

**30 MARCH 2011**

**Education Budget Vote delivered at Provincial Legislature, Cape Town**

**Budget Vote of the Western Cape**

**Minister of Education, Donald Grant**

**30 March 2011**

Mr Speaker

Honourable Premier

Fellow Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

The Superintendent General of Education and all senior officials from the Western Cape Education Department

Invited guests from the education community

Ladies and Gentlemen

**Introduction:**

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the 2011/12 Budget for education in the Western Cape.

The improvement of learner outcomes is a major priority for this government and the provision of a quality education is fundamental to this government's overarching vision of an open opportunity society for all.

With every step we take towards fulfilling this vision, we are creating the Western Cape of our dreams, where every child will be literate, numerate and able to compete in an increasingly competitive regional, national and international economic environment.

The importance attached to this vision is reflected in the 2011/2012 provincial budget.

R42, 303 billion has been allocated over the 2011 MTEF for education, with an allocation of R13, 332 billion for the 2011/12 financial year.

This represents an 11% increase from the previous financial year, with the expenditure on education in the Province growing on average by 14,6% per annum in nominal terms since 2007/8.

This allocation will be used to fulfill the objectives set out in our strategic plan for education, released in November 2009, with the intention to ensure that all learners, no matter their life circumstances, will receive a quality education.

### **Improving learner outcomes**

Speaker, this time last year, I stood in front of the house faced with a legacy from the previous government of a provincial education system in decline.

One year on, we can confidently say that there has been a positive shift in education and that significant progress has been made in laying the necessary foundation to achieve our overall objectives.

All the relevant indicators now show that learner outcomes are improving across the board.

For example, we have arrested a six year decline in the matric pass rate, with more learners having passed the 2010 NSC exams than ever before, subject performance in critical subjects such as Life Sciences and Physical Sciences improved and more learners achieving more distinctions.

More schools reached a 90% pass rate and above and only 4 candidates out the 35177 who passed did not achieve a pass with access to some form of higher education – a truly remarkable achievement.

Another negative trend that we have managed to turn around is the number of underperforming schools.

Since 2006, the number of schools achieving less than 60% in the NSC increased from 36 to an unacceptable high of 85 in 2009. In 2010, after only one full year in office, this trend was reversed, with the number of underperforming schools decreasing to 78.

However, we are not satisfied with the number of underperforming schools that continue to exist and in 2011 we will be redoubling our efforts to reduce this number even further.

Retention within the system also improved.

It is significant to note that the Western Cape was one of only two provinces to increase the actual number of candidates that wrote the NSC in 2010.

By increasing these numbers, it was that much harder to increase the overall pass rate relative to other provinces, where in some instances, the number of full-time candidates was dramatically reduced.

We, however, will never create in the Western Cape a situation where we artificially reduce the number of candidates to inflate the percentage pass rate.

We are delighted that we managed to achieve more passes than ever, with significant improvements being reflected throughout the province.

Some schools, such as Zola Secondary, achieved a remarkable 97 more passes than in the previous year.

The Cape Academy for Science and Technology (Cosat) achieved a 100% pass rate and 46 more passes, and in Khayelitsha, 276 more learners passed than in the previous year.

And we have also seen inspiring levels of individual achievement, such as Asevele Rawe from Masibambane Secondary who achieved excellence in Life Sciences and whose individual story has been so movingly and insightfully described by the Hon Premier, as well as Pieter Egbert Klue from Langenhoven Gimnasium who achieved the top marks for both Accounting and Physical Sciences.

But, it's not just at the top end of the system where we have witnessed pleasing improvements in the quality of education outcomes.

The recent release of the Grade 3 and 6 literacy and numeracy results reflect that targeted interventions and strategies by the department are making a difference.

Learner performance has significantly improved at the Grade 3 level, most especially in the field of numeracy where we saw a remarkable 13.3% increase from 35% in 2008 to 48.3% in 2010.

Overall, in Grade 3, 78% of our primary schools in the province improved their results in numeracy, with 52.9% of schools improving by more than 10%. In literacy, 54.9% of schools improved their results, with 33.3% of schools increasing by more than 10%.

The results achieved are also in excess of, or in line with, the targets we set in our strategic plan.

We could not have achieved these improvements without an enormous collective effort from teachers, officials, learners and parents.

I would like today to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our teachers, whom the Premier so aptly describes as the architects of opportunity.

I was very proud to present awards to all our top achieving and most improved schools at an awards ceremony three weeks ago.

