

**Basic Education Budget Vote Speech for the 2024/25  
Financial Year, Delivered by the Deputy Minister of Basic  
Education, Dr Reginah Mhaule, MP, at the National  
Assembly, Cape Town**

**15 July 2024**

The Honourable House Chairperson  
Minister of Basic Education, Hon Siviwe Gwarube  
The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Hon Khomotjo  
Maimela  
Honourable Members  
Our DG, Mr Mathanzima Mveli  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Good afternoon

It is my honour to stand in this august house in the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration as the Deputy Minister of Basic Education. I thank the President of the Republic of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa for giving me the opportunity to continue to serve in this important portfolio.

House Chair, we want to send our deepest condolences to the Gauteng Department of Education, the parents, the schooling community and learners from Rocklands Primary School and Learskool Blyvooruitsig in Carltonville, on the loss of 12 learners and their driver in a tragic private scholar transport accident on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2024.

## **CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION**

House Chair, to respond to an ever-changing economy and to better prepare learners for the future, the country has introduced a curriculum that equips learners with Skills and Competencies for a Changing World.

The new curriculum offerings include inter alia coding and Robotics; 11 new Technical Subject and new Technical Subject Specialisations: Civil Technology (Civil Services, Construction & Woodworking); Mechanical Technology (Automotive, Welding & Fitting and Machining); Electrical Technology (Power Systems, Electronics & Digital Systems); as well as Technical Mathematics and Technical Sciences; Marine Sciences.

The department is working to introduce Aviation and Aerospace Curriculum, Mining Studies Curriculum and Aquaponics Curriculum to equip learners with skills they need to thrive in the ever-changing economy.

The Entrepreneurship Framework is also being implemented in many schools to prepare young people for entrepreneurship, employment, and employability. This is because the department wants to see many young people acquiring knowledge and skills of entrepreneurship, employment and employability.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INCREASE IN ACCESS**

House Chair, One of the major achievements of the sixth administration was the transfer of Early Childhood Development co-ordination from Departments of Social Development to Departments of Basic Education.

The formal proclamation came into effect in April 2022, supporting the NDP identification of ECD as central in the building of human capabilities while equalising opportunities for all its children.

Not only has the coordination role been transferred but also to lay a solid foundation for the ECD going forward, a census of ECD programmes was conducted in 2021, collecting data on 42,420 ECD programmes serving 1.66 million children across the country.

In addition, the first-ever Thrive by Five national study established the extent to which young learners are developmentally on track by age 5. This will assist the DBE in monitoring progress in the developmental outcomes of our young learners as new programmatic support is rolled out within the newly restructured ECD system.

The percentage of 5-year-olds attending educational institutions has increased from about 40% in 2002 to almost 90%. The DBE is now making every effort to further increase participation through, for instance, a mass registration drive for ECD Programmes. Quality improvement initiatives are also being introduced, including a new ECD Infrastructure Strategy, curriculum support materials, and new forms of practitioner training and support.

## **INSTEAD OF DROPOUT, RETAINING MORE LEARNERS IN SCHOOL THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC**

House Chair, Basic Education during the sixth administration faced an unprecedented disruption through the COVID-19 pandemic. The extended school closures caused by the national lockdowns led to fears of an increase in dropping out of school. However, a combination of measures taken by this administration saw the participation rates amongst 16-18-year-

olds (where dropout mainly occurs) actually increase in 2020 and 2021.

These measures included new health and safety protocols for operating schools during the pandemic, efforts to keep the National School Nutrition Programme going, implementing trimmed Annual Teaching Plans to allow optimal curriculum coverage within a shortened school year, and changes to grade repetition policies. Lower grade repetition meant more learners progressing into grade 12 and writing the National Senior Certificate examinations. Ultimately, the number of NSC passes and bachelor-level passes was higher than ever before.

### **MORE HIGH LEVEL NATIONAL SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (NSC) OUTCOMES THAN EVER BEFORE, ESPECIALLY AMONGST FEMALE LEARNERS**

House Chair, not only have more young people reached grade 12 and achieved an NSC Pass in recent years, but the number of high-level NSC achievers has been higher than ever before during the sixth administration.

The number of bachelor-level passes has tripled since 2008. Moreover, the share of bachelor-level passes coming from no-fee schools has increased from only one-third of all bachelor-level passes to about two-thirds of all bachelor-level passes.

Chair, similarly, the MTSF targets for number of NSC candidates scoring more than 60% in mathematics and science have now been achieved thanks to strong increases in 2023. It is also encouraging that the gender gap in high level mathematics and science achievement has now been closed: In previous years there were always more male learners achieving 60% or more in these subjects; but in the last two years the number of female learners achieving 60% or more has caught up to and surpassed that for male learners.

## **SASCE AND SPORTS**

Another way to address the social challenges we face, the sector implements the Integrated School Sports Programme, after-school, extra-mural and co-curricular activities in collaboration with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture together with other partners.

The main role of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is to promote mass participation activities aimed at enriching the curriculum whilst DSAC focuses on social cohesion, talent identification and excellence in sports, arts and culture in line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2018 by the two Departments.

The Department needs partners to achieve some of its goals. It is for this reason that Department partnered with the Motsepe Foundation.

In March last year, the Motsepe Foundation announced a further donation of R150 million for a period of five years as part of the extension of the current partnership with the department.

This programme contributes towards the development of Schools Football, Netball, choral and traditional music across the country. This initiative is supported by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

The National Championships for netball will be held from 15 to 17 August 2024 in North West and the one for football will be held from 23 to 28 September 2024 at a venue to be confirmed.

Chair, each year we host the South African School Choral Eisteddfod. This is our flagship enrichment initiative that involves more than 300 000 learners and 2 968 schools from all

provinces. At the end of it 7000 learners participate each year in the National Championships over a period of four (4) days.

SASCE has established a well renowned Alumni space with some performers being contracted to sing internationally such as *Ms. Pretty Yende, Ms. Kelebogile Boikanyo, Ms. Phumeza Matshikiza, Mr. Sunnyboy Dladla, and Ms. Andiswa Makana* to name a few. A majority of the current SASCE conductors, teachers and Adjudicators are from the alumni space.

This year's edition is taking place from **7 to 10 August** at the Rhema Bible Church in Randburg, Gauteng, and you are all invited.

## **Conclusion**

As we undertake the last five-year term towards achieving the National Development Plan to 2030, the department will embark on a strategic planning process that will enable us to make new strides in achieving the targets set for the basic education sector.

We have made great strides in implementing the 2019-2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF); as a result, the country has made remarkable progress towards achieving universal access to education at all levels and overall improvement of educational outcomes.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister, Ms Siviwe Gwarube for her leadership she has provided for the department since her appointment by His Excellency the President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa.

Thank you