

**POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION,
MRS REGINAH MHAULE AT THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE ON 14 MAY 2010.**

Honourable Speaker, Mr SW Lubisi

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ms Violet Siwela

Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi Mhlabane

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable Speaker, quality education is the foundation for human capital development. Let me acknowledge that quality remains a target that we should always work towards.

Matters pertaining to the state of education in our province are common knowledge which I am not going to reiterate, but instead, I through this presentation plan to show how we can work together to improve the situation. Indeed “Together we can Educate the Nation!”

We remain certain that all of us present in this august house share the view that children of this province deserve better. I feel humbled

that I am tasked to lead the revolution of making the delivery of education in this part of our country a better one.

Motivated by our vision to accelerate excellence in education delivery, we believe it is time to go back to basics and to tackle the challenges facing the sector.

Our idea of going back to the basics in this context means that:

- We should create opportunities for learners, particularly those from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds to access education.**
- We should improve the attainment of learning outcomes by all learners, particularly at key exit grades.**
- We should provide minimum resources to schools for effective learning, teaching and assessment to take place.**
- We should provide and create conducive and safe learning spaces in our schools, and**
- We should provide a qualified and knowledgeable workforce in all our classrooms and schools.**

Honourable Speaker, keeping the above in mind, the education sector nationally has agreed on outcomes and targets that we all must reach by the end of 2014.

- Our target is to ensure that at least 60% of our children at Grade 3, 6 and 9 achieve appropriate levels on Literacy and Numeracy outcomes**

- Our target is to increase the participation and the number of learners passing Mathematics from the current 9 596 to 18 000
- Our target is to increase the participation and number of learners passing Physical Sciences from the current 5 979 to 13 000
- Our target is to increase the number of matric graduates qualifying to study towards Bachelors' Programmes at university from the current 6 552 to 13 112.
- In the same vein we shall have to improve the overall pass rate at matric level if we have to provide the requisite skills base that the province so need. Our target is to attain at least a pass rate of 70% by 2014.

To achieve these outputs, Honourable Speaker, the sector has prioritized the provision of universal Grade R by 2014, development and provision of relevant learning and teaching materials and the administration of national tests at Grade 3, 6 and 9.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Mpumalanga is amongst the poorest provinces in the country. This means that the majority of our learners are dependent on state intervention to access education.

NO FEE SCHOOLS

Honourable Speaker, our drive to ensure access to education for all learners is encapsulated from the vision of the Freedom Charter. We have made it our obligation not to fail the people of this province in

this regard. This year, we are extending the No Fee policy to all Quintile 1- 3 schools in the province to benefit 699,157 children. This represents 71.31% of all school going children in the province. We have set aside a budget of 38.6 million Rand to achieve this.

TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO SCHOOLS

In 2005, the province proclaimed all public schools as having been granted Section 21 functions in terms of the South African Schools Act. I must admit though, that this is ideal if we need to have Self Managing Schools. However, this proclamation has come with unintended consequences. We shall therefore initiate discussions with relevant stakeholders to review our position on this matter. For 2010/11 we have allocated 259 million Rand to transfer directly to all section 21 schools.

To enable schools to operate optimally throughout the year, three transfers will be made with the first 50% due by the end of May. Once the schools have submitted audited financial statements, the second transfer of 25% will be made in September and the last 25% by the end of January 2011.

Learner wellbeing (NSNP) and dealing with the scourge of HIV & Aids.

Honourable Speaker, a hungry child will not be able to concentrate nor benefit from education. The Department will in this year continue feeding learners but also extend the number of learners benefitting from the National Nutrition Programme from 623 313 to 738 015. This includes learners in Quintile 2 Secondary Schools

introduced to the programme from April 2010. Our plan is to extend the programme to Quintile 3 secondary schools in April 2011. A total of 354 million Rand has been allocated to the programme. This includes a R600 monthly stipend we are giving to Volunteer Food handlers and the training of SGBs to ensure that they start taking ownership of the programme and thus monitor the quality of provisioning.

Honourable Speaker, through our Life skills Education programme we shall train 4620 educators, 3200 learners as Peer Educators with special emphasis on HIV and AIDS and other related life skills programmes. We shall establish 400 additional schools as centres of care and support. This will enable us to preserve these children for the future. We will also host a provincial Soul Buddyz congress drawing from the successful national congress we hosted last year. This will help to ensure that our learners are constantly involved and engaged in matters pertaining their health status. A budget of 15 million Rand has been allocated to deliver this programme.

SCHOLAR TRANSPORT

Honourable Speaker, the necessity of providing scholar transport services cannot be overemphasised. No child should be denied access to education because there is no school close by. The Department will continue to identify learners in need of this service and work closely with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport to meet the need. 70 000 learners will in this year benefit from this programme.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

There are 114 independent schools registered in the province, with 33 of these receiving subsidies from government. I must admit, that there are varied standards in this sector which need our urgent attention.

