

BUDGET SPEECH, VOTE 3, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BY LIMPOPO MEC FOR EDUCATION ISHMAEL KGETJEPE ON 14 APRIL 2016 AT THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, LEBOWAKGOMO.

Honorable Speaker

Deputy Speaker

Honorable Premier

Honorable Colleagues in the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Leadership of the African National Congress

Leaders of the Opposition Parties

Veterans of the Struggle

Acting Director General

Acting Head of Department

Senior Management of the Department

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

Comrades and Friends

I greet you all

Honorable speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary since the revolutionary June 16 of 1976 uprising in Soweto. This is a day in our history that is violently etched on the South African collective conscience. It is a day that reminds us of the brutal killing of the Soweto students following a protest against Bantu Education, an inferior education system introduced by the apartheid regime.

The government of the day and police were caught off guard, when the simmering bubble of anger of school children finally burst, releasing an intensity of emotion that the police controlled in the only manner they knew how, with ruthless aggression.

Honorable speaker, the grand apartheid architect, Hendrick Vervoed had made it very clear about the kind of education that was meant for the majority of our people in this country. He said at the time: **“There is no place for him (Black man) in the European Community above the level of certain forms of labour. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has its aim of absorption into the European Community, where he cannot be absorbed”** This was the attitude at the time and the intention in the main was to permanently turn black people in hewers of woods and drawers of water.

As we can see today the sacrifices of those heroes and martyrs were not in vain. It is in this regard that we salute the courageous young people who helped accelerate the pace of our struggle to freedom and democracy. We salute the courageous actions of our youth whose struggles makes it possible for us to continue building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous education system whose training is aimed at absorbing every citizen into the South African Community. **We must sustain the momentum and move on with Oliver Tambo’s call when he stated: “The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future”** Today, we speak of an education system which is realigned and diametrically opposed to Bantu Education. Twenty two years into democracy, we remain proactive in ensuring as emphasized in the Freedom Charter that the **“doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all”**

Honourable speaker and members, undoing years of colonial oppression and legacies of specific policies is not a walk in the park and needs a great deal of work to improve the state of education more especially in our previously disadvantaged rural communities and townships alike.

We are year in and year out paying more attention in ensuring that our schools and the education they offer are at par with any other in the world.

It is in this regard that we remain resolute and want to quote as poetically captured in our country's National Development Plan that:

“We are a people at work.

We work to create plenty

Our work brings us ever closer to our dreams

Work grounds our dreams even the fascination they are

The reality of work connects us to our dreams

We work towards goals with patience invested in actual effort”

Then we are patient for the results of our efforts

This kind of patience, gives birth to our new work ethic”

Beyond these parts of the NDP's vision statement, our new development plan, goes deeper and profoundly proclaims that: **“Education, training and innovation are central to South Africa's long-term development. They are core elements in eliminating poverty and reducing inequality, and the foundations of an equal society. Education empowers people to define their identity, take control of their lives, raise healthy families, take part confidently in developing a just society, and play an effective role in the politics and governance of their communities”**. This is our future and we must make it work individually and collectively because almost nothing in the plan can be achieved without high quality education, training, research and innovation.

Honourable Speaker, as we remember the youth of 1976, we would like the youth of today, our learners in schools, to follow their example of unwavering commitment, as they confront modern day challenges of alcohol and drug abuse, HIV/Aids and other diseases, illiteracy and other problems that make the lives of our youth in schools difficult.

Much has been done during our two solid decades of freedom to respond to the challenge of providing a better life for all our people.

Despite everything that has been done, all of us know that we still have a long road ahead of us before we can say that we have made sufficient progress towards achieving the goals of development. All of us know that our children are fed at school, transported to school, are provided with learning and teaching support material and we also have no-fee paying schools. But we also know that there are still children who attend school in dilapidated buildings. We know that we still have much to do to improve the quality of education in many of our schools.

All of us therefore must feel responsible and persuaded to come on board to confront today's many and varied challenges in our schools. All of us must answer the question whether we are doing enough, individually and collectively to empower and develop our youth and show them through our deeds that they are growing in a society that really cares about their future with regard to these challenges.

Individually and collectively, we should answer these questions by doing practical work to ensure that our youth attend school, that they get good education, acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for their own development and their full participation in the economy of our country and at all times have someone to turn to in case of need. But as you know, the levels of poverty, some of our interventions might not be enough. It is important therefore that all of us should find additional ways to assist our young people to access quality education that they rightfully deserve. If we do that, we will be making education a societal matter that it is.

It is clearly a societal issue that cannot obviously be laid squarely on a school principal's doorstep while the rest of us go on with our lives without any care in the world. Otherwise we will be guilty of forever complaining and pointing out the wrong without doing anything. We call on a more involved approach by all concerned if we are to make the much desired and fancied progress.

To this end, I want to salute the courageous and progressive actions and deeds of those social partners who worked with us to accelerate access to education.

These include our traditional leaders, the business community, spiritual leaders, politicians and parents who always fix a keen eye on the future. These are partners who understand the dangers of being short sighted and understand that education is at the heart of this government's agenda. These are people who recognize the power of education to be a great life transformer that unlocks real social justice giving every young person regardless of both birth and background, the opportunity to reach their potential.

We appreciate your support in the form of school uniform, school infrastructure, school equipment, school shoes, school furniture, mentoring programmes, career guidance and other donations that has made a difference in the schooling life of a learner. We also worked with these partners in ensuring that teaching and learning is restored where there were disruptions in the province. What is saddening is the fact that in most of these disruptions, learners were only caught in the crossfire as issues of protests were not related to education.

Honourable Speaker, we are saying let us honour the martyrs of 1976 by defending the gains of our freedom, refusing to be part of those who disrespect our freedom by disrupting teaching and learning, abusing other people, robbing, raping, killing and destroying public and private property. Individually and collectively, let us identify something practical that we can do to help our learners. Our President Jacob Zuma during his delivery of January 8 statement, was indeed correct when he said: **“A crucial element of creating prosperous society is access to quality education. We are making steady progress in this regard”**. We can individually and collectively succeed with providing quality basic education.

