most for improvements. They are trying more efforts to train and to retrain them in the stem subjects is one of the key recommendations that the portfolio committee has raised.

In the recommendations the committee has also raised the issue of school safety against vandalism and the safety of our children and teachers. To this end, we had recommended that schools should consider a partnership with the local SA Police Service.

On Umalusi, the committee also put focus on Umalusi as the Basic Education public entity. As per briefing and quarterly report, the entity is doing very well in terms of performance. If one looks at Umalusi budget, the original approved budget amounted to R187,7 million. This budget consists of the Department of Basic Education, R162 million, which is 86%, which is the grant and R25 million which is 14%, which is their own revenue. As of 28 February 2023, the department of Basic Education grant was received in total and R30 million of their own income. Umalusi will therefore exceed its annual revenue budget. One of the recommendations that we have raised

as the committee is that Umalusi budget allocation where possible it needs financial increase.

To ensure that the department took cognisance of the portfolio committee recommendations made during the oversight visits, the committee conducted follow-up oversight in line with the feedback mechanisms on provinces visited as well as to get update on the status report regarding implementation of committee recommendations as an oversight visit which we had in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape in February 2021.

When we look into the department’s budget, the department updated the committee on school infrastructure. The provision of learner support material, facilitating supply of teachers, implementation of the early childhood development function from the social development sector and providing nutritious meals for learners through the national school nutrition programme. The budget allocation for the department increased by 3,3%, from R28,5 billion to R30 billon in 2023-24 with transfers and subsidies accounting for 84% of the budget.

Regarding infrastructure, despite the perennial challenges of old infrastructure, there is a need for infrastructural

interventions. The education infrastructure grants and school infrastructure backlogs grant account for 51,8% of the budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, period. This is the extent in which infrastructure is prioritised by the Department of Basic Education. The committee recommended that there were infrastructure backlogs and delays that the department fast-tracked.

Regarding the project completion targets, during the oversight visit that we had in Harry Gwala, and I want to refer to one and two example where school called Mhlaba Combined School needed immediate interventions. We want to acknowledge the response of the department to deal with the issue while we were still in the province. The committee also indicated that more proper classrooms should be built while they use mobile classrooms at that moment.

On the aspect of eradication of pit latrines, which has made an issue, and increasing access to water, let us remind you that the department gave a detailed overview of the progress of the following key deliverables.

In respect of the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative, Asidi, overall progress will have 350 sanitation projects. We will also build nine schools. In the last two weeks the committee had a briefing with the KwaZulu-Natal department in particular on the issue of pit latrines. Chair, the pit latrines came as far back as the apartheid regime. We are dealing with a perennial system that was left behind by a government that did not address issues of sanitation and access to water particular for a black child. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Bororto): Order!

Ms B P MBINQO-GIGABA: The committee noted that our schools face the challenge of water shortages, and the committee advised the department to consider installing boreholes in schools and put aside the budget to deal with these issues. We are dealing with your legacy – your grandfathers’ legacy.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Bororto): Hon Gigaba! Hon members. I cannot hear you more than the speaker on the podium. Proceed.

Ms B P MBINQO-GIGABA: On the eradication of pit latrines the engagement we had with the departments starting with KwaZulu- Natal, is that 192 projects are on construction stage and are anticipated to be completed by 31 March 2024. Other provinces’ plans are in the pipeline. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr B B NODADA: Hon Chairperson, as we debate the Basic Education Budget Vote, we must remember that quality education is the most powerful tool to realise opportunity. A tool children can use to end poverty and unemployment despite their circumstances of birth, geography, race, or gender. But listening to Minister Motshekga this week has left me feeling like *Alice in Wonderland*. While South African learners cannot read for meaning, while they attend schools in unsafe environments without food, while they sit in overcrowded classrooms with overworked and underqualified teachers forced to teach a curriculum unresponsive to economic opportunities, the department has no plans in place to turn the situation around to save this generation.

They make many promises but there is little actual impact on the ground. This is nothing new. During Minister Motshekga’s first term, I was impressed by some of her reforms, a new

curriculum, new workbooks and new assessments. But Minister you indeed, have run out of steam and ideas.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, Pirls results released on Tuesday are just but an example, one in five Grade 4 children cannot read for meaning in any language. More than half of Grade 6 children cannot read for meaning when tested on Grade 4 levels. These tests show that we have lost a decade of progress.

You see Minister, the thing with surveys of achievement is that they do not care what you say you have done, they just measure what children actually know. And what they revealed was devastating. Minister, if children cannot read they are doomed before they even begin. The COVID-19 pandemic is not wholly to blame either. These devastating outcomes are of your making. Your department closed schools for far too long and did not have plans while they were shut.

Seventy five percent of learners who attend no-fee schools lost 50% to 75% of their learning time in 2020 and more than 25% in 2021 because of your departments. Even the Ministerial Advisory Committee packed with experts, advised the department

in July 2021 to send all learners back to school immediately. But this too was ignored and rotational timetables continued for another six months. Even when the DA took your department to court to end rotational schooling, you resorted to name calling and thought we were grandstanding. But in fact, we knew the devastating effects of your inaction.

Most sensible countries have announced huge catch up programmes. Chile has a detailed 4-year plan. Not South Africa. Currently there is no budgeted national catch up plan, just talk. The department’s dribs and drabs are a disgrace, talking about free websites and parachuting untrained unemployed youth in classrooms. An immediate investigation by GroundUp and Viewfinder refuted the department’s claims to Parliament about a National Reading Programme and found that the programme is nothing but a collection of random, unco- ordinated activities by provincial education departments with no proper monitoring.

In fact the DA-run Western Cape is the only province with a budgeted, implemented and monitored reading plan, as well as their R1,2 billion Back on Track program to catch-up learning losses. Another R111 million has been set aside for reading,

specifically for Afrikaans and IsiXhosa schools. That is why the Western Cape has double the number of learners that can read compared to the rest of the country. How are learners meant to eventually participate in the labour market if they cannot understand what they read, a basic skill?

Last year, the Department of Higher Education’s Labour Market Intelligence Programme identified a lack of “reading comprehension” as the number one skill deficit in the country’s labour market. This is why 4,9 million young South Africans are unemployed. This is a national disaster which will only get worse. Chairperson, the Minister and the director-general therefore, must present a catch-up and reading plan to Parliament with a budget specific timelines in this Annual Performance Plan, APP. They will be held accountable to stop the bloodbath of the generation who will be confined to a lifetime of poverty and unemployment.

