# Minister Angie Motshekga: Basic Education Dept Budget Vote 2019/20

17 Jul 2019

### Basic Education Budget Vote Speech for the 2019/20 Financial Year, Delivered by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the National Council of Provinces, Cape Town

Honourable Chairperson / Vice Chairperson of the NCOP
Cabinet colleagues and Deputy Ministers present
Honourable Members of the NCOP
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for the 2019/20 Debate on Vote 14 – Basic Education, which is delivered and debated fifteen days, after the launch of the results of the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2018) on 02 July 2019.  TALIS is a flagship project of the OECD, which in five-year periods, aims to provide valid, timely and comparable information to help participating countries review and define policies for developing a high-quality teaching profession.  The Survey provides an opportunity for teachers and school leaders to make input into educational policy analysis and development in key areas.  I encourage the Honourable Members to read the results of the TALIS 2018, which can be found on the DBE website.

At the outset Chairperson, I must state that South Africa participated in this international Survey for the first time.  We are the only country in the African Continent to participate in the latest round of TALIS.  We wish to stress that our participation in continental and international studies and surveys, is not just an irrational attachment to peer review mechanisms, or perhaps to massage the egos of the current Mandarins.  In fact, it forms part of our Government’s policy injunction through the NDP, which states that “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” to ours.

It cannot be coincidental that all continental and international standardised assessment tests, namely the Fourth Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SEACMEQ IV), the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2015), and the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2016), are unanimous in reporting that the South African basic education system as firmly on the rise.  What is significant in the observation is that the largest gains were evident within the historically disadvantaged sections of the schooling system, namely quintiles 1-3 schools.

Even TALIS 2018 confirms our system as on the upward trajectory.  Also of importance to note, is that these continental and international standardised assessment studies confirm the importance of the early acquisition of the foundational skills and competencies of reading and numeracy as critical goals that require focused attention in our schools and sustained support from parents, civil society, and the private sector.  Chairperson and Honourable Members, when these continental and international studies and surveys, which are independent and scientifically sound, are read severally and collectively, they all feed into the emerging narrative that we are definitely a system on the rise.

As we are building the future – yes the “new dawn” for South Africa, we recommit to building a solid foundation for a quality and efficient basic education system, from Early Childhood Development (ECD) to the Further Education and Training (FET) Band; and to contributing to the seven cardinal principles of the Sixth Administration, especially in relation to consolidating development.  The President has enjoined us “to reimagine and build the South Africa we yearn, a South Africa of our dreams”.  There is no doubt in our mind that our country has indeed ushered in the “new dawn”, a period characterised by selfless public service, hope and renewal.

Chairperson, we are fully aware that basic education is an emotive issue.  As leaders in the basic education sector, we understand the enormity of the task placed upon us.  We are aware that there are numerous concerns in the sector.  Most of these concerns are valid, but some are largely driven by negative sentiments from those who hold the entire public schooling system in utter contempt.  Today, I am going to be bold and say, South Africans, give yourselves a pat on your backs.  Our basic education system is slowly and surely reclaiming its rightful place among the countries and economies of similar size and budget.  We are definitely a system on the rise.  His Excellency, President Ramaphosa attributed the sector’s progress to a “silent revolution”.

Budget allocation, Vote 14 – Basic Education and that if the nine provincial education departments for the 2019 MTEF Period

Chairperson and the Honourable Members, allow me to highlight the following in relation to the Budget Vote 14 – Basic Education and those of the provincial education departments for the 2019 MTEF period, with the main focus on the 2019/20 financial year –

* The overall 2019/20 budget allocation for the DBE is R24.5 billion, an increase of 3.4% from the 2018/19 allocation.
* The overall allocation for 2019/20 Condition Grants for the DBE is R18.6 billion – an increase of 4.9% from that of last year.
* Chairperson, I wish to thank the National Treasury for a new allocation of R59.5 million for the 2019 MTEF period, through the General Support Allocation, for a new project called the Systemic Improvement of Language and Numeracy in Foundation Phase.  The first tranche allocated for the 2019/20 financial year is R26.8 million.
* We are also grateful for additional allocation of R60 million for another new project, also funded through the General Support Allocation, called Technology for Grade 7-9.  The first tranche for the 2019/20 financial year is R20.5 million.
* The overall allocation for 2019/20 Earmarked allocations and transfer payments is R2.8 billion – an increase of 3.7% from that of 2018/19 allocation.

