

BUDGET VOTES

2024



**THURSDAY,
15 AUGUST
2024**

Hon. M.J Maboya
Education
(Vote 6)

Dress Code: School Uniform



Fourth Raadsaal, Bloemfontein

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Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

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**Free State Department of Education: Budget Vote Speech, 2024/25,
Delivered by the Honorable MEC for Education: Dr MJ Maboya (MPL),
Free State Provincial Legislature - Fourth Raadsaal, Bloemfontein,
15 August 2024**

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Premier,

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature,

Honourable Members of the Executive Council,

Organised Labour (SADTU, CTU/ATU, NEHAWU and PSA),

School Governing Bodies,

Our Partners in Education: Education Funders, Civil Society
Organisations,

Principals, Teachers and Learners,

Distinguished Guests,

The people of the Free State, greetings to you all,

Honourable Speaker, it is with a deep sense of responsibility and purpose that I rise today to present the Budget Vote 6 for the Free State Department of Education for the 2024 - 2025 Financial Year. This occasion marks not just a procedural necessity, but a critical moment for reflection, planning, and recommitment to the noble cause of educating the future leaders of our province and our nation.

Honourable Speaker, as we convene during this significant period of Women's Month, it is imperative that we honestly acknowledge the profound influence of what we usually call "feminine energy", which is currently rising globally and challenging existing societal norms.



This powerful shift represents not just a symbolic resurgence of the divine feminine but a real, tangible force driving change across all sectors, especially in education.

Arguably, our society has been shaped by the tireless efforts of women revolutionaries such as Charlotte Maxeke, who once said: ***"This work is not for yourselves — kill that spirit of 'self' and do not live above your people but live with them. If you can rise, bring someone with you."***

As a department, we heed these words and commit to rising with our girl learners and women in general, ensuring their protection, wellness and safety, both within our schools and in their communities.

Honourable Speaker, I can confidently affirm that the Free State Department of Education is unwavering in its commitment to providing quality education to all learners in our province, ensuring that no child is left behind. We need to be reminded that the African Union has designated 2024 as "The Year of Education in Africa". In this context, we will continue to place a high premium on supporting our schools to achieve high-quality teaching and learning, with a view to maintain an ongoing improvement in learning outcomes.

Reflections on the past 30 years of Democracy

Honourable Speaker, this Budget Vote takes place at a time when we need to appreciate our achievements within the context of 30 years of democracy. From the first democratic elections to date, our government has consistently worked to ensure that education serves as a catalyst for



growth, empowerment and equity. As we reflect on our province today, a lot has been achieved in the education system.

In reflecting on the achievements of the past years, we take pride in our efforts to enhance the education spectrum in the Free State. Recent research and statistical data reflect significant strides that we have made:

Attendance and enrolments

The Census 2022 has demonstrated that the introduction of no-fee schools, ECD, access to learner transport, and school nutrition in the form of the NSNP has had a positive impact on attendance and enrolments. The largest rise in attendance was observed in Free State, with the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions increasing by nearly four percentage points, from 73,1% in 2011 to 76,8% in 2022.

Level of Education

Census 2022 has demonstrated a positive trajectory for education in the Free State. In 2011, 7,1% of the Free State population **aged 20+** had no formal schooling; that figure declined to 5,0% in this latest Census 2022.

Early Childhood Development

Overall, in 2022, children aged 0–4 years mostly attended a crèche/educare centre (36%). The largest percentage of children attending these facilities were residents of Western Cape, **Free State** and Gauteng (44,1%, **44,1%** and 40,8% respectively).



The migration of ECD from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Education has been a major achievement from the work of the 6th administration.

The Department also made significant strides in the provision of school infrastructure including the eradication of inappropriate structures and pit toilets. We completed the construction of several new schools in under-served areas, ensuring that more learners have access to safe and conducive learning environments.

Additionally, we enhanced the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education, equipping schools with digital resources that are essential for 21st century learning.