The ANC-led government is so dysfunctional and incompetent that it cannot do even the most simple things, building toilets, feeding children, or keeping the lights on, let alone teaching children how to read. Twenty nine years into our democracy there are more than 5 000 schools with functional

pit toilets, and no credible plan in this financial year to eradicate them. The Department of Basic Education has failed to meet every single Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative, Asidi and Sanitation Appropriate for Education, Safe target to eradicate pit toilets and other dangerous infrastructure in schools. And the goal posts have been shifted for the fourth time to 2025 now.

When 4-year-old Langalam Viki’s tragic death in her school’s pit toilet is raised, the Minister simply refers to the police investigation. The fact that the police are investigating the circumstances of her death does not minimise the dehumanising facilities Langalam was forced to use while still alive. I personally did an oversight to her school. The toilets are horrendous.

The Minister would certainly not use them, nor would she allow her grandchildren to use them. But the learners at Langalam’s school are still subjected to those conditions to this day.

Sadly, in the last decade, we have lost 6 children to pit toilets under your watch. Schools are not meant to be the graveyards that this ANC-led government has turned them into. That is why as the DA we have launched an End School Pit

Toilet Campaign and will be approaching the courts to ensure that each pit toilet is eradicated in our schools.

More than 5 800 schools still have unreliable water supply. There are 400 mud schools and 900 schools still have asbestos roofing despite. Yet, the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga departments returned R414 million meant to deal with unsafe infrastructure. This money was then was given to provinces who can use it like the Western Cape who built a new school in 65 days, yes you heard me correctly 65 days, while your Departments infrastructure projects are delayed by an average

27 months.

Minister, it is high time your department looked at efficient models to build schools of quality quicker to eradicate dangerous infrastructure in schools. Nationals School Nutrition Programme, NSNP is another insult that has been.

Learners at more than 10 000 schools in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape were forced to go hungry when the provincial departments failed to ensure provision of their daily meals.

The KwaZulu-Natal tender is now the subject of investigation. However, there is no indication that anyone would be held

accountable for this travesty despite allegations that a family member of an official benefited from this tender. With an ANC-led government, cadres must eat while children starve.

Minister, an urgent audit of all the provincial NSNP programmes must be done to ensure that no other learners suffer the same fate. It is also high time that the department face the truth about the matric results – a real pass rate of 54,6% is not good enough. Minister your government’s focus on quantity means nothing if quality and depth of education is left out of the equation.

Chairperson, the DA the DA believes that education is the foundation of opportunity. Where we govern, more children stay in school, school infrastructure is built and maintained, children eat twice a day, budget is provided for a catch-up plan and reading, quality of teaching is monitored and no child is at risk of dying in a pit toilet because we do not have them. That is why parents moved here for better schooling.

So Minister instead of taking offence when we offer you best practice to you, embrace it for the sake of the future of this

country. Through the ANC’s education systems - are confined to a lifetime of poverty and unemployment. It is called political maturity, mama. It is however, time to vote out these ANC-led government out.

*IsiXhosa*:

Noko badiniwe ngoku.

*English*:

I thank you, Chairperson.

Ms N R MASHABELA: Hon House Chairperson, 10 years ago this generation of Economic Freedom Fighters made a bold call to establish an economic emancipation movement as a means through which our people would be the core focus of all government actions. In the declaration of the National Assembly on what is to be done in 2013 we said,

We gather on 26 July 2013 because we are inspired and agitated by the Cuban July 26 Movement, which from 26 July 1953 launched a struggle that culminated in the victorious Cuban revolution which is still intact despite trade embargoes, isolation, natural disasters and terrorism

against the Cuban people. Cuba is amongst the best countries in terms of healthcare, education, low infant mortality rates, life expectancy and other vital social services. This is a sign that the revolution was about the emancipation of the people, not the enrichment of few individuals who callously and rapaciously redirect State resources for self-enrichment.

Today, 10 years later, we could not have made a more correct call. We say this because there has never been a greater demand for a movement grounded in and amongst the people as is now. That organisation is the Economic Freedom Fighters.

We reject this Budget Vote because it demonstrates a perpetuation of this government’s long record of neglect of the basic education sector, and by extension, its neglect of the lives and future of millions of our children whose future depends on the ability to acquire decent education today.

Not only has the department failed to deliver basic infrastructure needs for conducive education of our children, but it has also failed to ensure that it employs a sufficient number of qualified teachers to teach learners at acceptable

teacher-learner ratios. This persists and it is getting worse in the public education sector, and eventually paints an inaccurate picture on the ability of learners coming out of private education and those in public education. The so-called low pass rates and dropouts in the public education sector are therefore structural and a product of the state’ inaptitude.

Public schools do not have the necessary tools that private schools have to support teaching and learning. We were shocked to find that, at present, the department has no data on the transition of learners from schools to Technical Vocational Education and Training, TVET, colleges which may inflate what we view as dropping out.

The department also opposed recommendations from civil society for ensuring that there is an Excel-based early warning system to detect dropouts at school. They do this while they have no means of monitoring potential factors that contribute to dropping out and following up on those who actually do drop out of schools.

Further, the department has ... [Inaudible.] ... regard to the concern of violence against girl learners at school. At

schools located in rural areas, the department is caught napping each time there is a story of a girl learner who is sexually abused by a teacher.

We must have inbuilt capacity to detect and prevent these from happening. It is for this reason that in our 2019 manifesto we proposed that there must be a social worker and a psychologist at each school. Concerns about the price it would cost to have these at schools are superficial concerns; there is no price too high for the proper education and safety of our children.

We need intense investments in improving the quality of our public education, this includes massive investments in school infrastructure, learner support material and cutting-edge technologies to enable our learners in the public education system to compete with their counterparts from anywhere else in the world.

Our public education system must also be cognisant of the socioeconomic factors that are under conducive education. It is for this reason that we have firmly advocated for each school to have a social worker, psychologist and a co-

operative system between teachers and the community to ensure the well-being of the learners.

The Department of Basic Education is not concerned with any of these things. The EFF rejects this Budget Vote. Thank you very much.

Ms Z MAJOZI: Hon House Chairperson, the Department of Basic Education is a government department that is in charge of shaping the future of this country. Its success in achieving its output determines the overall development goals of government by educating our young people to achieve success.