This year, we shall focus on finalising policies and monitoring the operations of independent schools to ensure that there is policy compliance and that the standards of provision are at acceptable levels. We have already developed a protocol for communication to improve consultations between ourselves and the independent school sector under the Mpumalanga Alliance of Independent Schools. In this year, we have allocated 11 million Rand to subsidise qualifying schools.

PUBLIC SPECIAL SCHOOLS

There are 3735 children currently attending school in 18 Special Schools. This, Honourable Speaker, does not represent all learners requiring this specialised service. We estimate that there may be 3000 children with disabilities out there not attending school. We reiterate our call to parents, guardians and communities to ensure that all these children are sent to schools. We are improving our systems to meet the needs of these learners as we move towards attaining the Education for All goals. We have allocated a total budget of 195 million Rand towards this programme.

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES

Improving learner attainment is our priority of priorities. We will not rest until our children can operate and achieve at the same levels with their peers in the country. Our inputs and processes in this year going forward are aimed at realizing that.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Honourable Speaker, our collective view is that Early Childhood Development forms a solid foundation for learning and thus the basis for improved learning outcomes. We will this year going forward work tirelessly to improve access to ECD but also to improve the quality of service we provide in this sector. We have set a target to reach universal provision of Grade R by 2014. At this pace we are confident that the province will meet universal provision even before 2014.

ECD is a sector where different spheres of government, departments, business, religious and all communities should hold hands and work together. We each have a role to play if we want to change this country for the better. We will this year train 880 Practitioners towards an ECD Teacher qualification; we will also train Child minders, Cooks and Gardeners.

We will together with the Departments of Social Development and Health run pilots for integrated ECD services in our Primary Schools. We indeed need to find solutions specific for Mpumalanga problems. These pilots will enable us to determine the best model of ECD delivery for the province.

Honourable Speaker, I take this opportunity to announce that we have improved the stipend provided to our ECD Practitioners from two thousand Rand to three thousand five hundred Rand per month effective April 2010. We will also ensure that this stipend is received monthly as we will also from this year pay all our ECD practitioners through PERSAL system. The Department of Education has allocated a total budget of 125 million Rand to ECD programmes this year.

IMPROVING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

I have earlier indicated that our target is to have all children in Grade 3, 6 and 9 attaining appropriate levels on literacy and numeracy outcomes.

We therefore intend to improve performance in Grade 3 Literacy from 34% to 42% and in Numeracy from 33% to 42%.

We will improve performance in Grade 6 Literacy from the current 27% to 40% and in Numeracy from 26% to 40%.

We will be implementing the Annual National Assessment for the first time in Grade 9 this year and aim to at least attain 50% pass rate.

All our energies have to be channelled for the realisation of these goals. We will in this year train all Foundation Phase Curriculum Implementers to be able to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy within the Foundations for Learning Programme. Through funding from national, all our primary schools will receive workbooks and all learners will sit for national assessments in literacy and numeracy. This will enable us to monitor and have

information on learner progress towards the attainment of outcomes.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT AND UPLIFTMENT PROGRAMME (QIDS –UP)

Honourable Speaker, this government will always be biased towards the poor. Through the QIDS-UP programme 353 primary schools will receive additional resource for literacy and numeracy. We are piloting the use of young matriculants to assist schools and learners to develop these foundational skills. Thus 200 Learning Support Assistants have been appointed in 100 primary schools. We believe that the experience they shall gain will also lure these young minds to joining this noble profession, the teaching profession. We have allocated a budget of 28 million Rand for this programme.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

We will continue supporting educators in curriculum delivery. We have taken a conscious decision to focus on improving school leadership. As a result we shall train 400 newly appointed principals and also register 100 school principals on a school leadership qualification. We have allocated a total budget of 39 million Rand for this programme.

Time on task remains the key input for learning. Teachers should be in class on time, teaching for at least 7 hours a day. The agreement between ourselves and teacher unions on the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign has identified this as a non-negotiable. The Department has a big role to play in ensuring that teachers are not

only held accountable but are supported, appreciated and acknowledged for their effort. In this regard, we will recognize excellence in education through the National Teaching Awards and celebrating the World Teachers' Day.