I would like again to congratulate Sweet Valley Primary School in Bergvliet and Augsburg Landbouginnasium in Clanwilliam which have consistently managed to perform the best in their respective districts. This was the third year in a row that they received an award for overall excellence in outcomes.

Another school that deserves special mention is Impendulo Primary School in Makhaza.

This school, under the leadership of their very dedicated principal Mrs. Busika and committed educator corps, achieved impressive improvements in their results, turning a lamentable 4% for numeracy in 2008, into an extraordinary 50% in 2010 and increasing their literacy pass rate from 16.6% to 58.3%.

This is a remarkable achievement and is living proof that sustained interventions, “time on task” and parental involvement can make a difference in education outcomes in this province.

So, as one can see, all of these indicators reflect the fact that we are turning the corner in the provision of quality education in this province. However, while we should rightly celebrate these achievements, it is clear that there is still much work to be done to improve learner outcomes even further.

The challenge now is for the department to sustain all these improvements. International experience shows that after a spike in performance of this nature performance can often plateau or drop off. This is a situation we are determined to avoid.

Through this budget, complemented by our annual performance plan, this year we will strengthen our interventions even further, and will continue to lay the necessary foundation for a sustained and continuous improvement in learner outcomes.

In so doing we will continue to give life to our vision of an open opportunity society for all and help create the Western Cape of our dreams, where parents can send their children to their nearest public school, safe in the knowledge they will receive a quality education.

### **Sustained strategies at the top end of the system**

In order to sustain the improvements made at the top end of the system, the WCED have reintroduced their Grade 12 improvement plan, which has been expanded to include interventions in Grade 10 and 11 as well.

R9.5 million has been allocated to this programme, with spending set to rise between 5-7% over the next two financial years.

Strategies include tutoring programmes for underperforming schools, the expansion of the successful telematics programme (which sees master teachers give instruction to over 140 schools simulatenously), intensified management support and teacher development courses.

Many of our interventions will focus on underperforming schools. These schools are failing our learners and are denying them opportunity to reach their full potential. Therefore we are currently working with these schools to determine new strategies for improvement. Thirteen of our underperforming schools already have new principals or are in the process of having new ones appointed and schools will be monitored on a weekly basis.

In order to ensure that our Grade 12 learners have the relevant texts and to address any possible shortages, additional textbooks to the value of R6.5 million have been ordered and are being currently distributed to schools.

We have again supplied to every Grade 12 learner the popular "Tips for Success" booklet which supports our learners in preparing them for the NSC. Last year, this book proved so useful to learners that the national department of basic education has approached us with the intention to design a similar booklet for the other provinces.

It is also heartening to note that other provinces in South Africa are starting to replicate our practice of setting individual targets for performance at the high school level.

For the second year running, schools in the Western Cape have been asked to set targets on the number of additional passes they hope to achieve as well as the percentage pass rate.

Target setting has created clarity of focus in our schools that was previously lacking and will give us the opportunity to hold schools and districts to account against these targets.

This year, these targets are more of a challenge than one might first assume as we are faced with a statistical anomaly in that the Class of 2011 is significantly smaller than in previous years as a result of a standardization of the school-going age of admission when this cohort of learners entered the system in January 2000.

This has led to a decrease in the number of candidates that will sit the 2011 exams.

Despite this we are still determined to ensure that as many learners as possible are able to pass the NSC, and have used every available mechanism to increase the number of learners writing.

For example, unlike other provinces who encourage learners that have failed the previous year to enter as part-time candidates, our districts have actively sought out candidates that failed one or two subjects in the 2010 examinations to encourage them to re-register as full-time candidates in 2011, thereby giving them a second chance to reach their full potential.

This is a strategy not without risk, but it is a risk worth taking when it is considered that it could fundamentally improve the life chances of hundreds of young people.

### **Focus on the Foundation Phase**

While many of our strategies focus on the senior phase of schooling, these will not be our exclusive focus. We will also continue with sustained interventions in the critical Foundation Phase.

To this end, we have already held targeted training courses for Foundation Phase teachers and we will, for the first time, in 2011 closely monitor actual classroom practice to assess the quality of teaching in the Foundation Phase properly, paying special attention to the level of cognitive demand, pacing and expectations of these teachers.

This government continues to believe in the primacy of textbooks for all learners and we have therefore allocated in 2011/12, in addition to the norms and standards allocations to schools, R129 million on textbook allocation. This is expected to rise to R147 205 000 in 2012/13. In total we will spend R385 700 000 in textbooks over the next three years.