What is concerning with the way this department is run is that it still has perpetual overcrowding of learners in our public school system. In fact, the average class sits at about 31 learners to one teacher, including educators who have fewer students in their specialised teaching subjects. This leaves this figure to be much higher in real terms.

It is no wonder that independent studies have revealed that about 80% of learners leaving Grade 4 are unable to read for comprehension. The regression of literacy in South Africa is

at a crises stage which requires immediate government interventions in order to effect a change, yet there are little to no plans by the government to address this.

Despite a clear problem facing this department, in its budget there is no specific national reading plan, no proper budget, no accurate reporting and no progress on implementing vital interventions. It does not take an expert to tell us that part of the problem in schools is that the learning environment for many is unconducive; learner classrooms are overcrowded, insufficiently equipped with proper learning materials, and what little infrastructure exist is not maintained or very old.

The government has, in its own admission, recognised these challenges and committed to fixing them, especially regarding the dangerous pit latrines, but as expected, they have failed to deliver its promises to our people. Although the department has made available an online system of issuing lost and damaged matric certificates, to date, there is a lady Nonhlanhla Machabaphala, who matriculated at Mafori High in Soweto who has not received her matric certificate since from last year.

This department has not come up with a timeous and cost- effective way of handling the matter of those accused of being implicated in irregularities such as cheating and copying during matric results. What this often means is that pupils spend resources, time and money going in and out of court on seemingly never-ending court battles. There are instances of such which date back to almost a decade ago. In some instances, the department fails to provide tangible evidence, and this unfortunately translates to these groups of students not having a chance at bettering their lives by pursuing higher education which ultimately means they cannot get employment. We must bring to an end the perpetual poverty life cycle in which the nonissue of matric certificates will deliver. The process of replacing matric certificates is lengthy as it takes up to half a year.

Procurement spend in South Africa stands at approximately R926 billion annually for the procurement of goods and services. It is vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to corruption which warrants greater control of legislation at the cost of turnaround times. Unfortunately, good financial

control is not always the case for the building of schools and infrastructure in schools as there have been probes and

investigations made into irregularities in tenders awarded by the Department of Education throughout the country over the past decade. For example, two district municipalities in the Eastern Cape irregularly awarded a R1,5 billion toilet tender whilst in the same province the Hawks arrested 10 people in connection with a R600 million tender fraud.

Members, we are all aware that the High Court recently ruled that schools, clinics, hospitals and police stations are all to be exempted from load shedding, but the government intends to appeal this decision. Now, I would like to bring to light some of the challenges that schools are faced with during load shedding such as not having access to water and teaching and learning disruptions. I would like to know what extreme stages of load shedding mean for our children considering that there have been allegations that load shedding will go up to stage

1. this winter. We cannot continue to accept being led by a government that subsidise programmes that do not address the meaningful development needs of our children.

Let us not forget that the basic education level for learners is the most critical time of their educational development. By the time of tertiary education, it is too late to reform

foundational skills that learners can use to further develop their academic knowledge. [Time expired.] The IFP supports the budget.

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Hon House Chair, hon Minister, hon Deputy Minister, many people tend to judge the performance of this Department of Basic Education with preciously little accurate information. Let us look at a few of those.

Firstly, according to the World Economic Forum, South African mathematics education is at the bottom of the ladder. Yet, it is based on the perception of business leaders, not a real survey.

Secondly, it is often said that only half of Grade 1s reach Grade 12, without considering how many exit the school system in favour of FET colleges.

Thirdly, a popular allegation is that 30% is a pass in South Africa, while the reality is that a learner is allowed to have one subject with a minimum of 30% without failing the whole year. And that had been so before 1994, although that was 33%.

Thirdly, many say that standards fell, but I shall eat my hat, if anyone who matriculated in 1994 will pass Grade 12 Mathematics today, using their old textbooks.

I find it frustrating, because I am an opposition politician. There is much to criticise, but before one does, one has to get inaccurate perceptions out of the way.

Maybe this is the time to turn to the reading report that the hon Minister dealt with in her speech.

*Afrikaans*:

Die kort weergawe van die verslag is dat 81% van Graad 4’s en 56% Graad 6’e nie met begrip kan lees nie. Hierdie verslag is deur die departement self in Suid-Afrika gepubliseer, waarvoor mens eintlik die departement wil gelukwens dat hy so ’n moeilike verslag bekend gestel het. Dit verander nie die feite nie. Afrikaanse kinders, die beste presteerders in hierdie leestoets, is steeds onder die wêreldgemiddeld. Ons kinders is skerp; dit is nie die probleem nie.

Dit help nie om hierdie afname in prestasie aan Covid-19 toe te skryf nie. Voor die tyd was dit nie veel beter nie. Die

probleem is dat ’n land se bevolking, staatsopset, die grondwetlike bedeling daarvan en onderwys in samehang met mekaar moet wees, maar in Suid-Afrika is dit nie. Elf amptelike tale erken die verskeidenheid van ons, maar dit is waar dit eindig. Prakties het die land net een amptelike taal en dit is Engels.

Die wortels lê in die Britse beleid van “indirect rule” wat ’n klein swart bevolking in elke kolonie as “swart Engelse” wou opvoed, om die kolonie later namens Brittanje te regeer.

Engels het die taal van ekonomiese vooruitgang geword en ander tale is tot die private lewe beperk.

Kom ons noem dit smalgebaseerde swart bemagtiging – narrowly based black empowerment. Dit bevoordeel die min en laat die baie aan hulle lot oor. Dit is ’n durende erfenis. Dit het wel daartoe gelei dat Engels die taal van die bevrydingstryd was en pogings van die vorige regering om moedertaalonderrig in te stel, is as verdeel en heers verwerp.

Nou is Graad 4 bes moontlik die laaste keer wat kinders hulle taal in druk gaan sien. Daarom kies ouers maklik vir Engelse onderrig en kinders leer gevolglik in ’n vreemde taal, om te

lees. Of hulle leer dit in hulle eie taal, maar gesofistikeerde gebruik van die taal word nooit ontwikkel nie en selfs die basiese vaardighede verroes.

Die Engelssprekende black [swart]-identiteit het dalk verdeel en heers besweer, maar vir ander tale word dit verenig en verdwyn – unite and disappear.

Die uiteinde van die storie is dat die Departement van Basiese Onderwys leerplanne vir robotika ontwikkel, maar nog nie kan verseker dat alle, of darem die meeste kinders met begrip kan lees of basiese wiskundige vaardighede onder die knie kry nie.