We will with effect from this financial year subsidise all permanently appointed educators in schools who procured laptops in terms of the Teacher Laptop Initiative. These laptops will enable them to access information, prepare their lessons and thus sharpen their practice. A budget of 21 million Rand has been set aside for this programme.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Honourable Speaker, education is a societal phenomenon. Parents as individuals and as a collective through School Governing Bodies should support schools. We have had successful SGB elections in the last half of the 2009 school year. This year, we have set aside 2 million Rand to capacitate 8000 newly elected members of SGBs, 550 Teacher Liaison Officers, and 40 Master Trainers on Youth Leadership Development. This will ensure that schools are governed properly. In addition, the Department will also establish a task team to develop standardized financial reporting systems for all the public ordinary schools.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Honourable Speaker, violence and crime in our institutions cannot be tolerated. What has happened to Mr Mohale Matsobane, Circuit Manager for Witbank 2 and others last year cannot be allowed nor

condoned by any civilized society? We shall therefore continue working with the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison and other Departments to reduce incidences of crime in schools. The Department will train 2500 members of School Safety Committees on Hlayiseka Early Warning Systems and other safety issues.

FET COLLEGES

Honourable Speaker, the provision of Vocational and Adult Education Programmes now lies with the Ministry of Higher Education. The province will in the transitional period continue to deliver these programmes. Mpumalanga is ranked second after Western Cape in the overall National Curriculum Vocational examinations in 2009, with all our FET colleges ranked in the top 12 out of the 50 colleges in the country.

A budget of 286 million Rand has been made available through a national conditional grant for FET Colleges.

MRTT remains our flagship for skills development in the province. An amount of 29, 5 million Rand has been allocated to MRTT to train at least 1200 young men and women on various skills programmes. Again we will also in this year finalise the legal framework governing this institution.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Public Adult Learning Centres have also done very well and are ranked 4th in the country obtaining an overall 62% pass rate for the ABET Level 4 examinations. We will train 400 under qualified and

unqualified educators towards an ABET teacher qualification and ensure that all employees working in this sector are remunerated on time. We have budgeted 98 million Rand for ABET programmes

Honourable Speaker, the mass literacy campaign is indeed working. We are each year exceeding the targets we have set for ourselves. There are currently 60 000 adult learners in the Kha Ri Gude programme. We urge other adults to take up this opportunity.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Honourable Speaker, Mathematics and Science remain the cornerstone of skills development in any country. We are encouraged by the increase in the number of learners taking Mathematics and Physical Science in Grade 12 particularly girls. Our challenge though is to ensure that these learners also pass these subjects. Our target is to increase the number of learners passing Mathematics.

We will continue working very hard with our partners, particularly from Business and Industry to make this a reality. Together with Anglo American, MTN and others we will be opening a Science Centre in Emalahleni Municipality on 01 June 2010. It is a second in the province after the one established with Mondi in Piet Retief. We are aware of a number of businesses supporting schools in the teaching of Mathematics and Science. Our Dinaledi schools are also benefitting from these business initiatives. I am not going to be able to mention all of them here but would like to acknowledge the staff from Vodacom - Nelspruit and the National Development Agency

that are volunteering their services on Saturdays to teach at ZB Kunene. This is one example that must be emulated. Together we can Educate the Nation!

MATRIC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Learner attainment at Grade 12 remains our challenge in the province. We have in 2009 performed below the national average but also below all other provinces. The Department has developed a Matric Intervention Programme which has been supported by the Executive Council. Through this programme, we urge all schools to introduce a compulsory one hour study period at least two days a week and to have extra classes in the morning, afternoon and on Saturdays.

Honourable Speaker, preparations are underway to hold winter schools across the province and a three week residential study camp for 4 000 learners during the winter school holidays. Expert teachers from performing schools have been identified to teach at these holiday classes. The Dial-in-Tutoring programme will operate from 08H00 to 16H00 on Mondays to Fridays during the world cup period to help Matriculants with their learning programmes.

Our focus, Honourable Speaker, will be on the 66 schools that obtained below 20 % pass rate with emphasis on Bushbuckridge Region. We continue to support performing schools to maintain and improve the quality of passes.

MANAGEMENT OF EXAMINATIONS

In 2009 we had an examination question paper leakage. This incidence and previous examination related irregularities led to the national Minister of Basic Education taking over the function of examination administration in the province. We intend working very hard to improve our systems and structures to ensure that we can resume this function sooner rather than later. We are engaging our partners in the labour formations to re-establish the examination unit. Once this is done, a process to recruit, vet, train and strengthen security measures will commence.

INFRASTRUCTURE

It gives me pleasure to inform this august house that the commitment we made last year of building Cyril Clark Secondary and John Mdluli Primary Schools has been accomplished. The second phase of these schools shall be completed in this financial year.

This year we will build at least 18 extra Grade R Centres in Primary Schools and upgrade four special schools namely Pelonolo, Ethokomala, Masianake and Mantjedi.