Our teachers are very critical in our important task of ensuring that quality education for all is achieved for all children.

One of the problems bedeviling our education system is the protection of contact time between educators and learners. The amount of contact that learners have with educators as part of their learning experience in basic education is something that cannot be taken for granted. Results do not come without commitment on both sides, i.e. teachers and learners.

Our educators have to make it more meaningful by first and foremost valuing the issue of contact time with learners. It is in this regard that we shall continue to enforce the President's directive as delivered in his 2009 State of the Nation Address when he said: **"Our teachers must commit to a set of non-negotiables i.e. to be in school on time, in class on time, teaching for at least seven hours, no abuse of learners and no neglect of duty"**. We must do so because contemporary research reveals that this glorious call by the President is not being honoured fully. We shall enforce this directive because a loss of a minute, an hour, or at most a day in the delivery of education is too much to bear in our quest to improve learner performance.

Recognition and Appreciation

Honourable speaker, our teachers, despite the less ideal working conditions, continue to make us as a province very proud. This was so in the recent 16th Annual National Teaching Awards where our educators competed with the best in the country and were recognized accordingly with awards of excellent work.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Mabore Lekalakala from Toronto Primary School who obtained position one in teaching mathematics in the country's primary schools. She walked away with a brand new car courtesy of Vodacom and the official handover was done on the 17 March here in Polokwane. In the category of Excellence in Primary School Teaching, we congratulate Ms Kwena Betty Mojela from Rev. Malatjie Primary School who obtained position two in these prestigious awards. We also saw Mr Joseph Matlala attached to Mampatile Primary School getting position two in the category recognizing Excellence in Primary School Leadership.

Another position two went to Ms Koena Letsoala who hails from Maune Primary School for Excellence in Teaching Natural Sciences.

In the lifetime achievement category, we congratulate Dr Mapula Mofya Legodi of Rev. Malatjie Primary School who obtained position three at the awards. We heartily congratulate you for representing the Province. We encourage other teachers from our schools to participate in these awards.

Honourable Speaker, in the same breath, we are forever grateful to all the schools, learners and teachers that continue to perform exceptionally well in our National Senior Certificate. In 2015, the following schools and their principals deserve a special mention. Thengwe Secondary School, our top school in the province headed by Ms TM Madanda, followed by Mbilwi Secondary School headed by Mr NC Lidzhade and Tshivhase Secondary School headed by Mr FK Maselele. We congratulate these schools, their circuit managers and their District Directors.

We also want to acknowledge the contribution of principals and deputy principals who do not only provide leadership and management in their schools but teach and produce outstanding results in their respective subjects. They are: Mr KM Matsapola, the principal of Dendron Secondary School for achieving outstanding results in English First Additional Language, Mr NC Lidzhade, the principal of Mbilwi Secondary School, for his excellent results in Life Sciences, Mr NR Sikhitha, Deputy Principal of Mbilwi Secondary School, for his excellent results in Mathematics and Ms B Sankaran, Deputy Principal of Mbilwi Secondary School for achieving outstanding results in Physical Sciences.

A special word of appreciation goes to our top learners who received acknowledgement from the Minister of Basic Education for their excellent performance in the 2015 NSC Examinations. Out of the 9 categories that were awarded by the Minister, our learners featured in 7 of these categories. This is indeed a job well done and Limpopo was once again on the national map of achievers and top performers.

2015 NSC Performance

Honourable Speaker, it is now common knowledge that Limpopo has not improved its 2014 performance of 72.9%. In 2015 grade 12 results declined in all provinces except for one. As Limpopo, we declined by 7% largely as a result of the high cognitive level questions papers which some of our learners could not fully comprehend.

While in percentage terms the picture does not look rosy, we must point out that, our record 101 575 candidates who sat for the National Senior Certificate worked hard and saw the province increasing the number of bachelor passes from 16 325 to 20 992 while the number of learners who obtained 50% and above in mathematics increased from 6 886 to 7 922. In Physical Sciences the number also increased from 5 977 to 6 795.

Teacher Development

Honourable Speaker, during the announcement of the results in January, our Honourable Premier said that the province is not revising its target of 80% and called on the Department to invest more resources in teacher development something that was not done in the previous financial year. For those who cannot recall, this is what the honourable Premier said: **“Our teachers remain our most dependable pillars of our entire system. Without them, we have no education system to speak about. It is for this reason that going forward we will continue our investment in teacher development programmes”**

Honourable Speaker, school systems across the world are charged with the responsibility of addressing the ever-increasing demands of teaching. Teachers are expected to address poor learner performance in our schools. They must meet the requirements of new curricula designs; they must again adapt and find new ways of teaching their content subjects in a way that is interesting, relevant and stimulating to modern day learners. In short, teachers must keep abreast of the important advances that are occurring in education.

At the same time, we must pay particular attention to the task to improve the competence of our teachers and the quality of teaching, as well as improve the performance of our schools in such areas as sciences and mathematics.

We are very mindful of these demands and in implementing the Premier's directive of prioritizing teacher development; we have allocated at least R 11 million in the 2016/17 financial year. This allocation will be devoted to ongoing professional teacher development that will deepen our teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Honourable members, R 600 000 of the R 11 million will be used for the Provincial Annual National Teaching Awards while the remaining allocation will be utilized for the training of GET, FET schools and Inclusive Education Teachers. 1 550 educators will be trained on literacy/language content and methodology.

In our quest for inclusive education and continued development of our teachers, 300 of the 1 550 educators will be Inclusive Education Teachers who will be trained on the South African Sign Language, Braille and Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support and Subject content and methodology for special schools offering scholastic programmes. A further 1 550 of educators will be trained on Numeracy/Mathematics teaching strategies.