Verder wil die departement die magte van skoolbeheerliggame knip, ongeag die prestasie van skole onder hulle beheer.

Hoër onderwys, daarenteen, het ’n nuwe beleid, wat die onafhanklike besluitnemingsbevoegdheid van hoër onderwysinstellings grond op hulle akademiese en bestuursvermoë. Die onderskeid tussen openbare en onafhanklike instellings verval in alle opsigte buiten befondsing.

Basiese onderwys benodig iets soortgelyk. Lui die doodsklok vir die Bela Bill, wat beheerliggame se vlerkies knip. Skryf ’n nuwe onderwyswet met ’n onafhanklike onderwysreguleerder, pleks van ’n departement wat rolspeler én reguleerder is.

Erken kulturele verskeidenheid in onderwys.

Help dan die skole waar kinders tans nie ordentlik leer lees en skryf nie. Hervorm die konstitusionele bedeling, want as die staat net Engels is, help veeltalige onderwys niks.

Gebruik inheemse tale in die staatsdiens. Vereis dat nuwe staatsamptenare ten minste twee inheemse tale magtig is. Skep ’n toekoms vir elke taal in Suid-Afrika. Ek dank u.

Ms M E SUKERS: Hon Chair, the ACDP rises today to address the concerning state of the education system. Our children are the future of our nation and the quality of their education is paramount to our prosperity. However, the current situation reveals that our education system is not in safe hands.

The Department of Basic Education does not conduct adequate research, leaving us with insufficient knowledge to determine whether the department is implementing appropriate programmes. The lack of appropriate targets and metrics on issues such as

dropout rates and school closures obscures what is actually happening in our education system.

The recent collapse of the National School Nutrition programme in KwaZulu-Natal and our dismal reading scores are a testament to the department’s inability to deliver on its goals, yet the DBE is seeking more power through the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill.

Our people however recognise that the department act ... [Inaudible.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, house

Chair. Greetings to you. Greetings to the Minister of Basic Education and other Ministers that have connected on the other platforms, chairperson of the portfolio committee and members of the portfolio committee that are always vibrant in the portfolio committee, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

House chair, I rise to express my profound sadness at a recent passing of ambassador and activist Billy Masetlha. He was a giant in the struggle against apartheid and a towering figure

in the history of the ANC. He served as a member of Umkhonto Wesizwe, the, ‘People’s Army’. He served in various positions in the ANC-led government in post-apartheid South Africa with distinctions.

He was a dedicated and principled leader, committed to the cause of justice and equality. We extend our deepest condolences to the Masetlha family, friends, comrades, and the Department of International Relations and Corporation. House Chair and hon members, today, we must reflect on the key moments that have shaped today today’s people education as a tribute to our forbearances.

We do so, hon members because we are comforted that their struggles were not in vain. We owe a debt of gratitude to the visionaries of the 1976 Soweto Uprising who shook the foundations of apartheid Bantu Education 47 years ago. We are indebted to the pioneers of people’s education, the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee celebrating 38 years since the momentous event of its formation.

We are also grateful to the activists who bravely confronted the apartheid state and championed people’s education within

the National Education Crisis Committee 37 years ago. Finally, we are indebted to President Nelson Mandela, the father of our democracy and his generation of freedom fighters, as we celebrate the 33 years since he was released from prison, and even 10 years after he passed on, for gifting us the greatest treasure of them all – that is freedom.

House Chair, to continue in the footsteps of the giants, the Basic Education sector successfully implemented the three phases of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative creating more than 850 000 job opportunities for young people to support teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools, including special schools in our country.

The National Treasury allocated R26,7 billion over four financial years to implement the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative. In 2020-21 financial year, the sector was allocated R6,2 billion grants; in 2021-22 it was R6,6 billion; in 2022-23 it was R6,9 billion; as well as this current financial year, which is R6,9 billion.

The last phase, which is phase 4 is being implemented from February 2023 and will end in September this year. Phase 4 was

divided into two cohorts: One of 150 100 starting on 1 February 2023; and other 100 000 beginning on 2 May 2023. To date, phase 4 of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative in the Basic Education sector created jobs.

Since December 2020, the Basic Education sector has created 1,1 million job opportunities for young people of the ages between 18 and 35, without prejudiced, color, race, language, disability or gender. The only critical qualifying criteria is youth between the ages of 18 and 35, a valid South African ID document, a Grade 12 pass for education assessment position and no Grade 12 certificate is required for general school assistant position.

The other purpose of the intervention is to provide youth with decent jobs, meaningful work experience and skills through formal and informal training. According to Statistics SA Census Media Population Estimates 2022, South Africa has

20,6 million young people between the ages of 15 and 35, of whom 10 million are not in education, nor in employment nor training.

The program addresses past imbalances by recruiting women and addressing poverty and unemployment among youth. Sixty-five percent of job opportunities target young women, equivalent to approximately 715 000 job opportunities for women, created in all the four phases.

Hon members Fundza Lushaka Bursary Scheme is a flagship training program that has trained thousands of new teachers, making it one of the most successful public sector training scheme. The allocation from the National Treasury for 2022-23 is just above R1,3 billion. This translates into a target of

1. 800 full bursaries to be awarded to students in the year 2023-24 financial year for the Bachelor of Education and the Post Graduate Certificate in Education, PGCE, across the 24 participating public higher education institutions. In 2022, the department offered 11 971 Fundza Lushaka Bursaries for initial teacher education by 31 March 2023, surpassing the target of 171 bursaries.

House Chair, we are training teachers for the future beyond the 4th industrial revolution. In June, 2022, we entered into a memorandum of agreement for three years to train teachers on skills for a changing world, focusing on coding and robotics.

This agreement includes five teacher unions: SA Democratic Teachers Union, Sadtu, National Teachers; Union, Natu, National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa, Naptosa, Professional Educators’ Union, Peu and the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers’ Unie, Saou.

As part of this agreement, 23 967 teachers nationwide underwent training in coding, robotics and digital skills in the first year. These numbers exceeded the targeted goal of teachers by 1 467. In the 2023-24 academic year, the Basic Education department and the teacher unions’ collaboration will provide nationwide training for teachers in coding, robotics, digital skills, entrepreneurship, mathematics, and assessment for learning. Special emphasis will be placed on equipping teachers from special schools with these essential skills.

House Chair, the Teacher Appreciation and Support Program, Tasp, initiated in 2015 has grown in lips and bounds. In 2022- 23, we awarded 40 teachers honours for teaching excellence during national teachers’ month in October. In addition, teachers were acknowledged and supported through various other

initiatives coordinated by the Basic Education provincial education departments.

