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Circular: 0022/2025
 Expiry date: 31 March 2027

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Circuit Managers, Heads: Management and Governance, Deputy Directors at district offices, Principals and Governing Body Chairpersons of all section 21 ordinary public schools

Short summary: *Particulars of the financial allocation to section 21 schools for the 2026/27 financial year and guidelines for the procurement of goods and services.*

Subject: Section 21 schools: Norms and standards funding for schools Grades 1–12 — financial allocations for the 2026/27 financial year

1. Allocation

- 1.1 Allocations are calculated in accordance with the prescripts in paragraphs 108 to 114 of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF), as published in *Government Gazette* No. 29179 of 31 August 2006.
- 1.2 According to paragraph 110 of the NNSF, the National Table of Targets, as published in *Government Gazette* No. 51962 of 24 January 2025, indicates the 2026 per learner targeted amount. The no-fee threshold will be R1 835.

National table of targets for the school allocation: Grades 1–12 (2026–2028)

National quintile and fee status	Per learner allocation		
	2026	2027	2028*
NQ1–NQ5 No fee	R1 835	R1 919	R2 005
NQ4 Fee charging	R919	R962	R1 004
NQ5 Fee charging	R315	R329	R344
No-fee threshold	R1 835	R1 919	R2 005

* 2028 adjusted with projected inflation rate

- 1.3 The **provisional norms and standards (N&S) allocations** for section 21 schools for the next three years, for the period of 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2029, are available on CEMIS and can be accessed in the following way:

- Log on to CEMIS.
- Click "Proceed" then select the "Administration" option on the menu bar and click on "Norms and Standards Allocation" and select "N&S 2026/27".
- Print the page for your records.

- 1.4 For planning purposes, provisional allocations were calculated based on the 2025 10th day SNAP Survey enrolment.
- 1.5 The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) will recalculate all school allocations with the 2026 10th day SNAP Survey, to ensure alignment between funding and enrolment for the applicable year.
- 1.6 The **final allocations** will be published on CEMIS by 15 April 2026.
- 1.7 Where applicable, fee-charging schools will receive top-up funding if the sum of their approved 2025 school fees and 2026/27 N&S per learner allocation is below the no-fee per learner benchmark. This will be determined once the 2025 school fee has been confirmed.
- 1.8 **The funds allocated in terms of this circular must be spent by 31 March 2027.**

2. Use of the allocation

- 2.1 The N&S allocation is intended to cover non-personnel items, as well as normal repairs and maintenance of the school's physical infrastructure.
- 2.2 The N&S allocation may, at a minimum, cover expenses related to the following:
- (a) **Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)** (see paragraph 3.5 for the list of items included under LTSM).
 - (b) **Information Technology (IT)-related LTSM and/or digital resources for enhancing eLearning**, which should be for the requisitioning of software, educational software licensing and subscriptions, online applications and the renewal of contracts or proprietary digital resources to enhance eLearning which are compatible with the IT hardware (computers, etc.) currently being utilised at the school.
 - (c) **Local purchases**, which include cleaning materials/equipment, overalls for cleaners and ground staff, personal protective equipment/clothing, stationery, photocopier paper, telephone equipment, intercom systems, closed-circuit television systems.
 - (d) **Municipal/Eskom services**
 - (e) **Essential day-to-day maintenance** of school buildings, grounds and equipment (non-scheduled maintenance) and repairs to safeguard the school.
 - (f) **Other day-to-day expenses** including workshop fees, TV licences, internet service providers, school memberships of educational associations, postage, telephone calls, rental of equipment, audit fees, bank charges, legal services, advertising, security services, public or scholar transport, vehicle hire, insurance and copying services.