The reason behind these significant allocations to textbooks is that today I am making an unprecedented commitment to ensure that over the next three years, every child from Grades 1-12 will have a textbook in every subject that he or she is taking.

This will be a first in South African history and I am proud that we have already broken new ground by ensuring that for the first time ever, all learners in Grades 2-7 have a mathematics textbook.

We have also provided relevant readers to 258 primary schools who serve poorer communities.

### **Accountability in the system**

In order to improve learner performance at schools, we need to strengthen our ability to hold schools and officials to account. The recently passed Western Cape Provincial School Education Amendment Act provides an enormous opportunity.

The Act, which I am pleased to say was unanimously passed by this house, enables the Provincial Minister to develop regulations with regard to performance agreements between the Head of Department, principals and deputy principals.

The implementation of such agreements heralds an enormous change in the management of education in this province as, for the first time, the performance

assessment of principals and deputy principals will be directly linked to the academic outcomes of an individual school.

The Act will also enable district and circuit officials to monitor teacher performance, where it matters most – in the classroom.

These regulations have now been finalized and we are now ready for consultation. I will soon be initiating discussions with principal organizations, SGBs and unions on these agreements, and I look forward to a constructive discussion on their implementation, and will listen carefully to the feedback received.

We are, however, resolute in our determination to see such agreements enacted and we are expecting the first agreements to be piloted from June this year, with full implementation from January 2012.

I wish to make it clear that there is no reason for anyone to be apprehensive about these interventions. Accountability is, after all, the life blood of a profession. We are very fortunate in this province to have in place hundreds of quality school principals, who are committed and passionate, and deliver the best possible results in often very difficult circumstances.

This is something we wish to replicate in all of our province's schools and therefore it is only the very small minority of principals that are failing to meet the most basic of their duties that have anything to be concerned about.

To further the quality of our school leadership, new principal appointments will now have to be able to point to a record of improvement at their previous school and the WCED is currently actively recruiting and training talented educationalists to become principals.

This intervention, arguably more than any other, has the potential to improve the quality of schooling in this province radically.

#### **Improvements in organizational support**

While we take these important steps aimed at increasing levels of accountability within our schools it is essential that the WCED itself provides an efficient and professional support service to our most important clients – the schools of the Western Cape.

In this regard, it is clear that there is still much to be done, but I can confidently say that progress has been made.

Over the last year an enormous amount of effort has been put into making the WCED a more caring and responsive organization.

For example, the WCED has made the efficient appointment of principals and teachers a priority as these are two aspects of school life that matter most to schools. In the last few years, only two vacancy lists were published each year.

However, last year seven vacancy lists were published and a two month turn-around time for principal appointments has been implemented.

The WCED has also ensured that SGBs receive more assistance in helping to appoint quality principals. All these efforts have seen 142 quality principals appointed in 2010 as opposed to 88 in 2009.

We have also freed up as many posts within the department as possible to be allocated to schools. This has helped, in part, to allow 514 additional teaching posts to be allocated to the Foundation Phase in schools.

The department has also sought to streamline its communication to schools and to ensure, as far as possible, that the programme for the school year is communicated well in advance.

Last year, schools were notified as early as September about the posts that would be made available to them for 2011 school year, as well as a programme of all teacher training schedules and all other relevant information.

Schools then had the opportunity to plan and budget ahead more efficiently, minimizing interruptions to teaching and learning time.

Given that our teachers remain our most important asset and biggest expense, with R8,8 billion being spent on teacher salaries, in this budget, R91 million has been allocated to train our teachers. Unlike in previous years there will not be a one size fits all approach. Rather there will be differentiated training for those teachers in need of urgent assistance and value added training for teachers from top performing schools.

It is most pleasing to note that according to the WCED 2010 Customer Satisfaction Report, which rates the levels of service delivery in our Head Office and District offices, there have been substantial improvements in the assessment of educators and principals of the responsiveness and efficiency of the WCED, compared to 2009.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank other government departments for respecting our policy of “time on task”, an often repeated mantra of our honourable premier.

I have little doubt that one of the primary reasons for improvements in learner performance is that we are protecting teaching time at all costs. Any disruption, no matter how well intentioned, has the effect of undermining the rhythm of teaching and learning – often to the profound detriment of our more vulnerable learners.