In 2023-24, we have developed an annual plan of task activities to support and acknowledge our teachers. This include the Annual National Teaching Awards, to be hosted on World Teachers’ Day on the 5 October 2023, you are all invited, and a seminar on teachers’ wellness.

House Chair, the Draft Caps for Coding and Robotics is being finalised by the reference team. The curriculum will be implemented in phases, with Foundation Phase starting in 2024 and Grade 4 to 9 beginning in 2030. The University of South Africa’s, Unisa’s, accredited training has been offer offered to Foundation Phase educators, and more than 15 000 teachers have been orientated using the Basic Education Sasol Model platform.

The teacher union collaboration has trained over 23 000 educators in Unplugged and Using ICT Devices. We are engaging with higher education institutions to introduce accredited training on the approved curriculum. Quarterly interprovincial meetings have been instituted to serve as a reporting platform

and encouraging sharing of good practices amongst provinces through school visits.

Hon members, school safety remains the pain of our existence. We have adopted a multisectoral approach to this campaign. We and our partners, especially Deputy Ministers from the following departments - SA Police Service, Social Development, Home Affairs, Health, Communication and Digital Technologies, Correctional Services, Justice and Constitutional Development

- rolled out an interdepartmental campaign.

Five provinces have hosted the campaign activations: Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Eastern Cape. We want to thank the Free State for initiating this campaign on their own. The campaign will be rolled out in all remaining four provinces, with a focus on hotspot districts in the coming financial leave. The campaign focuses on the prevention of violence, bullying, corporal punishment, gender-based violence, learner, pregnancy and drug and substance abuse.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of these social ills in schools and mobilise school communities, including school governing parties, ward counselors, parents, faith-based

organisation, traditional leaders and civil society organizations to support schools in preventing violence so that effective teaching and learning can occur.

The campaign also includes various precursor events where learners participate in interactive sessions on preventing social ills. We have also released a secular to all schools, requiring all school-based personnel and safety committee members to complete the digital training on the National School Safety Framework, the protocol for management and reporting of sexual abuse and harassment in schools.

The digital training has since been accredited by the South African Council of Educators with 10 professional development points for educators to acquire the complete the online course. To date, 130 028 people have completed the digital training countrywide.

House Chair, as I conclude, let me quote Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary and politician, who once said:

Ignorance is the root of many ills. Knowledge must be fundamentally all of nations that aspire, despite all their

tragedies and problems, to become truly emancipated to build a better world.

I thank you Chair.

Mr A M SHAIK-EMAM: Thank you, Chairperson. I want to bring to the attention of this House that in 2014, 280 schools were damaged in Gaza Strip alone. That is preventing children in that area from getting an education. Coming back home, Minister, you have heard many of my colleagues ask questions about pit toilets and infrastructure in schools, and we have to admit that we have a problem. And what your department should do is identify what budget you would need for all these schools with pit toilets to put the right infrastructure in place and bring it to this House and tell us, this is what I need to fix the problem that needs to be fixed. Give me the resources. Because I do not think it’s entirely up to the Department of Basic Education, which has a limited budget, even though we need to have these services provided. But I think we are working with the budget that has been made available.

But I think one of the problems with education in South Africa is that the emphasis is on quantity and not quality. Let us face it, at Technical Vocational Education and Training, Tvet colleges, 30% of graduates drop out in the first year, 30% of those who do mathematics dropout in the first year. That’s really not a good sign. But Minister, I would rather focus on what we think should be done to create a better life and a better society for our young people today. We think you should introduce safety ambassadors in every school, working with social workers in the community. What is currently happening is inadequate. No child is born a rapist or a murderer. And I think the school plays a central role in deciding what kind of generation we will have later. So we would urge you to do that.

And then there is the problem that there is no co-ordination or working relationship between basic education, health, sport and development and other stakeholders. They need to come together and make school so attractive that learners want to stay in school. One out of every two learners starts school does not complete Grade 12.

Then there’s the issue of South Africa moving to a preventive health system, and I think basic education can play that role in how we prepare our learners for a healthier society.

Because if you want to work with the Department of Basic Education in creating something you have to start from the ground.

We have a very dysfunctional society. Again, it is the Department Basic Education. Children are coming from dysfunctional homes. The society we have is dysfunctional. But more importantly, I want to say this with my time running out, Minister. You cannot have a teacher who is also working as a councillor and ... [Time Expired.]

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: House Chairperson, hon Minister mama Angie Motshekga, Deputy Minister mama Kgabo Mhaule, colleagues and hon members, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, hon Mbinqo-Gigaba, our well-oiled machinery of the Department of Basic Education, DBE, staff led by the Director-General, DG, himself, ntate Mathanzima Mweli, I salute you all in the name of the African National Congress.

It is my singular honour and privilege to ascend this podium so we could jointly share on matters of education. After having appraised ourselves with this all-important Budget Vote No 16 on Basic Education, at the level of the portfolio committee, the African National Congress rises to support this Budget Vote No 16.

Since the inception of our democratic dispensation in 1994, it has been the quest of the ANC-led government to transform our education system as we sought to provide free and quality public education in line with the prescripts of the Freedom Charter as adopted in 1995 for the betterment of the lives of our people.

It was never going to be an easy walk to reverse the damage caused by the discriminatory Bantu education system. The function will only be carried out by taking all stakeholders on board, that is learners, teachers, parents, department, and the entire community at large. The line function of our education has and will always be centred around the teaching and learning. In this regard, the department Budget Vote, as indicated by the Minister herself, allocates significant funds

for the teacher development. And our teachers are a critical role player in the education system.

We therefore need to continue to train these teachers in both language and literacy. Our teachers need to be trained to teach subjects of the changing world, such as coding and robotics. This budget supports such teacher development programmes and allocates funds up to the tune of R12,000 for Funza Lushaka bursary holders to continue developing a pipeline of competent teachers into the basic education system. And this good work, as intended, can never be realized without first draining out the bantu and apartheid mentality within our educators through a well-refined teacher development programme.

Gone are those days where our children were only taught to regurgitate knowledge like parrots. As in words of the architect of the grand apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd, who in the moment of madness, and I doubt he was ever in a sane himself, said the following and I open quotes:

Blacks should never be shown the greener pastures of education ... [Interjections.] ...

You shut up!