Chairperson and Honourable members, the overall 2019/20 budget allocation for the nine provincial education departments is R256.7 billion, an increase of 6.9% from the 2018/19 overall adjusted allocation.  The provincial allocations are as follows –

* Eastern Cape Department of Education is allocated R36.3 billion, an increase of 4.1% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* Free State Department of Education is allocated R14.7 billion, an increase of 8.1% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* Gauteng Department of Education is allocated R49.8 billion, an increase of 9% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is allocated R54.02 billion, an increase of 6% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* Limpopo Department of Education is allocated R32.3 billion, an increase of 4.7% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* Mpumalanga Department of Education is allocated R21.9 billion, an increase of 3.7% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* Northern Cape Department of Education is allocated R6.9 billion, an increase of 7.3% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation;
* North West Department of Education is allocated R17.1 billion, an increase of 5.2% of the 2018/19 adjusted allocation; and
* Western Cape Department of Education is allocated R23.7 billion, an increase of 6.9% from the 2018/19 adjusted allocation.

Therefore, the total budget allocation for the DBE and those of the nine provincial education departments combined, is R281.2 billion.  A big thank you to the ANC-led Government.

Chairperson, we wish to remind the NCOP that such allocations are indeed by design.  In allocating funds to State departments, the Fiscal and Financial Commission considers a variety of factors, including the size of the system.  For instance, KwaZulu-Natal is the largest provincial education system in the sector.  Hence, they received the highest allocation from Government fiscus; followed by Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Limpopo, respectively.

It is therefore, imperative that we must tighten and strengthen financial controls and compliance with legal prescripts and standard operation procedures, as well as enhancing fudiciary responsibilities and accountability at all levels of the system – from the DBE to the various schools in our country.  We must own the concept of “value for money”.  The 54th National Conference of the Ruling Party and the NDP have pronounced on the importance of strengthening and enhancing accountability systems from the top to the lower rungs of the system

Chairperson, we are stressing the importance of compliance with legal prescripts and standard operation procedures, accountability, and consequence management, because these are the areas where serious lapses were prevalent in three provincial education departments – the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and now in the North West, in which we had to intervene in terms of section 100(1)(b) of the Constitution.  The common denominator in the management and administration lapses of these three provincial education departments, were related to their failure to comply with legal prescripts, their failure to hold transgressors accountable, and the failure to apply appropriate remedial and/or consequence management practices to transgressors.

Chairperson and Honourable Members, we are in the process of realigning and repositioning the entire Basic Education Sector to effectively and speedily respond to the demands of the “new dawn”.  The sector must be able to implement with speed and effect the priorities identified for the sector, and address the challenges and weaknesses identified within the sector and by the Auditor-General of South Africa.  We are cooperating with the Department of Public Service and Administration and the National Treasury in this critical work.  We are not far as a sector from playing a meaningful role in ensuring that the DBE and the nine provincial education departments are active parts of a “capable, ethical and developmental State” that we all yearning for.

Strategic realignment of the basic education sector

Chairperson, I must remind this House that South Africa is a unitary State under the world-renown democratic Constitution.  The laws and policies we have developed for the sector, and the monitoring and evaluation practices we constantly embark upon, enable us to have a pulse of the system across country.  We have noted remarkable progress in a variety of indicators among our provinces, and as I stated earlier, we are a system on the rise.  An impression should therefore not be created that there are provinces that are outperforming others.  Provinces have different strengths in a variety of indicators.

The one indicator that we must work hard to improve on, is that of transformation and social cohesion in the system.  We must work very hard to rid the system of the regressive habits, such as racism, sexism, and the like.  All learners currently in our system, must enjoy the fruit of the hard labour their forebears had to endure.  No child under our Constitutional democracy, should be subjected to the yoke of oppression and segregation of the apartheid era.

We have noted in our recent NSC results that the performance of no-fee schools is constantly improving.  No-fee schools produce the highest number of distinctions even in gateway subjects such as mathematics, science and accounting; they produce the bachelor and diploma passes in the system; and in general, produce the highest number of passes in gateway subjects such as mathematics, science and accounting.  Clearly the pro-poor policies of the ANC-led Government are yielding good fruit.  We have also noted that more provinces are now dedicating resources and support for the progressed learners.  We can assure this House that we will intensify our monitoring and evaluation mandate, as we are enjoined to do so by the National Education Policy Act, and intervene where is desirable for us to do so.

Chairperson, we encourage the Honourable Members to read our detailed Budget Vote Speech provided in the DBE website, for a detailed elaboration on all eleven focus areas.  Because of time constraints Chairperson, allow me to just reflect on the five most critical of the eleven strategic areas –

Priority 1:  Improving the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, especially “Reading with meaning”, straddling the ECD to end of the Intermediate Phase at Grade 6, which should be underpinned by a Reading Revolution

We have made much progress in giving our children access to schooling, and ensuring that more children go on to complete Matric and enter post-schooling opportunities.  But we know that the only way we are going to see further improvements in these indicators, is by improving the learning foundations that children build in the early grades of primary schooling.