#### **Assisting schools that serve poorer communities**

In this tough economic climate, the WCED are in line with the provincial government’s desire to learn to do more with less. We are determined to ensure that as many resources are directed to our schools, and that as little as possible is spent on administration.

To this end, we have previously made savings to the effect of R16 million and we will continue to ensure that we limit all unnecessary expenditure on travel and entertainment wherever possible.

I would also like to dispel a myth which the opposition in this house likes to perpetuate, namely, that not enough resources are being put into address the inequalities that have arisen out South Africa's apartheid legacy.

Let me state categorically that the vast majority of our resources are put quite rightly into schools that serve poorer communities.

For example, we have prioritized the allocation of educator posts to our poorer schools, with the maximum allowable of 5% of posts being top sliced and allocated to poorer schools.

40% of the learners of the Western Cape also attend no-fee schools. Our poorer schools in National Quintile 1 receive a per learner allocation which is six times more than schools in Quintile 5 and schools in the National Quintiles 2 and 3 receive an allocation which is five times more.

Furthermore, all Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools benefit from the feeding scheme I will outline below. Our infrastructure programme is also targeting predominantly poorer communities.

We are making these kinds of investments, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because affording children access to quality education, which while not sufficient on its own, is a key contributing factor to breaking the cycle of poverty.

We have also listened to and heard many of the pleas of a number of schools regarding the nationally prescribed quintile system. I have lobbied the national minister, Angie Motshekga, to have this system reviewed on a number of occasions. I have also supported initiatives for a system that compensates schools for exempted school fees. As we recognize the important role that fee exemptions play in granting access to the poor.

I know that she shares similar concerns and we welcome the confirmation that the national department of basic education is currently considering a review of the quintile system.

However, until this becomes a reality, and in line with the relevant national regulations we have allocated R41 million to help assist schools for fee exemptions. The amount allocated for this purpose is the highest in the country.

This fund will help poorer schools in particular who are struggling with the burden of learners with fee exemptions to apply for funding. We will do everything possible to minimize the administrative load required to apply for such funding and I am confident that these funds will help at least some schools most in need with the financial challenges that they confront.

### **Improving our infrastructure**

Speaker, in last year's budget I announced the allocation of R1.9 billion towards a new infrastructure plan in the province over the current MTEF.

This is an unprecedented level of investment. It is also a very ambitious plan, which is a marked departure from the past, where new schools were built on an ad-hoc basis.

The plan's main objectives are to create safe and secure places of learning, expand access into successful schools and address severe overcrowding.

I am very pleased with the current roll-out of this plan. Over 171 additional mobile units were delivered to schools last year to alleviate overcrowding and in our classroom expansion plan, 112 classrooms are either already built, or are being built to improve access to quality schools. Once this phase is completed, over 3 900 additional learners will be receiving good quality tuition at 19 successful schools.

This year, we have already opened four new schools, including our third Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths School – Claremont High School.

This school, with a truly unique management model, provides world class maths and science tuition to learners from a diversity of backgrounds. I am extremely proud of this facility and would like to thank Westerford High School for assisting us in making this wonderful school a reality.

Our other two STEM schools have similarly been improved. We have expanded the Cape Academy by 150 learners and have provided a new facility with increased learner numbers in COSAT in Khayelitsha.

This year, we will continue to build on the momentum we generated last year. The WCED has allocated R688 million this year on the plan, compared to R560 million in the last financial year.

Eight schools are currently under construction, with a further fifteen in their planning stages. Fifteen replacement schools are also in their planning stages, with four schools expected for completion this year.

### **School Safety**

School safety does remain a challenge in our schools, especially in schools in communities worst affected by the scourge of gangsterism.

This government has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of violence in our schools, and we have taken a number of proactive steps to ensure that our learners are secure once they are behind the school gate.

In 2011/2012 we will spend R23 million on the safe schools programme, an increase of R1 million from the previous financial year.

This allocation will contribute towards improved physical security measures, such as metal detectors, fences, alarm systems and safety gates, as well as the implementation of behavioural and attitudinal programmes in our schools. Currently 159 of our schools have received safety packages from the WCED. An additional 50 schools will be added this financial year and every financial year thereafter.

However, we ultimately need the support of communities to make our vision of safe schools a reality.

The women of Voorbrug in Delft are a good example. Just yesterday I learnt about their efforts, in which 400 women in the community set about finding the perpetrators that vandalised their children's school.

In the end, they assisted the police in capturing the suspects. This has mobilized the community to act against crime, something all communities have the ability to do.