As part of capacity building and development of educators and curriculum advisors with deeper knowledge of both content and teaching methodology particularly in mathematics, sciences, technology, commerce and languages, MASTEC and its satellite centres will continue to offer continuous professional development programmes in sciences, mathematics, commerce and languages. In this financial year, 300 educators and 80 curriculum advisors will be trained in these subjects.

Early Childhood Development

Honourable speaker, Early Childhood Development is critical for ensuring that children are able to reach their full potential. Our take is that education has to start at the earliest possible age. Our learners who obtain distinctions in National Senior Certificate do not just perform like that on arrival in their matric classes. A proper foundation must be laid for such sterling performance. The earlier a child begins learning the better he or she does down the road and we must do enough in terms of providing qualified educators to give all of our kids a chance. Currently the Department has 1 080 Grade R Practitioners.

In 2016/17 financial year, an amount of R 2, 6 million has been set aside for the training of Grade R Practitioners. This is in addition to the R11 Million allocated for teacher development. In 2015, the Department enrolled 200 Grade R Practitioners at the University of North West and this year, another cohort of 200 Practitioners will be enrolled at the same university and will start their lessons in July 2016. Upon completion, this cohort will receive a three-year Diploma qualification which is equivalent to REQV 13.

National Strategy on Learner Attainment

Honourable Speaker, Provinces are expected to implement the National Strategy on Learner Attainment. This is a reporting tool on programmes that provinces are implementing. The Department has set aside an amount of R 9 million for the implementation of the National Strategy on Learner Attainment (NSLA). The allocation will focus on improving learner performance in the primary and secondary schooling sector.

More attention will be directed to the two districts that recorded the highest declines and lowest pass rates, namely, Sekhukhune and Waterberg so that they can improve their current performance to meet and even exceed the national norm of 60%. We happy that the Minister of Basic Education, has already started her supporting work in these districts and we will be working together to address the poor run of performances.

Progressed Learners (Modularization)

Honourable Speaker, in 2015, Limpopo had 13 022 progressed learners who sat for the Grade 12 NSC Examinations. Of these, 3 492 passed. This amounts to 26.8%. In 2016, performance of progressed learners will be closely monitored. If learners struggle to perform on the required seven subjects, they will be advised to sit for modularized option which was not done in 2015. The modularized writing option enables them to choose the number of subjects in which they feel most prepared to write and then write the remaining subject/s in another examination sitting.

LTSM Provision

Honourable Speaker, we have made strides in ensuring that learning and teaching support material are provided to schools as required and on time. We have seen in the past five years the landscape of the learning and teaching resources changing for the better proving once again the premium value the ANC led government places on education. We emphasize therefore that an investment in education is a prerequisite for building a country that works and most importantly, that advances the ideals of our constitution.

The National Development Plan states that education is a means to building an inclusive society and providing opportunities for South Africans to realize their full potential. It further says that education provides tools to people to solve their problems. It remains our vision and commitment to ensure that all pupils enrolled in our schools have the necessary material to facilitate high quality and effective teaching and learning. It is in this regard, that we must improve on our processes every year for us to build a strong culture of service and dedication to the people we serve.

To this end, stationery and top-ups for textbooks were delivered to all schools before they reopened for 2016 academic year. Textbooks, with a normal five-year lifespan, were in this case provided on a top-up basis since all the schools have been supplied with books at the time when CAPS was being introduced.

However, some shortages were reported in some schools due to increase in learner enrollment in schools. These shortages are addressed on a need to need basis as and when they are reported by our schools.

We once again utilized the services of the South African Post Office in the warehousing and distribution of textbooks to schools. We complimented SAPO by using our own trucks to close gaps that might result in delays in the delivery of textbooks. We have earmarked R 596 million to procure stationery and textbooks centrally for all learners in no-fee paying schools. The schools in quintile 4 and 5 will receive their full allocation to procure LTSM on their own. We expect schools to enforce measures that will ensure that all books are looked after and returned at the end of the year.

Norms and Standards

Honourable Speaker, funding of schools in terms of norms and standards sees an amount of R 981 million allocated for their running costs of our schools. The Department will be transferring funds to schools for the running costs which exclude personnel costs and capital expenditure. Schools where learners do not pay school fees will receive R578,87 per learner and will be supplied with all LTSM. Including the cost for LTSM per learner, the allocation is R964,79 which is 82% of the national norm of R1 177.00. Our schools in quintile 4 will receive R483.59 per learner and those in quintile 5 will receive R167,21 per learner. These schools will however procure LTSM on their own from this allocation which is also at 82% of the national norm.

We will not just be satisfied that we transferred money; we will this year be strengthening monitoring and compliance to deal with impropriety. We will enforce accountability mechanism on whether these financial resources are used for their intended purposes. It cannot be acceptable that when critical programmes in schools must be undertaken e.g administering internal examinations, servicing of municipal accounts and minor maintenances, money is all of sudden not available or insufficient. Such excuses will have to be accompanied by compelling proof of where the money was spent on.

Infrastructure Provisioning

Honourable Speaker, The Department has committed itself to the eradication of all inappropriate school infrastructures. We acknowledge that some of these were developed by communities themselves and some by missionaries. This is an indication that our communities have from time immemorial prioritized education as they realized that this was where the future of the nation lay. However, we have not failed to note also the previous policy of funding community initiated school projects through what was known as the R for R basis. This meant that the then Government would only match what the community has been able to spend on what was then called community schools. This had the effect of perpetuating unequal provision of school infrastructure as it was based mostly on poverty and racial lines.

As part of Government's policy of free education, the state has taken over all such school infrastructure – both the good and the bad – and set forth a program to eradicate all inappropriate structures. This will ensure that all our people have access to school infrastructure that is in line with the basic norms and standards for school infrastructure.