We also know that there is a clear link between educational outcomes and later life outcomes, such as access to jobs.  Therefore, the only way that South Africa is going to achieve meaningful social and economic transformation, is by making sure that children across all of society, especially in poor communities, learn to read, write and do mathematics in the early grades, so that they are equipped to go on to further educational opportunities.

His Excellency, President Ramaphosa has set us a goal that “every child should learn to read with meaning by the age of ten”.  The coordination of our Reading intervention is currently being strengthened; and we are paying particular attention to the teaching of “reading with meaning”.  The time has come for us to work together to achieve this goal.

As the DBE, we are implementing the Primary School Reading Improvement Programme (PSRIP), through which, a range of support interventions are brought together to improve the quality of teaching of Home Language literacy as well as English as a First Additional Language.  This programme will have a measurable impact on reading outcomes through the DBE Early Grade Reading Study.

We are collaborating with the NECT, in entrenching the Read to Lead Campaign with the National Reading Coalition, which we launched on 15 February 2019.  We are also supplementing the technical work we are doing to support and improve instructions and learning through curriculum materials, instruction, and assessment.  We will distribute materials for language and numeracy in the Foundation Phase on paper, and ICT devices to strengthen institutional practice.

A lot of work will also be done to support the teaching and learning of mathematics in the early grades.  Last year, we launched a new framework for teaching mathematics with understanding, which will help teachers to better implement the curriculum.  We are currently piloting the implementation of this framework, and will be expanding this support throughout the system.

Chairperson and Honourable Members, we wish to report that the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development will be fully institutionalised within the 2019 MTSF, strengthening teacher development in the sector, and improving teachers’ capacity to teach reading in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases.  We will, more strongly, link the curriculum delivery to professional development of educators through this Institute.

Priority 2:  Immediate implementation of a curriculum with skills and competencies for a changing world; Fourth Industrial Revolution – ICT roll-out; as well as the introduction of Entrepreneurship, especially Focus Schools

Chairperson, I am delighted to report that we have progressed quite well in the implementation of the Three-Stream Curriculum Model – namely academic, technical-vocational and technical-occupational streams.  We are convinced that the roll-out of the three-stream curriculum model was definitely a step in the right direction, which resulted in the NSC Class of 2018 sitting for a cluster of three Technologies, namely Civil Technology, Mechanical Technology, and Electrical Technology.  In addition, the Class of 2018 wrote new subjects, such as Technical Mathematics, and Technical Science.

Research conducted by the University of Oxford, revealed that 45% of the current jobs, will disappear within the next 10 to 20 years; with many jobs becoming completely automated.  UNESCO estimates are higher – that 65% of the current jobs will not exist in 15 to 20 years.  Therefore, the need for the Basic Education Sector to refocus the curriculum towards a competence-based approach, integrating the 21st century skills and competencies across the subjects; and the introduction of new subjects and programmes that are responsive to the demands of the changing world, is inescapable.

We have begun the process of transforming our curriculum by introducing new and existing skills-based subjects.  We are establishing National Schools of Specialisation or Focus Schools incrementally throughout the country, to offer new and other skills-based subjects, which include amongst others, Aviation, Maritime, as well as Hospitality and Tourism.  We are also incrementally establishing Technical High Schools and Schools of Skill, in line with the economic development zones.

Chairperson and Honourable Members, as we enter the first year of the Sixth Administration, we can say with conviction that we have brought Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and connectivity within the reach of our teachers and learners.  Workbooks and textbooks are digitised for easy access.  We have digitised approximately 90% of textbooks for high enrolment subjects – such as Mathematics, Physical Science, and Accounting; as well as 100% of workbooks and Graded Readers.  We have developed the Grade R-3 Coding and Robotics curriculum; and the design of the Grade 4-9 curriculum is at an advanced stage.  We will be piloting this curriculum from January 2020 in Grade R-3 and Grade 7.

To expand broadband and connectivity to schools for Learners with Special Needs, we, in collaboration with the Department of Communications and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), will provide 100 of the 453 special schools with ICT infrastructure and connectivity, as part of the Universal Service and Access Obligations (USAO) initiative. The ICT solutions will be determined by the categories of the disabilities in each school.