Honourable Speaker, this year we will eradicate mud and unsafe school structures. The Department has already commenced with a feasibility study towards the establishment of school hostels and will commence with processes for abolishing one teacher schools.

We have put aside an amount of 503 million Rand for infrastructure development.

Honourable members, we have an agenda to make all our schools ICT Compliant by 2014. All secondary schools will go live in this financial year. We have allocated an amount of 7, 4 million Rand towards connectivity.

DEVELOPMENT OF HRD STRATEGY

In this year, we will in collaboration with key stakeholders develop a Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy with the view to provide a pipeline of quality talent for the province. We will also in this financial year establish systems and structures to take over the management of bursaries in the provincial administration

IMPROVEMENT OF SYSTEMS

The Department of Education has for the past number of years been getting a qualified audit opinion. We are strengthening our systems and capacity to ensure that in this financial year, 2010/2011 we receive a clean audit opinion. We have already with effect from 01 April 2010 appointed the Chief Financial Officer.

CONFIGURATION OF THE ORGANOGRAM

Honourable Speaker, we have begun a process to re-configure the organizational structure so that we enabled to deliver services in an effective and efficient manner. The target is to deploy resources to Districts and Circuits as this is where they are mostly needed.

Included in this process, is the reconfiguration of our regions so that we alleviate the pressure from Ehlanzeni. The Executive Council has already approved the establishment of Bohlabela as the fourth education district.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSITY FOR MPUMALANGA

Honourable Speaker, in his State of the Province address, the Honourable Premier indicated *that the national government has granted permission for the establishment of a fully-fledged university in the Province.*

I want to take this opportunity to indicate that the Minister of Higher Education and Training has already established a task team to accelerate all processes leading to the attainment of this objective. Parallel to this, a consultative process to name the envisaged university will commence as pronounced by the Executive Council.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Honourable Speaker, indeed Together We can Educate the Nation. I wish to take this opportunity to appreciate and acknowledge the work done by the business community in education. Through the Education Development Trust. We will establish two e-Learning clusters in the Nkangala District. We will also commence with the construction of a Secondary School in Acornhoek. This will be done in partnership with Vodacom and Buffelshoek Trust. I take this opportunity to invite other business partners wishing to

support education to join the Trust. Truly, as Victor Hugo, a French Poet says “He who opens a school door, closes a prison”

APPRECIATION OF EXCELLENCE

All the above programmes, Honourable Speaker, find expression based on our shared vision of accelerating excellence in education delivery. In this regard, I request this august house to acknowledge the following individuals who have excelled in their different education related activities.

Simphiwe Mtsweni and Simphiwe Nyembe from Balfour High School and Kiriyaatswane High School in Gert Sibande Region who represented South Africa in COSSASA Games in Swaziland where they obtained position one and were awarded gold medals for Football and Netball respectively.

Mavis Silinda, a learner from Sofunda Secondary School who obtained position three nationally for the SADEC Essay Competition.

Mr. F Vosloo from Estralita Special School obtained position one at the National Teaching Awards in the Excellence in Inclusive Education and Special Needs Teaching category.

The Staff from Nelspruit Vodacom office who volunteered their time and resources to teach grade 12 learners at ZB Kunene on Saturdays.

Lastly, Ms Dolly Sono for her outstanding performance in her B.Ed studies at the University of Fort Hare. She passed 30 out of 34 modules with distinctions making her the first student teacher from Mpumalanga to graduate cum laude.

I take this time Honourable Members to officially assign her to volunteer as our Ambassador for our campaign to recruit learners to take teaching as a career.

There are many more individuals who continue to rise above the expected norm in their different fields of engagement. We will always salute them.

CONCLUSION

On this note, Honourable Speaker, I request this august house to approve the 11.5 billion Rand allocated to the Department of Education to deliver on the above mentioned mandate.

I also take this time, to extend my appreciation to the visionary leadership of the Honourable Premier, Mr. DD Mabuza, Members of the Executive Council. Members of the Portfolio Committee, Officials, Educators' Unions, Learner Formations, Association of School Governing Bodies, Business Community, my family with special reference to my Mother, the general public and to all who continue to support the vision of making education the key pillar in making the lives of our people better.

Thank You.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN:

Programme	2010/11 Estimated
1. Administration	989,890
2. Public Ordinary School Education (see further split below)	9,652,872
3. Independent School Subsidies	11,400
4. Public Special School Education	194,635
5. Further Education and Training	329,508
6. Adult Basic Education and Training	97,846
7. Early Childhood Development	124,553
8. Auxiliary and associated services	129,548
TOTAL	11,530,252
Current payment	10,388,308
Compensation of employees	9,217,097
Goods and services	1,171,211
Transfers and subsidies	684,219
Payments for capital assets	457,725
TOTAL	11,530,252

END