The nature and magnitude of the backlogs require that the Department should have a comprehensive plan to address them. That plan entails ensuring that the necessary professionals are available within the Department to deal with the technical issues around this. Towards this end, the Department has with the assistance of the Department of Basic Education been able to appoint 37 professionals within its Infrastructure Unit. Included in this number are works inspectors that will be placed at Districts to provide support with regards to infrastructure planning, implementation and monitoring.

In addition to these professionals, the Department will again be contracting through the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure a number of implementing agents to provide additional support and services to fast track the provision of infrastructure.

We have seen this efforts bearing fruits as this Department is one of the few Education Departments in the country that have in the past two years been able to spend its entire infrastructure budget. Due to this sterling performance, the Department of Basic Education re-allocated during the 2015/16 an additional R 79 million to the Department from other provinces. And as in previous financial years, the allocation has been spent. We believe that this bodes well for the Department to have its allocation for the MTEF period increased.

Honourable Speaker, in addition to normal project implementation by other implementing agents, the CSIR has been engaged to do a condition assessment of all the schools in the province. This assessment is nearly complete and the interim report is being finalized. The interim report has indicated that there is a shortage of 40 448 toilets at schools of which 33 669 are pit latrines that still need to be replaced. It further indicates that there is a shortage of 6 217 classrooms and 4 661 grade R classrooms in the province.

This condition assessment will assist in the development of User Asset Management Plan (UAMP) in compliance with the Government Immovable Asset Management Act, Act No 19 of 2007. This document will have an impact on the Limpopo Department of Education Five Year Strategic Plan. The UAMP will contain an overview of the department's immovable assets, the gap analysis and the financial requirements for an MTEF period emanating from the structured condition assessment process. As a planning tool, the UAMP will assist in the efficient management of the department's facilities towards the achievement of its service delivery objectives.

The CSIR is also in the process of undertaking a Geographic Accessibility Study of schools in the province to evaluate if the current distribution and sizes of schools in the province is aligned with the distribution and density of human settlement. This accessibility study will utilize information obtained from the recent audit of school assets and will specifically focus on geographic access and learner capacity of primary and secondary schools in Limpopo.

This geographic analysis is aimed at supporting the spatial planning activities that is undertaken by the department and its efforts to ensure that schools are provided where needed and to avoid underutilization or misplacement of schools. The objective is to ensure that the people of Limpopo have appropriate access to schools. This study also aims to contribute to the spatial planning capability of the department.

Honourable Speaker, we must work together to address problems before they escalate to the level of public spats, for the common good of the education of our children. As we have said in the past, we again reiterate that the gains we made in the eradication of inappropriate structures and the provision of quality infrastructure to our people requires that we should guard these gains with all that we have.

It is therefore unacceptable that we have in our midst those who for whatever reason decide that the burning and destruction of school facilities is an acceptable way of venting their frustrations. Such people are an enemy to the people and the state itself. They are destroying the future of a generation and should be viewed in the same way that we view those who commit genocide and treason. Through their actions, the future of a number of learners has already been severely negatively impacted when their school infrastructure was destroyed. Whatever gains, if any, which the perpetrators of these acts might have realized can never be compared with the loss that those learners have suffered. A year lost can never be regained and has set back for a number of years the whole community, the province and the Nation.

As we mark the 40th anniversary of June 16, we call on the youth of today and the community to honour the martyrs of 1976 by defending the gains of our freedom, by refusing to be part of those who want to see us going round in circles by destroying public and private property to push their own agendas and not the good of the community.

We would like to reiterate our position that while we will try our best to prioritize storm damaged schools, we will however not do the same for schools that are deliberately vandalized and destroyed. We will not be seen to be rewarding anarchy and lawlessness.

For those communities that have been provided with the required school infrastructure, maintenance will be critical to ensure that what we have is prolonged for as long as possible. The Department's responsibility is to provide school infrastructure but it is the responsibility of the School Governing Bodies and therefore the communities to maintain what has been provided to them through taxpayer's money. Our communities should be concerned when they see the schools they have been provided with are left to disintegrate before their eyes. It must concern us as communities when we walk past schools and see gates, windows and doors left open after school hours. These are the small things that will result in damages due to storms being more severe than they should have been. A lot of damage could have been avoided had simple maintenance and vigilance been done at the school.

The problems affecting our own education system require us as citizens to be directly involved in guarding jealously what we already have so that we can go on to have more. It remains our commitment to improve the teaching and learning conditions in honour of the 1976 brigade who laid down their lives in order for us to be free and enjoy our education.

These challenges are compounded by massive infrastructure budget cuts. As you probably are aware, the Department is funding its Infrastructure programme from the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG), an infrastructure conditional grant from National Treasury, with the Department of Basic Education being the transferring authority.

The EIG funding for 2015/16 was R 805 million with assistance from Limpopo Treasury of R 150 million. During January another R 79 million was made available from DBE for invoices that could not be honoured by the Department.

This brought the infrastructure budget to a total of R 1, 034 billion. This budget has been utilized to provide for infrastructure related services in our schools.

For the 2016/17 financial year the Department has set aside R 930 million for its Infrastructure program. R 830 million of this is from the Education Infrastructure Grant while R 100 million is from equitable share and it is specifically meant to deal with storm damaged schools. This allocation will address upgrades and additions, maintenance and repairs, refurbishment and rehabilitation.

Honourable Speaker and members, again, the demand for school infrastructure in the province is massive, and we have to provide these much needed facilities within the limits of our allocated financial resources. Despite all these challenges, we would like to share with this august house some of our success stories in terms of the provision of infrastructure to our schools.

Completed Projects

Honourable Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to report to this august house, that the Limpopo Department of Education has completed 141 projects at 133 schools. They include the construction of 354 classrooms at 47 schools, 915 toilets seats at 57 schools, 11 multi-purpose classrooms, 28 admin blocks, 2 technical workshops, computer laboratory, library, 3 halls, 2 hostels and 44 nutrition centres. Some of the schools that benefited include Jinnah Park Primary, Khubvi Primary, Hoedspruit Secondary, Jaji Primary, Madimbo Primary, Moyaneng Secondary just to mention a few. I must also announce in this honourable house that the much talked about renovation of Hwiti for purpose of relocating learners from Setotolwane is also complete. The physical movement of learners will be completed by this Friday.

