SPEECH
BUILDING A_socially cohesive education system in Gauteng

2014/15 MTEF Budget Speech - Vote 5: Education by
Mr Panyaza Lesufi, Member of the Executive Council for Education
Gauteng legislature - 31 July 2014

Madam Speaker
Honourable Premier
Deputy Speaker
Honourable Members of the Executive Council
Honourable Chief Whip and Leaders of Opposition Parties
Honourable Joe Mpisi Chairperson of the Education Committee
Honourable Members of the Education Committee
Honourable Shadow MEC for Education, Member Khume Ramulifho
Honourable Members of the Legislature
Newly Elected Provincial Leadership of SADTU
Leadership of Teacher Unions
President of Cosas Mr. Collin Malatji
Leadership of School Governing Bodies
Invited guests from the education community
Officials of the Department of Education
Honoured guests
Comrades and Friends

Thobela!

We thank the presiding officers to introduce the debate on Budget Vote 5.

I am deeply humbled to be assigned the task by the 5th Administration under the leadership of Honourable Premier, David Makhura as well as ANC led government, to table the budget vote of number one priority of government, education.

On the 06th April 1979, thirty-five years ago the apartheid government brutally ended the life of warrior that inspired many of us in this house. At only 22 years old, he died before his dream of becoming a teacher was realised. His name was Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, a combatant of the People’s Army Umkhonto We Sizwe.
He was committed to the struggle for freedom to the last moments of his life. Before going to the gallows on the 6th of April 1979 he said the following to his mother: "My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight”.

Madame Speaker, I stand here today to declare that the life of Kalushi did not go to waste. Honourable Members I believe that Kalushi would be pleased to know that the path to ensure People’s Education for People’s Power remain firmly rooted in our plans and objectives and we are unwaveringly committed to ensure that it is not where you are born that determines your destiny in life but it be access to quality education that must shape your destiny in life. As our former President Nelson Mandela once said, it is only through education that a child of a gardener can be a President of a country.

Honourable Members, the thousands of comrades like Kalushi, would be proud of the efforts of the ANC government to increase the opportunity to quality learning that is making a difference in the lives of our children. The Department in the last five years intensified its support for Grade 12 learners and expanded the SSIP to support over 387 priority secondary schools. Learners benefited from additional support materials and extra classes on weekends and during school holidays. In total over the last five years over 240 000 learners have benefited from this United Nations winning programme. The impact of the SSIP programme has been phenomenal in respect of improved learner performance especially in township and rural schools.

In his State of the Province Address, the Premier, unveiled a 10-pillar programme of the fifth administration to radically transform, modernise and re-industrialise Gauteng over the next five to fifteen years. Through these pillars we, in the education sector, will contribute to the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

We are committed to the vision that the Premier has so eloquently outlined when he said

“... the radical second phase of our transition to a national democratic society needs bold thinking and decisive action to completely eradicate the social, economic and spatial legacy of apartheid and colonialism.”

Honourable Speaker, our five-year plan responds to the key challenges facing the people of Gauteng. We need to ensure that education contributes to the reduction of inequalities in our population. Chief among these is access to affordable quality schooling in the communities they live in.
The 2014/15 MTEF Budget and the key pillars for Education Transformation

Honourable Speaker

Madame Speaker, the 2014/15 budget of R32.8 billion will be dedicated to the continuation of government’s agenda of building a non-racial education system, where all learners have fair and equitable access to all public schools in the province, irrespective of race, colour or creed. The budget responds to the principles underpinning each of the pillars and addresses the key targets outlined in our plans.

The Department’s total allocated budget has increased from R29.3 billion in 2013/14. The 12 percent, or R3.5 billion, increase again shows government’s commitment to education as an apex priority. Our programmes in this term will be guided by the objectives and goals as articulated in the National Development Plan and Schooling 2030. We will, also, consolidate the existing improvement programmes.

Four percent of the appropriated budget is from conditional grants. The largest allocations for grants are for salaries at FET colleges and the National School Nutrition Programmes, with smaller grants for HIV and AIDS interventions, Dinaledi Schools and Technical High Schools.

Seventy-five percent of the budget will be spent on salaries of teachers and officials of the department leaving us with 25% to meet infrastructure, learner teaching material and school subsidy demands. So we are now compelled to review our efficiency strategies. We have to do more with what we have thus the need for us to maximise our resources and ensure the resources are shared and spread across all sectors of society.

Consolidate Gains in Education

To consolidate the improvement in learner achievement, already achieved by the province, and to further improve the quality of education from Grade R to Grade 12, the Department will continue to implement CAPS and reach common understanding with teacher unions in the implementation of the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) in primary schools and the Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP) in secondary schools. At the same time, we will focus on modernising public education and build an education system that can compete internationally, especially in maths, science and technology, and continue to support the development of the province. It is within this context that we have now taken a decision to ensure that 80% of our children in Gauteng should do pure mathematics by 2019.