Yet, there is much that needs to be done to achieve total transformation for a better future. Our focus now is to consolidate and enhance our achievements with a view to ensure that we leave no child behind. We are delighted to recognize that President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his opening of parliament address (OPA) on 18 July 2024, foregrounded the imperative for a “well-functioning and quality education system” to improve the socio-economic conditions that continue to confront our communities.

Despite these achievements, we faced considerable challenges. The persistent issue of overcrowded classrooms, particularly in urban areas, continue to strain our resources and affect the quality of teaching and learning. The dropout rate among high school learners remains a concern, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities.



Furthermore, the safety and security of learners and educators have been compromised by incidents of violence and crime, both within and outside school premises.

Speaker, the following remain areas of concern:

- The percentage of children aged 0-5 who are not yet attending any form of early learning in the Free State.
- Learners who are unable to read for meaning.
- Participation of learners in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.
- The throughput rate which is exacerbated by dropout rates amongst others.
- The quality of our matric passes.
- Delayed completion of infrastructure projects, leading to more overcrowding.

Honourable Speaker, the challenges of the past years should not deter us; rather, they should strengthen our resolve to pursue transformative change in the education sector. The 2024 - 2025 financial year presents an opportunity for the Free State Department of Education to build on our successes and address the challenges that persist.

As we embark on the tenure of the 7th provincial administration, we need to appreciate that the **National Development Plan (NDP: VISION 2030)** has articulated a progressive vision in relation to the need for our learners to have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to



significantly improved learning outcomes by 2030. We therefore need to be guided by both provincial and national imperatives, for empowering our learners with skills and competencies for a changing world to meet the demands and challenges of the 21st century.

Our primary focus in the coming years will be on the transformation of the education spectrum. This transformation is guided by four strategic pillars:

Access, Quality, Inclusivity and Responsiveness.

- **Access** - we commit to intensifying our efforts to ensure that every child in the Free State has access to quality education. This involves expanding ECD programs, enhancing school infrastructure, and tackling the challenge of overcrowded classrooms. We will also focus on reducing the dropout rate by implementing targeted interventions for learners at risk, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas.
- **Quality** - we will enhance the standard of education and continue to support educators through professional development programmes, ensuring that they are equipped with the latest teaching methodologies and resources. We commit that the integration of ICT in education will be further advanced, with a particular focus on digital literacy and e-learning initiatives.
- **Inclusivity** – This includes providing support for learners with disabilities, learners with learning barriers, promoting multilingualism, and ensuring that our schools are safe and can



provide welcoming spaces to all, to ensure that no learner is left behind.

- **Responsiveness** - we will strengthen the implementation of the **three-stream model** to ensure that our curriculum remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the learners and the economy.

Honourable Speaker, it is important to pay tribute to more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1955 in protest against the extension of pass laws to women. During this Month, the department will advance the Women's Charter for Accelerated Development by honouring 1000 young women (18-35 years) in the Early Childhood Development sector for their contribution to child development. Furthermore, we will be hosting Dialogues on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) as well as Learner Pregnancy, to be held in Fezile Dabi District, targeting Grade 7-10 learners.

Honourable Speaker, as you might recall, on 30 June 2024, we buried a young female teacher from Tsosetso Secondary School, the late Ms Mpho Moalosi (May Her Soul Rest in Peace), who was brutally killed by someone who was supposed to love her. As social partners in the education sector, we need to take a collective and collaborative approach to condemn any form of GBVF with the contempt it deserves.

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to invite Honourable Members to work with us, the police, social workers, teachers, SGBs, parents and learners to stop GBVF once and for all.



Honourable Speaker, as we gather here today to chart the course for the 2024/2025 financial year, it is also essential to reflect on the vital role played by our School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in the governance and functioning of our schools. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the outgone SGB members, whose term came to an end in March 2024.

These dedicated individuals have been pillars of strength in our educational institutions. Their commitment, dedication and unwavering support have not only sustained our schools but have also laid the groundwork for future successes. Between March and April 2024, we successfully conducted elections for new SGB members across the province.