Honourable Speaker, the Department has currently committed R 118 million for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of a further twenty four schools that have been damaged by storms. This programme will be completed around September 2016 and honourable members can expect some invitations when we open some of these projects. The schools that are to benefit from this programme, include but are not limited to, the following: Gaza Primary (Ba-Phalaborwa), Magulasavi Secondary (Greater Giyani), Nahakwe Secondary (Greater Letaba), Favasi Primary (Greater Tzaneen), Masemola Secondary (Makhuduthamaga), Mmantutule Secondary (Mogalakwena), Mamogenge (Greater Tubatse), Selatole Secondary (Greater Tubatse), Matimba Secondary, Madabude Primary (Makhado), Rhabhela Secondary (Thulamela), Shiphamele Primary (Ba-Phalaborwa), Letswatla Primary (Blouberg), Hlalelani Primary (Makhado) and Ramatsetse Primary (Elias Motsoaledi).

From the end of November 2015 to January 2016, there have been various storms in the Province that have caused serious damages to schools in the province. There are currently 91 schools that have reported storm damages and the projected expenditure for these schools is an estimated R 760 million. Currently no provision has been made for the funding of these repairs except for the R 100 million that Treasury allocated. Due to the seriousness of the storm damages, the department has had to reprioritize the projects to address the most urgent needs in the province. To address these urgent and emergency projects, the department is looking at an alternative implementation process to enable swift response to address infrastructure repairs and improvements that is in line with Infrastructure Development Management System (IDMS) and treasury regulations.

Completion of abandoned projects (“Bermuda School Building Projects”)

Honourable Speaker, The Premier in his State of the Province Address spoke about the need to complete “**Bermuda roads**”. In the Department of Education, we also have 93 “Bermuda school building projects”, which are projects that have been halted due to alleged irregular appointments of consultants and contractors and the process is yet to be regularized.

We are targeting the completion of these projects in the 2016/17 financial year. These include schools such as Kgaladi and Sekwati Primary schools in Mamone village in Sekhukhune, Altein Secondary in Altein village in Vhembe as well as incomplete district and circuit offices.

Provision of Basic Services (Water, Sanitation, Guard Houses and Fencing Projects in Schools)

Honourable Speaker, according to the National Norms and Standards, as promulgated by the Minister of Basic Education on the 29th November 2013, all Provinces in the Republic of South Africa should have eradicated their backlogs with regard to water and sanitation by the 29th November 2016. This is a tall order considering the financial implications.

Provision of School furniture to Schools

Honourable speaker, as we refurbish, rehabilitate, provide new facilities to schools and upgrade our infrastructure, we must ensure that completed infrastructure facilities are immediately usable.

The contracts for procurement of school furniture have been tendered and awarded. Our budget for school furniture in 2015/16 financial year was R 34, 4 million. The Primary Schools' furniture backlog stood at 46 000 double combination desks. Our Secondary Schools' furniture backlog stood at 95 000 Single Combination desks.

Honourable Speaker, we wish to report the progress on delivery of school furniture as follows:

The order for 12 858 Double Combination Desks for Primary schools has been issued to the value of R 12.8 million and are in the process of being delivered. The order for 30 358 Single Combination Desks for secondary schools has been issued to the value of R 21,6 million and are in the process of being delivered.

Honourable members, as you can see from the above exposition, our backlogs of primary schools furniture stand at 33 081 units and 64 560 units in secondary schools after the current intervention. Our 2016/17 School furniture budget is a meagre R 36 million, which is not adequate to address our furniture backlogs in both primary and secondary schools. With this budget, we are planning to procure 13 454 primary school units and 31 766 secondary school furniture units.

Honourable Speaker, the ANC led government has progressively ensured that there are in place significant enabling factors, which play a role in the drive to improve the delivery of quality education for the majority of the people in this province. It is because of these factors that education has improved tremendously in spite of the levels of poverty in our communities. These include among others progressive initiatives such as the introduction of No-Fee Paying Schools, the National School Nutrition Programme and Scholar Transport. Our greatest responsibility and obligation is to our learners. We are making sure that our people who have the desire and the will, but not the money, access the best education possible. We must press on in this regard.

No- Fee Paying Schools

Honourable Speaker, provision of quality education is our priority and the background of a learner cannot determine access to education. We are happy that over 90% of all learners enrolled in our public ordinary schools, quintile 1, 2 and 3 are benefiting from the No-fee paying school policy as introduced by the caring government of the ANC. No learner should be shut out of school not when the ANC led government is still in charge.

Scholar Transport

Honourable Speaker, our province is vast and sparsely populated. We continue to promote access to education by ensuring that learners travelling 5km or more to the nearest public ordinary school are provided with learner transport. Last financial year, we spoke of 19 000 learners from 185 schools who benefited from scholar transport.

Moving forward into this financial year and as we speak, learners from 255 schools are able to be at school safely and on time for teaching and learning to take place at their respective learning facilities across the province. This support has proven to improve learner performance, attendance and their safety. Given these benefits, we have allocated this programme an amount of R 145 million so that we lessen the burden of walking long distances.

The National School Nutrition Programme

Honourable Speaker, the National School Nutrition Programme is a critical intervention by our government and is aimed at ensuring the provisioning of nutritious meals to learners in quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools in Limpopo. Good nutrition enhances concentration span of learners and very essential for good outcomes in education. We cannot subject our children to poor nutrition during the most crucial years of their development. It is in this regard that in 2015/16, we provided meals in all school going days to over 1, 6 million learners. Of this number, 967 240 are learners in primary schools, 656 212 are our secondary school learners and 7 721 are our learners in the province' special schools.