Priority 4:  Dealing decisively with the quality and efficiency through the implementation of standardised assessments to reduce failure, repetition, and drop-out rates; and introduce multiple qualifications, such as the General Education Certificate before the Grade 12 exit qualification

The NDP aims for a “World Class Assessment System”, involving “reliable measures of learning for every primary school”.  We are currently piloting a standardised assessment, called Systemic Evaluation, with the aim of finalising its first cycle in Grades 3, 6 and 9 by June 2020.

Work on the introduction of the General Education Certificate (GEC) will be accelerated.  The field trial for the GEC at the end of Grade 9, is scheduled for completion at the end of July 2020.  A draft framework for the GEC has been developed.  Assessment and examination modalities for the GEC are being investigated.  The Technical-Occupational subjects have been packaged and submitted to Umalusi for approval.

Chairperson, the Second Chance Matric Programme was designed to provide wider access to young people to attain a National Senior Certificate.  This programme provides more opportunities to access Government programmes, post-matric studies, employment and skills development opportunities to young people.  It gives young people a second chance in improving their lives.

Priority 7:  Decolonisation of Basic Education through the teaching and promotion of African languages, South African and African History and national symbols to all learners up to Grade 12

The revision of the History curriculum (Grades 4-12):  The reappointed Ministerial Task Team (MTT) on History has commenced the writing of a revised History curriculum.  After broad consultations, the MTT will commence with the writing of new textbooks for Grade 4-12 History, which are in-line with the new History curriculum.  To prepare the system for this innovation, rigorous teacher training will be carried out.

The teaching and promotion of African languages:  Chairperson, the NDP recommends that learners’ Home Language be used as a language of learning and teaching for longer; and English be introduced much earlier in the Foundation Phase.  It is important to remind South African languages are protected by our Constitution, and our policies recognise this fact.

There is a growing body of current research on African languages that confirms that the orthographies and the linguistic structures of African languages, are unique and different to the English language.  As a result we have conceptualised reading methodologies that speak to African languages.  The language issue, is a key factor that impacts on reading and literacy outcomes.

Chairperson and Honourable Members, I am delighted to announce that the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) agreed to incrementally introduce Kiswahili in our schools.  There is a high level of enthusiasm about this.  Kenya and Tanzania have committed to assist with the training of educators and the development of appropriate learning and teaching support materials in Kiswahili.

Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) Grades 1-9:  In 2017, CEM approved the implementation of the IIAL in all schools not offering a previously marginalised official African Language.  About 2 600 schools were targeted, and 82% of these schools are now implementing the IIAL.  IIAL will be implemented incrementally from Grade 1 to Grade 7 by 2024.

Priority 9:  Complete an integrated Infrastructure Development Plan informed by Infrastructure delivery and regular maintenance, which is resourced

The provision and maintenance of infrastructure, remains one of our key priorities as a sector.  To improve the delivery of infrastructure, we will be revisiting the delivery model for school infrastructure projects, to save on the cost of providing education infrastructure, and to improve contract management processes with our implementing agents and service providers.  We will also be researching alternative funding modalities for the provision of school infrastructure, and to ramp up our maintenance programme.

We will also revamp the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), with the cooperation of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); review the design of schools built – designs must be appropriate for teaching and learning; and be appropriate for the provision of digital infrastructure.

Conclusion

His Excellency President Ramaphosa has outlined the direction that the entire education sector must take.  Admittedly, we need all our partners on board to deliver the quality and efficient basic education system envisaged by our country.  Yes, Honourable Members, we have heard you’re the President’s clarion call.  We will “khawuleza” to implement our eleven focus areas we have identified for the 2019 MTSF for the sector, which articulate the seven priorities of Government as presented by His Excellency, President Ramaphosa.

In conclusion Chairperson and Honourable Members, let me thank the former Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Mr Enver Surty for his counsel, comradeship and leadership. Let me welcome our brand new Deputy Minister Dr Reginah Mhaule, who is not new to the Basic Education Sector. A word of appreciation to my Cabinet colleagues, the Chairperson of the Select Committee, the Whip and Committee members, all Honourable Members of this House, Education MECs, Heads of Provincial Departments and their officials, our Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mweli and his team, as well as officials in my office, for their counsel and unwavering support.

I am immensely grateful to all the learners, learner organisations, teachers, teacher unions, principals, parents, learners, SGBs, SGB associations, individuals, and our strategic partners – including the SACE, the ELRC, the NECT, the EDTP SETA, and the private sector, for their tireless work, contributions, and cooperation to make the quality and efficiency of the basic education system a reality in the various parts of our country.

Last but not the least, I wish to thank my family for their unwavering support.

I thank you.