I am pleased to report that the elections went smoothly, and we now have a new cohort of SGB members who have been oriented and inducted into their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, the Circuit and District SGB Committees have been elected, and we look forward to the forthcoming election of the Provincial SGB Council. This robust structure of governance will continue to play a crucial role in the advancement of our education system.

2024/25 BUDGET ALLOCATION

Honourable Speaker, for the 2024/2025 financial year, the Department has been allocated a budget of R17.895 billion (seventeen billion eight hundred and ninety-five million and three hundred and ninety thousand rands).



Accordingly, this must be juxtaposed against the 2023/24 financial year when the allocation was R18.230 billion (eighteen billion two hundred and thirty million and five hundred and sixty-one thousand rands). This represents a decrease of 1.87% from the 2023/24 allocation.

Honourable Speaker, it is evident that we are operating under difficult fiscal conditions which require innovation, creativity, and firm financial discipline on how to manage the public purse. The MTEF allocations for the period 2024/25; 2025/26 and 2026/27 are R17 895 390 000; R18 578 689 000 and R19 483 026 000 respectively.

A detailed breakdown of this budget is attached as an **Addendum** to this Budget Vote Speech.

Honourable Speaker, in the next five years, the Department commits to building a solid foundation, towards an education of high quality which is inclusive and responsive to the needs of the economy.

Bathong! we are NOT the Department of Matric – we are the department of education which serves all children from ECD, through to the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, Senior Phase and the Further Education and Training (FET) Band. We remain committed to our mandate of providing a meaningful expression to the right of all children to basic education as enshrined in our Constitution. This mandate, founded on the ruling party's founding document, the Freedom



Charter (1955), dictates that: ***“The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all”.***

Honourable Speaker, the impact of a well-functioning and quality education system that reduces poverty and drives inclusive growth cannot be overemphasized.

To this end, our work, as we begin the tenure of the 7th administration, will be guided by the following **key priorities** with a view to improve service delivery in education:

Improved access to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Honourable Speaker, our priority is to achieve universal access to ECD which is a prerequisite for improved learning in later years. We need to expand on this milestone by placing emphasis on delivering quality services

throughout the whole ECD ecosystem with a view to prepare children adequately in relation to their motor, visual, and cognitive dimensions to ensure their readiness for school.

In the 2024/25 financial year, the Department has budgeted R 306 504 million (from both equitable share and conditional grant) to subsidize 68 772 eligible children. This is to ensure that children from vulnerable communities access quality Early Learning Programmes (ELPs).

In 2023, the department funded 1 249 ECD centers that served 72 742 children. In 2024 the Department increased the number of funded ECD centers by an additional 161, which means a total of 1 410 centres are now funded, giving access to 81 464 children. In broadening access to



quality Early Learning Programmes (ELPs), at least 300 unregistered ECD centers will be registered in the 2024/25 financial year.

In dealing with the emergence of illegal ECD centers, the Department has developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure compliance with ECD registration norms and standards for partial care facilities. To facilitate mass registration of ECD facilities, we will continue to put measures in place to reduce red tape.

In celebrating Nelson Mandela month, 23 unfunded ECD centers were identified across the districts and were provided with resources including educational toys, blankets, mattresses, tables and chairs, seedlings, and revitalization of infrastructure in these centers. More importantly, these 23 centers will be fully funded by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. We believe this will go a long way in ensuring that we gradually achieve our strategic priority of improving access to quality ECD services.

Honourable Speaker, to ensure early identification and referral of children with learning barriers and those living with disabilities, we will ramp up efforts to improve access to quality inclusive education for children in our most vulnerable communities.

Honourable Speaker, we are pleased to announce that the Child Protection Week (31 May 2024 to 7 June 2024) was celebrated in 58 ECD centers, reaching 58 matrons, 36 ECD Practitioners, 1 432 parents and 1 909 children in the province.



To improve the provision of quality ECD services, the following initiatives will be undertaken within the financial year 2024/25:

With regard to Pre-Grade R:

- Training of 1 000 Practitioners on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).
- Training of 750 Practitioners on Classroom Management as well as 250 Matrons on Curriculum Management.
- Training of 100 Practitioners towards an NQF Level 4 qualification.