We are not looking back as we get into 2016/17 financial year. Our expressed plans are to have us providing meals to learners from 3 854 quintiles 1, 2 and 3 primary and secondary schools. The programme also covers learners in 33 special schools. Altogether, at least 1, 6 million learners are provided for in this programme for 198 school days. As a result of the successful implementation of this programme, learner absenteeism has declined, concentration has improved; in fact we have seen tremendous improvement in punctuality and the general wellbeing of our learners. It is in this regard that, we will intensify monitoring and we will not even hesitate to terminate contracts of non-performing suppliers who take pleasure in late or non-delivery of food which results to learners not being fed as expected. To effectively implement this programme to feed learners of Limpopo, R 870 million has been provided.

Small and non-viable schools (Merger of schools)

Honourable speaker, small and non-viable schools have proven to be a serious educational liability. These are schools with very low learner enrolment of 135 and below. Teacher provisioning is based on learner enrolment. This therefore means that schools with very low enrolment figures qualify for fewer educators. These educators are overburdened with the workload and struggle to deliver effective teaching and learning. Schools that obtained zero percent pass rate fall into this category. To resolve this problem as an intervention strategy and to optimize constrained resources in terms of personnel and ensuring that our learners get the quality education due to them, we continue to merge these kinds of schools.

When we delivered our budget vote last year, we said out of 301 small and non-viable schools, we had merged 69. We have to date merged 106 and 23 of these schools were provided with scholar transport at the beginning of the 2016 academic year. Given the negative impact these schools have on the delivery of the desired quality of education to our learners, we plan to finalize the merging of the current identified non-viable schools in this financial year. We appeal for sanity and unselfish cooperation as we finalize this important process and continue to identify this category of schools for educational reasons which are in line with policies of this country.

Underperforming schools

Honourable speaker, in 2015 the number of underperforming schools increased to 569 from 371 in 2014. This is an increase of 198 schools and this number is unacceptable because since 2010 the number of underperforming has been declining. This number needs to be brought down significantly. The said schools have to account and we have accordingly taken a decision to demand accountability from these serial underperforming schools. The year 2015 registered the highest number of these schools with Sekhukhune leading the pack.

These are schools that performed below the national average norm of 60% either for the first time or for the past years. We are mandated by laws and policies to monitor and support these underperforming schools in order to improve quality of learning and teaching. The 2016 school reopening saw us deploying 189 monitors which included senior managers, programme managers and curriculum advisors to these schools. We shall strengthen support and monitoring of schools from all levels. We have also developed intervention strategies in this regard, amongst others is to provide training to School Management Teams. We have in 2015/16 trained 1 178 schools in curriculum related matters. We will continue to train school principals in financial management in this financial year.

School Safety

Honourable speaker and members, we take school safety very seriously and we must accordingly strike partnerships to ensure the safety of all learners, educators and relevant stakeholders in schools. The Limpopo Provincial Schools Safety Guidelines for all schools is a critical document in our sector endeavoring to promote safety conditions in schools. All our schools must be drug free and dangerous weapon free zones so that teaching and learning activities can take place without any barriers. We will in this regard be strengthening our collaboration with SAPS on random searches and seizures for dangerous weapons and drugs. Equally important are Departments of Social Development and Roads and Transport to ensure the safety of learners on their way to and from schools.

We will be implementing incident registers in public schools and further explore the possibilities of training schools on the National Schools Safety Framework so that schools can be able to record and report adequately on incidents of crime committed in schools. We must emphasize that the success of these initiatives rely massively on the collective efforts of parents and communities who must work hand in hand with schools to ensure that all learners are safe at all times.

EMIS

Honourable speaker, we said in this house last year that we have rolled out the South African Schools Administration System (SA-SAMS) to 3 959 public schools. We are quite happy that the introduction of this system has expansively improved school administration, management and governance in schools. The provincial department is now able to monitor key performance indicators that are critical in the provisioning of quality education such as absenteeism for educators and learners as well as learner performance. We also said we were integrating and customizing EMIS, SA-SAMS and LURITS. As we speak, about 97% of learner unit records information for the 2016 academic year is already hosted in the departmental servers and is being used for planning and resource allocation.

School Governing Bodies

Honourable Speaker, School Governing Bodies are important organs that must at all the time seek to work with us and not against Department to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community and thereby enhance teaching and learning. This is a serious role that must be executed with sheer care, dedication and responsibility. We have seen some phenomenal governing bodies who serve their schools with pride and dedication but we have also seen those SGBs who make it their daily job to mobilize learners out of school for things that they should be addressing with circuits and district offices.

Most of our schools are still being disrupted and others are still dysfunctional due to poor school governance. It is extremely important that we must support and build our schools to be the best they can be and in doing that we must not use learners as bargaining tools. We extremely appreciate SGBs as an extremely important facet of our sector and that is why we have trained all the executives of the school governing bodies on their roles and responsibilities, including training on financial management. We envisage providing further training to SGBs to strengthen their support for basic school functionality.

We also want to appreciate the role played by organized governing bodies, who from time to time engage with the Department and raise issues with one voice that assist us in managing and governing our schools better.

Financial Management

Honourable Speaker, MEC for Provincial Treasury has already indicated when tabling the 2016/17 provincial budget that close to 50% of our budget goes to this Department. The Department is today tabling a budget of R 27,172 billion. It cannot be acceptable that we receive the most yet we are ranked the worst in terms of our financial management. These resources that have been allocated to us necessitate that proper financial management must be in place to ensure that service delivery is not compromised and that we are able to account for these resources. It cannot be business as usual and we must be able to improve our financial processes in the Department.

However, the Department has not been able to achieve this, which is evidenced by disclaimer audit opinions that the Department has received over the past four financial years. This is one of the reasons why the Department was put under section 100 (1)(b) administration together with other four Departments in the Province. That intervention was aimed at addressing challenges of budget management, expenditure management and human resource management in the Department. As is common knowledge, the intervention was changed to section 100(1)(a) and subsequently lifted in the other four departments.