... They should know that their station in life is to be hewers of wood and drawers of water ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Hon member, can you have a seat please? There is a point of order. The member who raised the point of order, it was you, member. It was you. I saw you raise a point of order. You may speak on the point of order.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Are you withdrawing? Thank you.

An HON MEMBER: Chair, may I defer the point of order to my work on duty?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): No, you may raise your point of order. Raise your point of order. You cannot defer your point of order. Are you withdrawing? Thank you. Proceed, hon member.

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: ... Can you ask the question again? Of importance ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): There’s another point of order.

Mr M S MALATSI: Thank you very much, Chair. I am rising on a point of order. The member has been here long enough, he would know that even if he feels interjected, shut up has been declared unparliamentary, so he must withdraw that and he can proceed with his speech. Thank you.

An HON MEMBER: Did he say that to you?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Hon Moroatshehla, can you withdraw the unparliamentary language?

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: I withdraw unconditionally.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Thank you and you may proceed.

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: ... House Chairperson and hon Minister, of importance in all this, is how do we expand the system of education for our children, contrary to what happened during the Verwoerd apartheid and Bantu education era.

We need to continue to encourage our children to enrol in maths and science subjects. We need to increase the number of females in the STEM subjects, science, technology, engineering and math, to also transform various careers which are dominated by males. We are pleased to know that the majority of graduates in higher education are girls. Who would have thought this would happen within our first 30 years of democracy? This is a democratic gain we should pride ourselves with, and we should therefore defend and consolidate through increasing enrolments in our schools. We have built science labs as the African National Congress-led government, and laboratories, libraries in rural and township schools.

The objective of the Dinaledi Schools project should be expanded for most of our schools. There is also a need to develop schools in what we often call “focused school” s as we prepare our system and children for the changing world.

We must confirm that our education system has piloted coding and robotics, and we will be expanding the offering the same with time. This is a sign of adapting education system, and the department should continue to invest in this all-important developments. Our education system seeks to encourage

discussions and platform solving amongst students by developing both practical skills and application of theory, thereby countering the colonial and apartheid education approach.

Hon Nodada, my learned friend, I think it is about time that we agree that the heinous and infamous Verwoerd system has cost this country enough harm. And I therefore beseech you and your cronies that instead of only focusing on the weaknesses we should build on the strength and progress made whilst addressing the challenges. It is very regrettable that you and your cronies remain so unrepentant as you seek to take us back to our bad past. Education is dynamic and should therefore be treated by all as such.

No wonder, of course, that some of your leaders are still grappling to acquire a simple matric certificate. It is because of their backward mentality. You reap what you sow. Madam and hon Sukers,

*Sepedi:*

... moputso wa sebe ke lehu, eupia mpho ya kgaugelo ya Modimo ke bophelo bjo bo sa felego ka Jesu Kriste, Morena wa rena.

*English:*

Romans chapter 6:23. “For the wages of sin is death.”

In the state, in his state of the nation address and for two years in succession, His Excellency, President of the country in ntate Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa declared the need of early childhood development, ECD, function to be migrated to the mainstream of our formal education. We have seen and witnessed this function shift come to effect as on the 1st of April 2022. This infusion is aimed at our learners having to receive a more formal and fundamental education from their infancy for their cognitive development. This includes the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill, BELA Bill. No matter, it indicates that there should be compulsory Grade R attendance. Bravo to hon Minister, mama Angie Motshekga, and her social development counterpart, mama Lindwe Zulu to for the collaborative and ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Your time has expired.

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: ... and the steady work they have done to make this dream come true ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Your time has expired.

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: ... All the best. We salute you ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): Your time has expired!

Mr P R MOROATSHEHLA: Having said all this, let me indicate that the ANC supports this Bill ... [Time Expired.]

Ms A M Van ZYL: Hon Chairperson, budget time is the perfect time for government to correct shortcomings in any department and propose way forward that will support positive programmes to benefit all South African children. Unfortunately, this is not the case today. This budget is a missed opportunity and the children of our country will continue to suffer under the uncaring ANC government. The Department of Basic Education should focus its budget on improving the quality of education through investing in resources like textbooks, early childhood development programmes, teacher shortages, nutrition support, infrastructure and learner transport.

These, if not attended to, will negatively impact on the quality of education learners receive. Unfortunately, not enough is being done in any of these areas. Let me give you a quick lesson on the mistakes you are making: On the matter of textbooks – centralising procurement, as proposed in the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill, will not assist students.

Textbooks must be with learners on the first day of school. This is currently not the case and centralising the system only creates opportunity for corruption by cadres.

On the matter of early childhood development, there is much to say about the failings of this uncaring ANC government. The inclusion of Grade R to be compulsory causes grave concern: that of infrastructure, or rather the lack thereof. This time it is an old ANC favourite, over-promising and under delivering. The department themselves has admitted that there is no budget to address this infrastructure need, and will not be able to build Grade R classrooms.

Where will the money come from Minister? Your department is pushing so hard to get the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill passed, which will make Grade R compulsory, yet there is no

plan to assure compliance. You will create a backlog even before it can be implemented.

On the matter of teacher shortages, the Funza Lushaka bursary programme has been put in place by this government, in order to address specific skill and teacher shortages. However, according to the most recent annual report, almost a quarter of students were not placed. With the University of Stellenbosch’s warning earlier this year that 49% of teachers will retire in the next decade, and that not enough new teachers are being hired, the lack of Funza Lushaka placements is very concerning.

On the matter of the National School Nutrition Programme, NSNP, more than a million children were forced to go hungry after the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces failed to provide them with meals as part of the NSNP. The KwaZulu-Natal Basic Education MEC’s foolish decision to the programme in that province, is now being investigated by the SIU.

The Eastern Cape MEC for Basic Education failed to ensure that nearly 5 000 schools received payment in time to provide their learners with meals, for many of them often their only meal a

day. Minister, can you imagine the desperation of poor parents who have come to rely on the schools to ensure nutritious meals for their children, only to be confronted by their hungry cries? When will you fix this mess, Minister? On the matter of infrastructure, infrastructure is one of the most worrying issues in Basic Education. Schools are not being built quick enough, which creates overcrowded classrooms. Now, the ANC will come here and say that it is language and admission policies that creates overcrowded classrooms. No Minister, it is the lack of your department to address the lack of proper infrastructure that creates this problem.