Honourable Members, in respect of Grade R,

- The department administered the School Readiness Tool for the first time in 20 ECD centers in January 2023 and January 2024.
- The School Readiness Tool will continue to be administered in 70 Public Schools to determine readiness of Grade R learners for formal teaching in Grade 1.
- We will continue to upskill Grade R practitioners in partnership with the ETDP SETA.
- 600 Grade R practitioners will be trained on Emergent Reading with focus on phonological awareness and shared reading methodologies.

Improving literacy and numeracy skills across all phases of schooling

Honourable Speaker, we will prioritize teaching learners to read for meaning and develop their numeracy skills early on, as these foundational



skills are crucial for future learning. To build a strong foundation, our focus will be on primary schools.

In an effort to improve learners' attainment in Mathematics and Languages in secondary schools, we will implement the following interventions amongst others:

- Administering baseline tests at the beginning of the year as part of identifying learning gaps and develop strategies to close them.
- Hosting reading conferences for subject advisors, teachers, and Departmental Heads.
- Training of teachers on Reading Methodologies.
- Support Grades 6 and 7 Mathematics and Science teachers on bi-weekly virtual workshops using the Webinar Platform.

Maintaining and sustaining performance in secondary schooling

Honourable Speaker, we have managed to retain our number one spot in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results for five consecutive years since 2019. Our latest NSC pass rate for 2023 is 89.3%. In addition, Bachelor passes improved from 43% in 2022 to 44.7% in 2023, the second highest in the country.

We are pleased that 3 of our districts, that is, Motheo, Fezile Dabi and Thabo Mofutsanyana are in the top 10 performing districts in the country. In this context, it is important to recognize that all our districts are performing above 85%. This is truly remarkable! not only are we proud of



our districts, but we also recognize the amount of effort that goes into producing such results.

Honourable Speaker, our province has also delivered excellence in different subject offerings in the NSC examinations. For example, Geography and Life Sciences have maintained the number one spot in the country for five consecutive years, while Accounting remains number one for three consecutive years.

Other subjects in which we are also leading include six technical subjects, Business Studies, English First Additional Language, Mathematical Literacy, Technical Sciences, Computer Applications Technology (CAT), Sesotho Home Language, Tourism, Dance.

It is therefore against this backdrop that we will continue to work harder towards the attainment of the schooling goals as enunciated in Action Plan 2024. This includes an increase in the number of Grade 12 learners who pass mathematics and science, an increase in the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at higher education institutions and an improved throughput rate.

Skills and competencies for a changing world

Honourable Speaker, the foundation of economic growth and job creation lies in the skills produced by our education system. We cannot hope to improve the life chances of our learners if we do not align their education with the skills and competencies demanded by our economy. The skills revolution is not just an option; it is a prerequisite for industrialization and for building an inclusive economy.



To this end, we are committed to expanding vocational and occupational training in our schools through the implementation of the Three-Stream Model. This approach has been proven successful in countries that have transformed their economies by equipping their youth with the practical skills needed to drive industrial growth and innovation. We, too, must ensure that our education system serves as a catalyst for economic transformation, creating a workforce that is ready to lead our nation into a new era of prosperity.

Honourable Speaker, our technical schools have increased from 29 in 2022/23 to 31 in 2024/25. To further expand the Three-Stream Model, 26 schools offering Technical Subjects implemented one or more of the three Technical Vocational Subjects (Civil, Electrical and Mechanical) in Grades 8 and 9.

Other vocational subjects implemented in Grades 8 and 9 are Digital Technology in 15 schools, Consumer Studies in 6 schools and Hospitality Studies in 6 schools. The province has 30 schools offering a minimum of two Technical Specialization Subjects from Grade 10 to 12. Reikaeletse Secondary in Koffiefontein in the Xhariep District will implement a second specialization in Grade 10 in 2025, which will increase the number of schools to 31.