Noting that the issues that the intervention had intended to address had still not been resolved, the Provincial Government took a decision to provide targeted assistance to the Department in terms of section 18 of the PFMA. In addition to the matters that were the subject of the section 100 intervention, the section 18 intervention team will also be offering assistance in areas such as Asset Management, Records Management, Supply Chain Management and Risk Management.

We welcome this intervention and are hopeful that the mitigating steps put in place as per the section 18's diagnostic report will go a long way in ensuring that the Department improves its overall financial management and thus obtains a desirable audit opinion.

Records management has been cited as one of the main contributors, if not the main contributor, to the disclaimer audit opinions that the Department has been receiving and has thus been included in the areas that will be covered by the section 18 intervention team. To this end, an amount of R 15 million has been set aside in this financial year to deal with matters pertaining to records management in the Department.

Human Resource

Honourable Speaker, In compliance with the directive by the Minister of Public Service and Administration, the Department has been reviewing the organizational structure to be in line with the Generic Structure of the Education Sector. The organizational structure in discussion is based on ten (10) Education Districts and 134 Circuit Offices.

The vacancy rate in the department has been very steep caused by non-filling of posts due to budgetary constraints and pressures. The department will move forward to turn the situation around within the available resources. To alleviate administrative burden from educators so that they focus on curriculum delivery, we have advertised and filled 164 administrative clerks in Public Schools in this previous financial year.

A further 184 Admin clerks will be filled in Public Ordinary Schools. We also advertised and filled 32 professional support staff for special schools. In addition to this, we also appointed 204 general support staff ranging from Teacher Aid, Cleaners, Household Aid and other general support. We have earmarked for filling, a total number of 131 general support staff posts. The human resource needs in special schools have become a matter of extreme urgency and we will prioritize on that.

On the educator post establishment, we have determined a pool of 52 252 educator posts for 2016 in terms of Employment of Educators Act, 1998 Act no 76 of 1998 as amended. We believe that with collaborative efforts by all stakeholders we will surely succeed.

To strengthen school management, the department has moved to new working stations those principals and deputy principals that become redundant as a consequence of merging of schools. We will move with speed to fill in this financial year, 516 principals, 322 deputy principals and 934 heads of department posts. We will also ensure that posts that are lost due to natural attrition are speedily attended to, to sustain our institutional management capacity in our various schools. We must do so to increase accountability as and when poor management rears its ugly head. Vacancy rate for specialists who must monitor our schools daily has to be kept to minimum levels. We need full time and appointed circuits managers who will take accountability, and in cases where an acting person is appointed, we must move with speed to advertise and appoint permanently so that curriculum delivery and support is not compromised.

Skills Development

Honourable Speaker, the Department notes the importance of improving skills of its workforce which will in turn enhance its capacity and capability to improve service delivery. There must be value for what the Department is allocated and the secret is having the right skills to execute pivotal programmes of the Department as per the mandate. It is in this regard, that we have allocated R 80.6 million and R 90.7 million 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years respectively for skills development.

We allocated the resources to benefit 452 educators, who will be granted part-time bursaries to upgrade their qualifications and improve their content knowledge on the subjects they teach. 50 bursaries will be offered to students who are keen on pursuing careers in teaching with special focus to identified scarce skills and critical subjects. 240 school heads of departments will be enrolled for a Post Graduate Diploma in Mentoring and Coaching.

Collaboration with ETDP-SETA

Honourable Speaker, we are elated to report that our relationship with the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA) and the support we receive from them is growing in leaps and bounds. ETDP will contribute R 13.6 million to fund skills development programmes. The programmes, to be implemented in this financial year include among others the following: 150 Deputy Principals will be enrolled in a financial Management Programme, 60 circuit managers will be enrolled on a Leadership Development Programme, 65 serving ECD Practitioners received bursaries to study for B. Ed degree in Foundation Phase and 200 serving educators in Special Schools will be trained on Interpretation of Braille and Sign Language.

In-School Sport, Arts and Culture

Honourable Speaker, the benefits derived from participating in sport are immense and for us to have our learners participating in various sporting activities is a huge boost for the province and the country. These are our future athletes and the best place to unearth such talent is in our schools. In 2015/16, 17 in-school codes were implemented across the province. Our public schools, special and ordinary participated at the District, Provincial and National Schools Sport Championships held at the University of Pretoria in December last year. Limpopo scooped 37 medals. To foster social cohesion, our school participated in the 2015 South African Choral Eistedford Championships and Kgakoa High School was the best performing school from the Province. With this achievement, 2016/17 will see us once more taking part in 17 in-school sporting codes and also in 2 Arts and Culture programmes, namely school choral and indigenous music across all levels.

Information Communication Technology

Honourable Speaker, the Department is hailed as the biggest in the Province in terms of its personnel, responsibilities and the people it serves. This translates to having a number of stakeholders with which we must interact with timeously.

It is therefore important to intensify both internal and external communications with all stakeholders in order to relay information, promote knowledge and better understanding of Departmental programmes and activities. We must intensify in terms of creating a platform for feedback and engagement to help us improve our service delivery mechanisms. More work must still be done for schools, circuits and districts with regards to IT infrastructure. Of concern here is the Department's ageing infrastructure which must be modernized for effective and efficient communication. In the light of these needs, we have allocated at least an amount of R15 million to connect 200 schools and refurbish the IT infrastructure at the Department's provincial and district offices.

2016/17 Budget Allocation

Honourable Speaker, as I table this budget let me then remind the house of an **African Proverb** that says: **"If you think you are too small to make a difference, you have not spent the night with a mosquito"** We indeed exist as sector of government to produce multi-skilled and knowledgeable South Africans who must be ready and well prepared to deal with the challenges confronting our country. This is a serious responsibility.