3. Payment schedule

3.1 Schools charging school fees

Schools will receive their N&S allocation for the 2026/27 financial year in two payments:

- (a) 60% in April–May 2026 to cover for LTSM and IT-related LTSM resources for enhancing digital and blended learning, either via their own suppliers or the online ordering system so that it is available before the end of September 2026 and pay for other expenses, as stipulated in paragraph 3.2; and
- (b) 40% in October–November 2026 to cover appropriate school-related expenses up to 31 March 2027. Where the WCED procures any LTSM on behalf of schools, such costs will be deducted from the second transfer payment.

3.2 No-fee schools

Of the total N&S allocation that is paid over in April–May 2026 (see paragraph 3.1), 20% must be reserved for day-to-day operational **non-personnel expenditure**. Schools will be informed of this amount in the N&S allocation letter. It must be borne in mind that this amount must sustain the school until April 2027, when payment will be received for the next financial year.

- 3.3 Own income, as referenced in paragraph 6, must first be used to cover shortfalls in the above regard before it is used to finance governing body posts.

3.4 It is **recommended** that schools divide their 2026/27 allocation among the various expenditure categories as follows:

- (a) 25% for LTSM orders for 2027 — each learner must have a textbook for every subject and 10% should be targeted for library material. The stock of school library material should be augmented annually until the total number of items reflects the minimum international standard of 10 items per learner.
- (b) 15% for local purchases.
- (c) 10% for IT-related LTSM and/or digital resources for enhancing eLearning.
- (d) 25% for municipal/Eskom services (**however, schools should budget for a larger percentage if expenditure trends necessitate this**).
- (e) 20% for maintenance (**of which 25% of this allocation should be earmarked for repairs to safeguard the school**).
- (f) 5% for other day-to-day expenses.

3.5 LTSM

- (a) The Department of Basic Education (DBE) defines LTSM as any material that supports and facilitates teaching and learning directly in the classroom or at home (homework). It includes the following:

- i. Textbooks, readers, reference books, prescribed works, atlases and dictionaries
 - ii. Workbooks
 - iii. Posters, maps and wall charts
 - iv. Educational board games
 - v. Library material (fiction and non-fiction), reference books, posters, and recordings on videos, Digital Video/Versatile Discs (DVDs), Compact Discs (CDs), multi-media, etc.
 - vi. Computer software and licensing
 - vii. Resource material for educators, learners, classrooms and libraries
- (b) Schools are required to use their full LTSM allocation to purchase LTSM that will enrich and strengthen the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in their classes. Schools are therefore encouraged to use their LTSM allocation to purchase supplementary textbooks, prescribed works, atlases, dictionaries, workbooks, posters, maps, wall charts, educational board games, library material (fiction and non-fiction), reference books, recorded videos, DVDs, CDs, computer software, as well as Consumer Studies, Hospitality Studies and science laboratory equipment.
- (c) LTSM funding should also be considered for subscriptions, online applications and the renewal of contracts or proprietary digital resources. This enables schools to use LTSM funding to acquire digital resources in the transition from traditional to digital learning. Such resources encompass eBooks as well as educational software. The costing for such is currently similar to traditional hard copy textbooks with little/no significant difference in costs. Provision should be made to enable schools to subscribe to these services/products.
- (d) Subject to the following conditions, schools may assign less money to LTSM if—
- i. each learner in the school has a textbook for every subject and access to other LTSM resources;
 - ii. the school has annually allocated 10% of the LTSM allocation to the purchasing of library material to augment the library stock and the total number of items in the library stock now constitutes the minimum international standard of 10 items per learner; and
 - iii. the governing body has taken a formal decision regarding this deviation. (This decision of the governing body regarding the budget, which must be submitted at a parents' meeting, must be explained and the amount spent per learner on LTSM must be provided. This decision must be put before the parents' meeting, whether the circuit manager supports it or not.
- (e) How to obtain LTSM:
- i. Section 21 schools must obtain competitive quotations in placing their orders with LTSM suppliers, where applicable, or schools can order online. The WCED informs schools annually (via circulars and/or minutes) of the timeframes for the ordering of CAPS top-up textbooks on CEMIS.