To date, we have completed three technical workshops in the Xhariep District in three schools (Boaramelo in Jagersfontein, Koffiefontein Combined, and Wongalethu in Bethulie), that were provided with



Automotive and Civil works respectively as well as classrooms for Engineering Graphics Design (EGD) to expand the Three-Stream model.

Honourable Speaker, on 28-31 August 2024 the department will be hosting the Provincial Technical Schools Skills Competition for grade 10 and 11 learners and teachers. The competition will be held in Bloemfontein at various venues including at HTS Louis Botha.

The competition will focus on various specializations which include Woodworking, Construction, Plumbing, Power Systems, Electronics, Digital Systems, Automotive, Welding and Metalwork, & Fitting & Machining. We take this opportunity to invite **Members** to come and witness learners and teachers locking horns in displaying vocational skills.

Honourable Speaker, the agricultural sector remains the key driver of the Free State economy. We need to reclaim our position as the breadbasket of the country. To this end, agricultural schools have been increased from 15 in 2022/23 to 19 in 2024/25. In addition to this, Agriculture is being offered in Grades 8 and 9 in 22 schools.

In collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, we will be accelerating the implementation of vegetable gardens in schools. This will not only serve to promote food security, but will also facilitate integration of our agricultural produce into the ecosystem of our National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).



This partnership, particularly with Agricultural Schools, will create the conditions necessary to reduce poverty and address the high cost of living in the communities surrounding our schools.

By fostering these synergies, we are not only enhancing the nutritional support for our learners, but we are also empowering local communities through sustainable agricultural practices.

Speaker, to expose our learners to the skills needed for participation in the 4th Industrial Revolution, 100 Primary Schools and 21 Secondary Schools are piloting Coding and Robotics. Furthermore, teachers will be trained to teach new technical subjects, including ICT Integration, Coding and Robotics, Digital Technology and technical vocational subjects in Grades 8 and 9. To support this, we will provide laptops and data projectors to both teachers and learners involved in the Coding and Robotics pilot, facilitating the effective integration of ICT into teaching and learning.

General Education Certificate (GEC) – progress

The GEC is envisaged to provide an accurate indicator on the performance of the South African Education System at the end of Grade 9. More importantly, it will provide reliable data for learners to follow diversified learning pathways into academic, vocational and occupational streams beyond Grade 9. The department administered the GEC in 85 pilot schools in 2023 and the full-scale administration of the GEC for all Grade 9 learners will be implemented in 2025.



Learner Support

Honourable Speaker, learner support cannot be seen in blind isolation from curriculum delivery in schools. Our interventions in learner support play an important role in creating an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning. These interventions, which have **direct and indirect impact on job creation and poverty alleviation**, find expression in the following programmes:

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

The National School Nutrition Program (NSNP) is a cornerstone initiative aimed at promoting the health and well-being of learners across the Free State. The provincial government remains committed to ensuring that all qualifying learners (Quintile 1 to 3 schools) receive nutritious meals daily, which is essential for their physical and cognitive development. This programme not only addresses hunger but also enhances learning outcomes by enabling learners to concentrate better in class. Moving forward, the Department of Education will continue to collaborate with various stakeholders, including local farmers and suppliers, to improve the efficiency and reach of the NSNP, ensuring that no child goes hungry in our schools.

This year, 599 339 learners, up from 597 600 last year are benefitting from the programme. A total of 3 371 Voluntary Food Handlers, compared to 3 363 previously, are involved in the programme.



Learner Transport

Honourable Speaker, ensuring safe and reliable transport for learners in rural and remote areas of the Free State is a key priority for the provincial government. The Learner Transport program is designed to address the challenges faced by learners who have to travel long distances to access education. The department is actively working on expanding this service to cover more areas and ensure that no learner is left behind due to transportation barriers.

Plans are underway to upgrade the existing fleet and improve monitoring systems to guarantee the safety and punctuality of these transport services.

The government is also exploring partnerships with the private sector to further enhance the program's sustainability and effectiveness. Our Learner Transport Programme currently serves a total of 9 528 learners from 147 farm schools and a total of 1 200 learners from 7 special schools.

Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI)

The Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) represents a significant effort by the government to tackle youth unemployment in the Free State. Through this initiative, the provincial government aims to provide young people with opportunities to gain work experience, develop skills, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. The program has already seen a positive impact, with many young people employed in various sectors, including education, health, and public works. Moving forward, the department plans to expand the scope of the PYEI to reach even more youth, with a particular focus on those in marginalized



communities. The Department is committed to creating a conducive environment for youth to thrive, thereby contributing to the broader economic development of the province.

On the PYEI, the number of job opportunities created in the last two financial years is 19 257. **Honourable Speaker**, these interventions undoubtedly represent a meaningful contribution in capacitating the state, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living.

School Enrichment Programmes

Honourable Speaker: in the previous financial years, we successfully launched and implemented key school enrichment programs, including the Magnificent Wednesday School Sports League, the South African School Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE), and the Schools' Moot Court Competition.

These initiatives have played a vital role in promoting learner participation in extra-curricular activities, supporting curriculum delivery, fostering social cohesion, and encouraging learners to pursue potential careers in sports, arts and law.

As we move into the current financial year, it is imperative that we continue and expand these programmes in order to massify participation. The Magnificent Wednesday School Sports League will see increased participation from over 750 schools, and we will further support SASCE and the Moot Court Competition to ensure they remain pillars of unity, diversity, and educational excellence. Our administration is committed to building on the successes of these programs, ensuring they reach even more learners and continue to contribute to their holistic development.



Improved access to quality teacher training and professional development opportunities

Honourable Speaker, as a further contribution to building a capable state, the department will continue to invest in our teachers. Teacher professional development continues to be an important theme in the international discourse on education improvement.

An amount of R49 496 million has been set aside for training and development of teachers. This allocation is meant to address in-service training focusing on improving teaching and learning.

The year 2024 will witness the implementation of Teacher Induction Programme for 500 new teachers across the province. As part and parcel of reorientation in approach to teacher professional development, teachers will benefit from the following initiatives:

- Training on ICT integration.
- Training on Social Emotional Learning in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- Enrolling School Management Teams (SMTs) in an Advanced Diploma in Education in School Leadership and Management.

Honourable Speaker, we are ready to explore partnerships with the private sector and sister departments in our province to digitize our teacher development systems. Such digital platforms will provide support to both learners and teachers in relation to subject-specific content knowledge and pedagogy. Teachers can also learn from each other through this platform in relation to classroom practice.



Honourable Speaker, the department continues to place a high premium on appreciation of the excellent work done by our teachers through the Teacher Appreciation and Support Programme. At the center of this programme, is the National Teaching Awards (NTA) in which teachers' work and excellence is recognized.

Honourable Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the following teachers who hoisted the flag of the province high at the 2023 National Teaching Awards:

Category	Position at National	Name	School
Excellence in Grade R Teaching	1	Ms Chezél Claassens	Onze Rust Primary School, Motheo
Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (GET Band)	1	Ms Marais Johané Petro	Boshoff Combined, Lejweleputswa
Excellence in Special Needs Teaching	3	Ms Dube Fezeka	Thiboloha Special School, Thabo Mofutsanyana
Excellence in Primary School Leadership	3	Ms Chaka Matlakala	Meqheleng Primary Thabo Mofutsanyana

The 2024 provincial ceremony of the National Teaching Awards will be held on 16 August 2024 at Bon Hotel, Bloemfontein. Through the National Teaching Awards, we salute and pay tribute to all teachers for their



extraordinary efforts and for molding our children to be good and responsible citizens.

We are pleased to announce that a new category of excellence in teaching agricultural subjects will be introduced in the 2024 National Teaching Awards.

Improved access to quality inclusive education

Honourable Speaker, the department remains committed to raising the bar, closing the gap, and supporting learners in all grades. This commitment is informed by the Freedom Charter's founding principle, that ***"The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all"***. We are obliged to provide inclusive education that enables everyone to realise their potential. This will ensure that all children, including those living with disabilities and learning barriers respectively, have equal access to quality education, helping them to stay in school through to completion.