Pit toilets are not being eradicated despite a court judgement stating it should have been addressed by the end of March 2023. Children are dying in pit toilets. Put budget to eradicate this, Minister. We cannot have parents like those of Langalam Viki, identifying the lifeless bodies of their children in pit toilets, 29 years after democracy. Then, on the issue of learner transport - the learner transport system in South Africa faces various challenges, particularly in relation to the inclusion of vulnerable scholars.

Thirty three percent of learners with special needs and 19% of learners that qualify for learner transport do not receive the necessary transport assistance. I think it is time that government decides where this function should be: the Department of Basic Education or Transport? Learners that qualify for transport, should receive support from the government. Minister, like the payment of Norms and Standards for School Funding, this only remains a paper budget, nothing more. Minister, the learners and parents of South Africa deserve an apology from you. You are failing them. Your department is failing them. You hide behind moving goal posts and skewed statistics while generations of children suffer and die under your ineptitude. Thank you.

Mr B S YABO: Hon Acting House Chair, let me greet the hon Minister as well, Deputy Minister, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education and hon members, good afternoon. Now, we are often misled by opposition parties who seek to propagate falsehoods when they shout nothing has changed since the advent of our constitutional democracy. They choose to focus on the backlog that the ANC-led democratic government inherited and has political will to address. Be it infrastructure which is critical for schooling, or they choose

incidents which have impacted government programmes as reasons of their perennial shout, nothing has changed since 1994.

There are those who want us to erase 342 years of colonial rule because it serves their interests. They want to truncate a history that was built over 342 years into 29 years. Now, if we were to do a comparative analysis by scientific means on what it would mean in budgetary terms to entrench a draconian system and we discount 30 years. Let’s discount 30 years from the 342 and say that 30 years was the time it took from when the ships landed on our shores to the entrenchment of a colonialises. If we account for each annual budget in that context to truncate the value of such in 29 years is unfeasible to imagine that you can roll back such a history, it's unfeasible.

Firstly, the democratic dispensation in itself is a fundamental change from a system of apartheid colonialism, which was advanced by the predecessors of the members on the left. Secondly, government has expanded access to basic education, which has become free, and we all know that our rural and township schools today produce top achievers which was not the case pre-1994. In simple terms, before 1994,

apartheid Bantu Education did not provide resources and the education curriculum to empower black communities, instead choosing to give them substandard education to keep them as fodder for the exploitative labour market system of the white elites. The Free State province is one example of a rural province which has surpassed both Gauteng and the Western Cape in matriculants performance even at the district level. We salute the late member of the executive council, MEC, Ntate Tate Makgoe, for pioneering this significant change.

*Sepedi:*

Re a leboga.

*English:*

We wonder why the opposition don’t shout their narratives to their own. The Western Cape is the best governed province despite the fact that it has registered a decline in matriculants performance relative to the ANC-led, Free State and Gauteng. As it stands the Western Cape sits at number four. As it stands the DA in the Western Cape stands at number four in terms of matric results. Now, numbers don’t lie.

Thirdly, they will not speak of the curriculum transformation from Bantu Education to the current National Curriculum and Policy Statement known as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, Caps, which has opened possibilities for the African child to be a scientist, a pilot, an engineer, a doctor, and other professions which their apartheid rule deprived us of. Fourthly, inclusive of the populist EFF, they will not speak truth to the people that this ANC government has taken bold steps through making education priority number one and has thus prioritised protecting vulnerable children through the provision of much-needed learners scholar transport. The scholar transport programme transports over 700 000 learners who would otherwise have to walk long distances to attend school exposing them to several safety risks; and lastly, the ANC government has introduced a

National School Nutrition Programme which protects 9,6 million vulnerable children who experience poverty by providing healthy meals in schools. We are pleased to also report that the programme has begun introducing breakfast in various provinces.

*IsiXhosa:*

Niyaqhuba ...

*English:*

... Minister. Coincidentally, during the pandemic the DA ran to court to get an order for these meals to be provided during lockdown which the ANC government was providing. In any case at least the ANC government policies which they have to implement in the Western Cape have brought a sense of ubuntu in the opposition benches, despite them doing so for purely electioneering purposes. Recently, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education experienced supplier challenges impacting children in various schools. We are the first to admit. We are the first to admit that the impact of these challenges was far-reaching.

Hon Minister, we welcome your swift deployment of national officials to support and resolve the problem faced by the provincial departments where wrongdoing is found heads must roll without prejudice because the problems faced by learners in KwaZulu-Natal undermines our policies as the ANC. We are confident that your Ministry will continue to support provinces to ensure that we defend our democratic gains. In essence, the shout by the DA that nothing has changed since 1994, is a reflection of their longing for an apartheid style governance system which preserved the dominance of white

minority as is the case in the Democratic Alliance, as we can see one raisin amongst many peanuts in the national leadership. They do not recognise the democratic gains because for them a system led by blacks, in general, and Africans, in particular, is bound to fail. Hence, they can never acknowledge the progress we have made as a nation.

It is this reason that they continue to use all black DA leaders to shout on their behalf as we are witnessing and fire them the day they begin to undermine white supremacy. I want to welcome the inputs made by hon Boshoff. We may disagree on ideological outlook, but you educated the House thoroughly, especially on the 30% misinformation pass rates that others carry all the way through to media houses on a daily basis as a harbinger of what is to happen in the following years elections. You are going to be disappointed.

Hon Minister, as African National Congress we are concerned about the various social challenges affecting our schools. The reported violence, bullying and cases of sexual harassment and the levels of pregnancies are concerns we should address post- haste. We must educate our children of these social ills at the young age as this generation is different because of its

access to the internet and various social media platforms, which influence them. The problem is a social problem which requires the family, guardians and the entire community to embed social values which protect the rights of children.

We call on the department to strengthen the capacity of the SA Council of Educators to effectively deal with sexual harassment cases. Our communities and the school governing bodies should take interest in these matters and respond timeously on allegations raised. As the government of the people, we should also prioritise providing sanitary towels for the girl child. The girl child is vulnerable, and we should heighten campaigns and programmes which focus on creating awareness for the girl child. We should equally have programmes which target the boy child to learn values which negate patriarchal society tendencies which breeds sexism. It is also urgent that we undertake nation-building programmes.

At the level of schools to engender social cohesion and nurturing patriots who subscribe to the values of ubuntu, nonracialism, nonsexism, equality and share a common national identity, and a common patrimony build upon respect for and protection of human rights and dignity. I thank you. [Time expired.]