- ii. When ordering additional LTSM, schools must select all CAPS textbooks from the approved national catalogues — refer to approved national catalogues that are available on the WCED website at **<http://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/index.html>**
- iii. For assistance with selecting school library material, schools should contact Ms Janine Ontong, EDULIS Coordinator: School Library Services at tel. no. 021 957 9628. The district School Library Service Officer can also be contacted regarding the development of school library services.

3.6 Municipal/Eskom services

- (a) The N&S allocation to schools is intended for the payment of, amongst others, schools' monthly municipal/Eskom services accounts which include electricity, water, sewage and refuse removal (availability and usage charges) but excludes the payment of property tax. As in the past, the State will pay the property tax on property registered in the name of the Western Cape Provincial Government or, in certain circumstances, the Republic of South Africa.
- (b) Schools must still implement the savings measures indicated in Annexure A.
- (c) Eskom and most municipalities have indicated that they can make prepaid electricity meters available to schools. This will enable schools to control their electricity consumption better. Schools must contact either Eskom or their local municipality, as applicable, should they want to have prepaid electricity meters installed.
- (d) **Where it is established that schools are not settling their municipal/Eskom services accounts, the WCED reserves the right to withhold funds from the N&S allocation to pay outstanding municipal/Eskom accounts on behalf of the schools concerned.**
- (e) All schools that agreed to be a part of the smart water meter pilot and have smart water meters installed at their schools must reserve funding from the municipal/Eskom allocation to pay the monthly smart water meter charge.

3.7 Day-to-day maintenance

- (a) Day-to-day maintenance applies to the maintenance of grounds, cleaning, renovations, guarding services, repairs and/or replacement of parts of school buildings and security mechanisms. **Regular maintenance must be carried out to prevent the deterioration of school buildings and emergency repairs resulting from neglect.**
- (b) **Where the N&S allocation for day-to-day maintenance is insufficient, schools are expected to supplement the allocation from their own income, where necessary.**
- (c) Schools must budget for their day-to-day maintenance repairs in accordance with the condition of the school buildings and grounds.

- (d) Schools should also set aside an amount from their annual day-to-day maintenance allocation for the—
 - i. maintenance of equipment used to enhance the appearance of the school grounds, e.g. servicing the lawnmower, purchasing paint for benches on the school grounds and purchasing lime and fertiliser;
 - ii. maintenance of firefighting equipment, i.e. hoses, reels, appropriate fire extinguishers, etc.;
 - iii. emergency maintenance of security mechanisms or guarding services when the existing security mechanisms (including automatic gates, gate motors, etc.) at a school have been compromised as a result of burglary, vandalism or age; and
 - iv. maintenance of fencing and other security mechanisms (e.g. alarms, intercoms, etc.).
- (e) N&S allocations may not be used for day-to-day repairs to hostels. Such repairs should be funded from the learners' boarding fees and bursaries.

4. **The N&S allocation may NOT be used for the following:**

- (a) **Remuneration of governing body-appointed personnel**
- (b) **New buildings**
- (c) **Hostel expenditure**
- (d) **Loans to individuals or other institutions**
- (e) **Any capital items > R5 000**

5. **Major emergency repairs**

In terms of paragraph 97 of the NNSSF, the DBE and/or the WCED must pursue resourcing mechanisms other than the school allocation in order to deal with, amongst others, urgent infrastructure repairs that are the direct and/or indirect result of historical expenditure inequities and natural disasters. The following repairs will be considered according to the Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Maintenance in Western Cape Schools, 2021:

CATEGORY A

Serious damage: Serious infrastructure damage as a result of historical expenditure inequities, natural disasters, structural defects and/or fires that has a negative impact on the ability of a school to continue operating and/or represents a health and safety risk to learners and/or staff.