Honourable Speaker, we are pleased to report that the Department is committed to providing quality education to farm school learners through the implementation of the Integrated Rural Education Strategy (IRES).

We can confirm today that 273 school hostel parents from 47 farm hostel schools were trained on Parenting with Assurance. The objective of the training was to equip hostel parents and staff to perform their *loco parentis* responsibilities of caring and instilling values, in order to prevent these learners from engaging in risky behaviors such as substance use and teen pregnancy.



Honourable Speaker, the need for psycho-social support by our learners and teachers has increased due to escalating social ills like racism, bullying, gangsterism, GBV etc. As a result, 25 intern Social Workers were appointed to ensure that the continuum of care and support for all learners and teachers is rendered. Such preventative measures help to create psycho-socially healthy schools towards improved retention and attainment. In an effort to improve the quality of inclusive education in the Province, the Department will:

1. Implement the School Readiness Program in under-performing primary schools, Full Service and Integrated Rural Education Strategy (IRES) Schools to ensure early identification and support of vulnerable learners.
2. Ramp up the implementation of the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) across all the grades to ensure early identification and support for learners with delayed milestones which can result into learning difficulties if not attended to at the elementary stage.

Honourable Speaker, we are in a quest to establish a School of Skills in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District (Riverside) to provide access for learners with a strong interest in technical occupations.

This school will offer an alternative to the academic stream, enabling these learners to fully participate and excel in areas aligned with their skills, thereby enhancing their opportunities in the industry and job market.



Improve the safety and quality of the schooling environment

Honourable Speaker, the safety of our learners, teachers as well as school infrastructure is one of our key priorities. Various measures have been put in place, including working with our partners especially the South African Police Service (SAPS) in ensuring that there is prevention, management, and response to incidents of crime and violence in schools.

It is worthy to note that:

- All schools in the province have been linked to local police stations, and they each have a Station School Safety Officer, formerly known as Adopt-A-Cop.
- There has been an intensification of efforts to ensure that each school and hostel in the province has established functional Safety Committees.

These committees will ensure that safety audits are conducted and that there is early identification and prevention of safety threats (bullying, drug abuse, GBV, racism, etc.).

- Hostel staff where farm learners are accommodated are being trained on Disaster Risk Management.
- Safety awareness campaigns will be held in each district to mobilize communities to take responsibility of their schools.
- With the assistance of SAPS, searches and seizures will be conducted in schools and hostels.

We are appealing to our communities to join the Department in ensuring that schools are protected from vandalism and theft.



The fight against ill-discipline, racism, gangsterism, drugs, bullying, etc can only be won if all stakeholders in education work as a collective. Together we can do more to transform our schools into safe spaces for both our learners and teachers.

Honourable Speaker, the imperative to create an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning cannot be seen in isolation from **infrastructure development**. Our investment in school infrastructure can provide the desired benefits to our communities in relation to the strategic priority of inclusive growth and job creation. We firmly believe that good infrastructure that is maintained on a regular basis is a non-negotiable for the delivery of quality education.

Speaker, in turning South Africa and the Free State into a construction site, the Department will use the new Public Procurement Act to prioritize Free State businesses and its people in general. In this regard, the Department will also develop a clear framework to regulate our working relationship with Implementing Agents.

In the 2024/2027 MTEF, an estimated amount of R 3 044 609 billion (IEG, Enhancement and ECD Budgets) has been set aside and the following infrastructure projects, will continue to be rolled out in the 2024/25 financial year:

New Schools in progress

	School Name	Type of School	District
1	Trompsburg	Special School	Xhariep
2	Arbeidsgenot	Primary	Motheo

3	Matlafalang	Primary	Motheo
4	Tlholo	Primary	Motheo
5	Malebogo	Primary	Lejweleputswa
6	Tshehetso	Primary	Lejweleputswa
7	Morena Tshohisi	Primary	Thabo Mofutsanyana
8	Father Balink	Primary	Fezile Dabi
9	Dr. Sello	Primary	Fezile Dabi
10	Katlego Mpumelelo	Primary	Fezile Dabi

Additional Facilities:

The department will invest over R300 million towards additional facilities as indicated in the table below:

Planned Projects for 2024/2025	Number of Schools	Number of Facilities
Ablution Facilities	11	17
Additional Classrooms	07	37
Grade R Classrooms	10	30
Fences	64	64
Laboratories	06	12

Speaker, in pursuit of inclusive growth and job creation, our investment in infrastructure development will undoubtedly contribute a great deal, in converting our Province into a construction site. In order to counter delays in capital infrastructure projects, stringent and modernized monitoring and reporting systems will be implemented.