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you very much, Chair, and let me also thank the members for their participation in the debate, and I always say that I refuse to be made to ... when people start jumping Western Cape, Western Cape children are South African children, so we are not going to be alienated from them as if Western Cape carries other people's children. They are children like all other children and we're not going to be comparing them with other kids to say other kids in other provinces in terms of maths ... KwaZulu-Natal is leading in terms of passes. They are South African kids and just disabuse yourselves on this Western Cape story and sometimes what is unfortunate, instead of looking forward to alternative policy views, we're forced to see through empty noises.

Engaging with opposition and just being tortured because you are forced to see through ... As I say that you don't know where it's leading to. People debating about rumours, hearsay, and unwilling to listen to things that have been said, not contributing meaningfully to the debate on a very important endeavour such as education because what you look for when you engage with people who have a different view is to get a different perspective that enriches your view, and member

Nodada does it without fail. He's stuck in the toilets. Ask him to debate, he is in the toilets and you look forward to saying this is your official opposition, they must have researchers. They must be talking about something alternative.

They'll be talking about local government tenders which have no bearing on the debate at hand, and this is a parliamentary debate on the education budget so it'll be very helpful to talk about ... and benefit from the engagements, which I must admit that in some instances find them very helpful. You take notes and you go and inform the work that you do. For instance, there have been exciting reports on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, PIRLS, and I thought as members of South Africa talking about education, we'll try to even understand what this thing is all about, and I want to agree and I'm very grateful to member Boshoff to say at some stage, let the truth be told, reading for meaning is not oral performance, and even if you say to people linking symbols that m-a-n means “man” is not reading, to say man is going, is not reading for meaning. It's something which is very highly cognitive, and very complex, which we even analyse with neuroscientists to say what happens in the wiring of a child's brain or a person's brain when they read. It's a very

sophisticated exercise, and I agree with him that what is very helpful for us as South Africa is to unpack, to say, what it means in our journey of development. For instance, I agree with you, the importance of mother tongue instruction cannot be underestimated because the PIRLS also confirm it.

It confirms that when kids learn in a language they're comfortable in ... not to say they understand the language, their brain cells are relaxed, they're happier and, therefore, they're able to process information which is the case for mother tongue instruction. This means we have to accept as a country that we have to promote African languages to make sure that the majority of learners who are not studying in African languages are being taught in their language. You also have to agree again with the member to say and agree perhaps accept the guilt that there's been an overemphasis on English.

The Eastern Cape conducted a comprehensive study on mother tongue instruction and the results were very encouraging. Children who were taught in IsiXhosa performed better in maths, performed better in science, and even English nogal [of all things], that their English performance was even better because a language not just for a combination of words but

it's also an instrument through which we are able to process information, and that's why in the PIRLS ... when you study the PIRLS, you also find that IsiXhosa performed better than other African languages, so the member is right that kids were exposed also ... or were expected to be assessed in a language whose symbols they've not used in the past, so we must say

*IsiZulu*:

Hhayi sekuyinina nodwa-comrade ... ngeke ngimusho ngegama elithi-comrade ...

*English*:

... member ...

*IsiZulu*:

... ukuthi ...

*English*:

... we have to agree to promote the teaching of African languages and promote them as languages of learning. For instance, the PIRLS, amongst others indicate that, for instance, in Setswana and IsiXhosa, the performance is low and we have to investigate to say, why is performance in IsiZulu

and IsiXhosa doing well. What is it? What is different, different about those languages? and moving forward, I think it should be very helpful to make sure that these Benny’s and Betty’s here come down and we talk to them as Tshepo and Lerato to say, what is it that we're doing to take our children forward.

What is also important about the relevance of the PIRLS is ... that Hon Boshoff also raised which I also say ... it's not about pronunciation, enunciation and attitude in speaking languages, it's to be able to get the clear ability to demonstrate logical thinking, coherence, associations and operating at a high cognitive level, and sometimes listening here, I can see that most of us will even have to fail the PIRLS exam. There's no coherence. There's no logic ...

*IsiZulu*:

... kuyakhulunywa nje.

*English*:

So if we were all supposed to write the PIRLS exam ...

*IsiZulu*:

... ngesibuye nabo abantwana, sibuye singaphethe lutho ...

*English*:

... because there's just no coherence that you hear. So I read even the concept of 30%, I just think people are also running around, even talking about things that are not there. I don't want to go ... [Interjections.] ... member, I'm going to run out of time. Regarding the question of infrastructure, as a Minister from a big department, I sit on the committee of Ministers, we budget. I know exactly how much the state collects, and I know I can only give it to Treasury, not to Parliament. They're the only people who can give me money, but sitting on the Ministerial Committee, Mincom Bud, I know that for the infrastructure we need about R100 billion, and sitting on the Mincom Bud I know that it's not possible to have it now, so it's to say what else do we do in the meantime?

So we are a developing country. We don't have lots of money and lots of other things. So I think it'll be very helpful and I ask with all humility and respect that ... and I'm not saying people should not ... [Inaudible.] ... member Sukers when we come here it's governing bodies and other things.

Let's talk about the debate at some stage as fellow South

Africans, let's talk about high-level educational matters. Let's hear what is your perspective, and I promise you we will always respect ... helpful ...

*IsiZulu*:

... hhayi nje ... nganisa kwi-PIRLS, ngeke nibuye ...

*English*:

... I am telling you, and the other matters, there is a member from the IFP also who said ... certificate, this and that, that's an administrative matter. Sister, just give me the name of the person, I promise you tomorrow I'll tell you where the certificate is. If there's anything that we're efficient with it is in the exam section. So don't worry about it. So I'm grateful that we have had the opportunity to debate and I want to repeat, our kids can read. They can combine “m” and “an” to mean “man” but many of them, like many of us here, are not able to operate at a cognitive level where we're coherent, systematic, and make references and that's why they're not passing, and instead of being condemned, Chair, I think we should be commended as this government for being a courageous government. We are one of only three countries in the continent that participate in the PIRLS. The question is,

why? Why have other people run away from the PIRLS? It was Morocco, Egypt and ourselves. As a party that fought for liberation we will in PIRLS and we are going to succeed. [Time expired.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms J Hermans): I just want to speak to the point raised by the DA, according to the 9th edition of the Rules of the National Assembly 64(d) it is indeed an established convention for members not to cross the floor during the sitting. We note that your intention was collegial but we wish to caution you not to do that again. Thank you.

Debate concluded.

The mini plenary session rose at 16:00.