The WCED shall consider the implementation of emergency repair work where a school does not have the necessary funds available (the maintenance allocation is exhausted) and/or does not have the necessary competency to execute such work, provided that sufficient funds are available to the WCED.

6. Own income

In terms of section 36(1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), governing bodies must take all reasonable steps to supplement the resources supplied by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school **to all learners at the school**. Although no-fee schools may not charge compulsory school fees (including registration fees), they are encouraged to seek voluntary contributions (donations) and engage in fundraising activities.

7. Reporting

- 7.1 The approved budget of the school must be submitted to the relevant district office by 01 December of each year.
- 7.2 All schools must submit a WCED 043 form (quarterly report) to the relevant district office within 30 days of the end of the quarter (expenditure up until 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December). Furthermore, section 43(5) of the SASA requires schools to submit (for the attention of the relevant district director) a copy of their set of audited financial statements for the previous financial year by 30 June of each year.
- 7.3 Funds will only be paid over to a school if the district office certifies it to be financially sound based on the financial activities of previous quarters. **Furthermore, if a school is not certified as financially sound on or before 13 March 2027, the school may forfeit any unpaid N&S funding.**

8. Further conditions

- 8.1 The governing body must exercise proper control over revenue and expenditure, as set out in the *Manual: Basic Financial System for Schools*, issued by the Head of Department in terms of section 37(1) of the SASA. Should the members of the governing body not have the necessary expertise to carry out this function, they must co-opt someone who will be able to assist them.
- 8.2 All school funds, obtained both from the State allocation and own income, must be used for purposes directly connected with education, as stated in section 37(6) of the SASA, including the acquisition of LTSM. In terms of WCED policy, textbooks and readers may not be photocopied as this is tantamount to infringement of the Copyright Act, 1978 (Act 98 of 1978).
- 8.3 The WCED has the right to inspect records relating to school funds and to act against any member of staff or the governing body should he or she be involved in the mismanagement of school funds. Schools must, therefore, keep all proof of income and expenditure for this purpose.

9. **Withdrawal of section 21 status from governing bodies**

- 9.1 In terms of section 22 of the SASA, the Head of Department may, on reasonable grounds, withdraw any or all of the functions of a governing body as contemplated in section 21(1).
- 9.2 The governing body must ensure the effective management and execution of functions allocated by section 21(1) of the SASA, including the development and implementation of control mechanisms in line with the regulations and guidelines issued by the WCED.

10. **2025/26 allocation**

All requirements in paragraph 7 must be met on or before **13 March 2026**, to prevent the forfeiture of unpaid funds.

11. **Contact numbers for enquiries**

Subject	Name	Telephone no.
WCED 043 biannual reports and audited annual financial statements	Deputy Director: Corporate Services at district office	Applicable district office
Purchase of LTSM (WCED 034), local purchases (WCED 026) via CEMIS, and online textbook (CAPS) ordering enquiries	Ms L John Ms F Bedford	021 467 2345 021 467 2018
General payment enquiries	Ms N Mtongana Ms N Petersen Mr B Teyise	021 467 2703 021 467 2701 021 836 1306
Emergency repairs	Mr N Sutcliffe Ms Z Gambula Mr C van den Heuvel Mr E Dikiso Mr K Sibonda	021 467 2568 021 467 2091 044 803 8322 021 467 2566 021 467 2877
eLearning EDULIS Coordinator: School Library Services	Ms M Jonas Mr T Cloete	021 828 3067 021 957 9626
General enquiries: N&S (excluding any transfer payment-related enquiries)	Ms G Jini Mr L Sangqu Mr E Bezuidenhout Email address: WCED.NormsandStandards@westerncape.gov.za	021 467 2191 021 467 2608 021 467 2192
Withdrawal of section 21 status	Mr D Louw Mr W Jantjies	021 467 2653 021 467 2613

12. Please bring the content of this circular to the attention of relevant personnel.

SIGNED: B WALTERS

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2025-08-22