CONCLUSION

Honourable Speaker, as part and parcel of our first 100-days programme in office, we will continue with various internal and external stakeholder engagements to establish solid relationships with the sole purpose of delivering quality education to all our learners. Such partnerships and collaborations will amongst others, help us to improve our capacity to deliver education of high quality in an efficient manner.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of our education system, I am pleased to highlight our ongoing collaboration with Institutions of Higher Learning and private sector in advancing the acceleration of the **three-stream model**, which offers learners diverse pathways, including academic, technical vocational, and technical occupational streams.

Our collaboration ensures that the curriculum is responsive to the demands of the modern economy, equipping our learners with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in various sectors.

Moreover, our partnership with these institutions is crucial in strengthening the focus on STEM subjects. By working closely with universities, TVET colleges, Business and NGOs, we are not only enhancing the quality of STEM education in our schools, but we are also fostering a culture of research and innovation among both educators and learners.

Honourable Speaker, our teachers are at the coalface of basic education delivery. What they do at the school level is what matters most as they prepare our learners not only for current challenges but also for opportunities of the future and the changing world of work.



This Budget Vote represents a public commitment to the provision of quality education for all our learners in line with our motto: ***“raising the bar, closing the gap and supporting learners in all grades”***.

Honourable Speaker, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the African National Congress and our Premier for their leadership, to my colleagues in the Executive Council for their unwavering support, and to the late Honourable Tate Makgoe for laying a solid foundation for quality education in our province **(May His Soul Continue to Rest in Peace)**.

I also wish to express my thanks to the people of the Free State for making education a societal matter, School Governing Bodies, Organized Labour, our QLTC structures, Principals, School Management Teams, Teachers, and the dedicated officials of the Free State Department of Education under the leadership of Advocate Tsoarelo Malakoane. Additionally, I appreciate the members of the Education Portfolio Committee, our corporate partners, NGOs, CBOs, municipalities, provincial departments, universities, and churches for their continued support of education in our province. Lastly, I thank my family for their loving support as I take on this important role. **Speaker, I therefore present the Budget Vote 6 of the Department of Education.**

I thank you!



ADDENDUM: BUDGET ALLOCATION 2024/25

Allocation PERE PROGRAMME	AMOUNT
Administration	1 398 333 000
Public Ordinary School Education	13 023 627 000
Independent Schools Subsidies	124 852 000
Public Special School Education	726 756 000
Early Childhood Development	695 180 000
Infrastructure Development	1 035 801 000
Examination & Education Related Services	890 841 000
Total	17 895 390 000

ALLOCATION PER ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION	AMOUNT
Compensation of employees	13 529 358 000
Goods and services	1 183 414 000
Interest and rent on land	56 000
Transfers and Subsidies	2 413 017 000
Capital	769 545 000
Financial Assets	0
Total	17 895 390 000

CONDITIONAL GRANTS	AMOUNT
HIV/AIDS (Life Skills Edu) Grant	11 107 000
Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Grant	32 340 000
National School Nutrition Programme	578 293 000
Maths, Science & Technology Grant	49 496 000
Education Infrastructure Grant	1 007 305 000
EPWP Integrated Grant to Provinces	3 328 000
Social Sector EPWP Incentive Grant	4 674 000
Early Childhood Development Grant	77 036 000
<i>ECD Maintenance</i>	8 952 000
<i>ECD Subsidy Expansion</i>	68 084 000
Total	1 763 579 000



BUDGET VOTES **2024**