Honourable Speaker, it is my singular honour on this day to present a budget of R 27, 2 billion, which is an increase of 7, 5% for 2015/16. 92, 5% of this budget is funded by equitable share, 7,4% from Conditional Grant and 0.3% from own revenue. Of the total budget of R 27, 2 billion, R 22, 3 billion is for the Compensation of Employees, R2.4 billion for Goods and Services, R1.6 billion for transfers and subsidies and R900 million for Payments for Capital Assets .

The infrastructure program of the Department is funded by R 830 million from conditional grants and R 100 million from equitable share allocation of the Province which is aimed at repairing storm damaged schools. However, this amount is far below the required R1, 6 billion to deal with all storms damaged schools. Details of allocation per programme are attached.

In conclusion, Honourable Speaker and members of this Honourable House, let us individually and collectively do as urged by our first democratic President Nelson Mandela when he said: **“Everyone must re-inculcate the culture of learning and of teaching and make it possible for this culture to thrive”**

Our overriding premise is that every child, in every society deserves quality education. We know that the majority of our people that have given us the privilege to govern did so with full confidence and we shall work very hard on their behalf and for the benefit of all the people.

In the revolutionary name of the Freedom Charter and the fallen heroes of 1976, we can only continue to call on all South Africans to make education a societal issue because through it we can promote democracy, non-racialism, non-sexism, a decent standard of living and security for all.

It remains our expressed conviction, as directed in the National Development Plan, that working together we shall have schools here in our province that are characterized by learners and teachers who are highly motivated, principals who are effective managers providing administrative and curriculum leadership, parents getting involved in the schools their children attend, schools that are accountable to parents, committed and professional teachers who have knowledge of the subjects they teach and schools and teachers that are supported by knowledgeable district and circuit officials. Individually and collectively all our energies and efforts should be directed to support teaching and learning at all times.

Let me thank the support from the Minister of Basic Education, Honourable Premier, my colleagues in the Executive Council and the Portfolio Committee on Education. Your unconditional support and guidance inspires us to fight and soldier on irrespective of the challenging circumstances.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Acting Head of Department and her management team. To all the stakeholders who hold our hands in that hour of need, we appreciate you greatly. It is my appeal that getting into 2016/17 financial year, we should work together better and closer for the greater good of education in this province.

Together we move South Africa Forward!

Thank you very much.

Table 3.2(a) : Summary of payments and estimates by programme: Education

R thousand	Outcome			Main appropriation	Adjusted appropriation 2015M6	Revised estimate	Medium-term estimates		
	2012M3	2013M4	2014M5				2016M7	2017M8	2018M9
1. Administration	1 157 265	1 117 659	1 436 388	1 521 972	1 520 856	1 511 545	1 695 879	1 755 642	1 846 246
2. Public Ordinary School Education	18 482 761	19 555 597	20 771 954	21 928 114	21 782 630	21 608 101	23 373 162	24 299 632	25 532 080
3. Independent School Subsidies	86 515	93 477	105 797	118 458	118 458	118 458	121 736	126 973	133 569
4. Public Special School Education	322 196	353 183	379 815	404 615	404 615	404 031	448 754	478 515	510 338
5. Early Childhood Development	112 089	117 652	132 023	164 826	164 826	164 255	174 218	174 591	174 312
6. Infrastructure Development	564 420	1 147 038	1 305 710	805 128	955 128	1 127 978	946 610	821 260	864 634
7. Examination And Education Related	283 223	263 373	287 587	341 592	338 192	350 337	411 387	435 554	450 941
Total payments and estimates	21 008 469	22 647 979	24 419 274	25 284 705	25 284 705	25 284 705	27 171 746	28 092 167	29 512 120

Table 3.2(b) : Summary of provincial payments and estimates by economic classification: Education

R thousand	Outcome			Main appropriation	Adjusted appropriation 2015M6	Revised estimate	Medium-term estimates		
	2012M3	2013M4	2014M5				2016M7	2017M8	2018M9
Current payments	19 644 386	20 428 087	21 725 068	23 412 795	22 962 738	22 753 912	24 680 664	26 013 953	27 674 403
Compensation of employees	17 554 909	18 709 915	19 797 846	21 515 773	21 054 513	20 725 879	22 351 417	23 926 052	25 541 803
Goods and services	2 089 476	1 718 172	1 927 222	1 897 022	1 908 225	2 028 033	2 329 247	2 087 901	2 132 600
Interest and rent on land	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers and subsidies to:	791 992	1 082 904	1 317 920	1 085 121	1 406 539	1 440 365	1 566 943	1 335 306	1 031 793
Provinces and municipalities	221	225	233	380	50 380	50 380	401	422	443
Departmental agencies and accounts	13 794	18 409	39 722	21 516	21 516	21 516	22 878	24 321	25 732
Higher education institutions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foreign governments and international organisations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public corporations and private enterprises	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-profit institutions	630 428	905 407	1 079 847	885 267	1 156 619	1 156 763	1 351 532	1 108 946	795 843
Households	147 549	158 863	198 118	177 958	178 024	211 706	192 132	201 617	209 775
Payments for capital assets	572 091	1 136 988	1 328 084	786 789	915 428	1 090 428	924 139	742 908	805 924
Buildings and other fixed structures	567 747	1 132 849	1 314 374	745 371	871 252	1 046 252	857 326	712 409	773 395
Machinery and equipment	4 344	4 139	13 710	41 418	44 176	44 176	59 463	29 199	31 129
Heritage Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Specialised military assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Biological assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Land and sub-soil assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Software and other intangible assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 350	1 300	1 400
Payments for financial assets	-	-	48 202	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total economic classification	21 008 469	22 647 979	24 419 274	25 284 705	25 284 705	25 284 705	27 171 746	28 092 167	29 512 120
Less: Unauthorised expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	42 234	-	-
Baseline available for spending	21 008 469	22 647 979	24 419 274	25 284 705	25 284 705	25 284 705	27 129 512	28 092 167	29 512 120