We will continue to work with communities and SAPS to deal with the challenges we face, building strong relationships with all sectors so that schools become the safe havens that they are meant to be.

### **Improvements in ICT**

Speaker, in order to improve the learning environment even further, this government with the assistance of the Western Cape Education Foundation, is currently auditing ICT infrastructure which can support schools with a view to facilitating a cheaper and high speed broad network for all schools.

Once we have completed the audit (which is being paid for partly by private donor funds), we will know the extent of the investment required. In a clear vote of confidence in this government's ability to deliver, we have had a welcome and very kind offer of free broad band access for schools from Mark Shuttleworth through a second undersea cable.

We will, however, only be able to take full advantage of this offer once the audit is complete. But there is no doubt in my mind that in the next 3-5 years that there is a very real prospect that we will dramatically improve the levels of information technology in our schools and in so doing enhance learner outcomes.

This comes on the back of the successful implementation of the Khanya programme, which is now only one year from completion. Just two weeks ago, I opened the 1 329<sup>th</sup> Khanya facility in the Province. Therefore we have only 195 more schools to go.

This programme has been recognized as the most successful roll-out of technology of schools on the whole continent.

### **Assistance to vulnerable learners**

The Western Cape government is also determined to ensure that we look after the needs of vulnerable learners.

A child cannot learn if he or she is hungry. While it is primarily the responsibility of a learner's guardians to ensure that his or her basic needs are met, the reality is that many parents lack the means to do so. This places an obligation on schools to make it easier for children to learn by giving them a nutritious meal where required.

The Western Cape's school nutrition programme is widely regarded as the best run in the country, most especially in terms of its efficient administration and in the quantity and quality of the food provided to our most vulnerable learners.

In 2011/2012 our school nutrition programme will receive an allocation of R227 443 million, which will help feed over 350 000 learners everyday. This allocation is R53 million rand more than in the previous financial year.

We have placed special emphasis on using this money to provide more nutritious and hot meals to young, exceptionally poor and vulnerable learners.

### **Special needs education:**

In an open opportunity society for all, it is essential that we provide the opportunity for access to quality education for all our learners, including those with barriers to learning.

The Western Cape already leads the country in the provision of special needs education. Our ongoing commitment to these learners is reflected in the R804 938 million allocation to this programme in 2011/12, representing a 15% increase from last year.

In terms of the overall percentage of our budget, this allocation towards special needs education puts us on a par with developed countries.

### **Improving our strategies**

Finally speaker, as mentioned above, we recently passed the Western Cape Provincial School Education Amendment Act which will allow us the opportunity to appoint an Education Council.

This council will be a statutory advisory council to the Minister and the WCED concerning education matters, the members of which will be appointed during the course of the second half of this year.

Such a council has never before been in operation in this Province and I have no doubt that a range of expertise will be harnessed in this council that will further strengthen our ability to deliver quality education in this province.

### **Conclusion:**

Speaker, and Honourable members of this house. I am under no illusion that we still have some way to go to achieve our objectives set out in our strategic plan, but I am confident that we are making significant progress in improving learner outcomes in this province.

As we move forward into another ground breaking year for education in the Western Cape, I would like to pay tribute to efforts of our Head of Department Penny Vinjevold, her Exco team and the hundreds of education officials who work tirelessly to make our objective of quality education for all a reality.

One year on, we can confidently say that the necessary legislative and administrative foundations and frameworks have been laid. This year, we will continue to build on these foundations, specifically targeting the Foundation Phase and underperforming schools, as well as ensuring that our Department is committed and equipped to give the necessary support schools need.

Uthmaan Solomom, a matriculant from Livingstone High in 2010, has written the following motivation to learners in the Class of 2011 in the "Tips for Success" booklet:

"Having a vision for yourself is important, so set your goals early on in the year. This way you have a starting point that should be your driving force towards achieving greater things. Achieving your goal is something no one can take away from you, and with perseverance, hard work and sacrifice, any adversity in life can be overcome."

I believe that these words are a fitting end to this year's budget speech.

Like Uthmaan, we have our own vision, a vision of the Western Cape of our dreams. To achieve this will take time, we will have to overcome numerous obstacles, we will have to work hard.

However, I am confident that we have behind us a strong team, a driving force consisting of our educators, officials and learners of the Western Cape who will ultimately ensure that we will achieve all of our goals. We will create, in time, the Western Cape of our dreams.

Thank you.