To sustain the improved Grade 12 performance of the province, the Department has extended the Secondary School Intervention Programme (SSIP) to reach all secondary school learners with various interventions. This is
to ensure that whatever knowledge gaps learners have are sufficiently arrested by the time the learner sits for the final matric examinations. Through SSIP, the Department aims to support Grade 12 learners through Saturday School sessions, Holiday sessions and exam camps. The Saturday and Holiday sessions have already commenced and the Holiday Camps are scheduled to take place later this year in preparation for the final examinations.

To support of the target to increase enrolment in Mathematics, the department has developed a framework that outlines the measures for schools and districts to increase the number of learners meeting the standards to progress to pure maths in Grade 10. These measures include the expansion of interventions to improve Grade 8 and 9 maths performance in all secondary schools, use the diagnostic assessment of grade 8-11 learners in maths and science and languages to strengthen maths development and guide learners, address subject packages in schools to include maths as part of the subject package and strengthen the teacher development programme.

Already, the Department has implemented a total of 16 Maths, Science and Technology programmes through the SciBono Discovery Centre, to improve the performance of learners in the Maths, Science and Technology subjects and to produce the skills in learners as required by the economy. Through SciBono, over 45 000 learners have been hosted in the various programmes by the end of June 2014. Further, over 40 000 learners were reached through school support programmes in these subjects and career counselling that was provided to 23 000 learners.

To improve learner performance across primary school grades, the department has begun institutionalising and mainstreaming into districts the key interventions programmes. This is to ensure that the support to teachers, learners and schools becomes a daily task of the district officials to ensure a sustained quality improvement trajectory across primary schools. Through this process, we aim to improve learner performance in the Annual National Assessments as well as in township and rural schools.

Since the beginning of this financial year, all 1055 targeted schools have been provided with scripted lesson plans and standardized assessment for all grades. Importantly, we have already developed Language and Mathematics lesson plans in 10 languages with assessment tasks built into these, as an important move towards the promotion of African languages as a medium of instruction. In respect of numeracy in the foundation phase, the Department has versioned the learner workbooks in the 9 African languages and has distributed them to over 450 000 foundation phase learners.

To further ensure improved learner performance in the Annual National Assessments, the Annual National Assessment guidelines have been
distributed to all schools together with the exemplars and previous exam papers.

We further support the call made by the National Minister of Basic Education Mme Angie Motshekga to make History a compulsory subject. We have already approached the Minister to request her to make Gauteng her pilot site. A country that chooses to hide its heritage and historical footprints from its children takes the risk of having them repeat the mistakes of their predecessors.

**Extend Access to Quality ECD – Grade R**

In order to extend access to quality ECD to learners in the province, the Department has improved the professionalization of ECD through the training of practitioners as well as through the registration of ECD centres in the province.

There are currently 133,142 learners in Grade R sites. To achieve the target of 140,000 by the end of the financial year, the Department is implementing a targeted approach by intensifying the advocacy campaign. This campaign will focus on 85 public primary schools with no Grade R facilities, 128 independent schools with no Grade R facilities and increasing enrolment in community-based sites. An audit into the 85 public primary schools that do not offer Grade R has been completed and the findings will be used to resource these schools to improve enrolments in Grade R in the areas serviced by these schools. Application forms have already been sent to the identified independent schools.

In terms of the training of Grade R practitioners, 180 Grade R practitioners are being trained on NQF Level 4 by the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG), 300 Foundation Phase HODs have been trained on How to Manage a Grade R Class, 750 Additional Foundation Phase HODs have been registered for the training and 1230 Grade R practitioners have been identified for NQF Level 6 training.

In support of the pre-Grade R ECD programmes offered through the Department of Social Development, 1,553 pre-Grade R Practitioners have completed the NQF Level 4 training and will be graduating in August 2014. A further 882 practitioners will be completing the NQF Level 4 training by the end of August 2014. A total of 50 ECD sites were selected for training to implement the Birth to Four Curriculum and 447 staff members have been trained to date.

**Introducing smart classrooms**

In modernising public education and responding to new educational imperatives for quality learning, the province will work towards introducing smart paperless classrooms to ensure that all learners and teachers have
progressive access to broadband and innovative learning and teaching tools which will enable learners to meaningfully participate in the economies of the future. We are ready to respond to the call made by Congress of South African Students of “One Learner One tablet in our lifetime”

As a starting point, 21 schools have been identified to participate in the pilot programme of classroom of the future. The 21 schools have been categorised as follows:

a. Five schools have been identified for development as model schools for the integration of technology in teaching and learning. The department will work with private sector partners to model smart classrooms. The five schools are: Thandi Sibeko High, Oracle Ponelophele Secondary, Tshepisa Primary School, Tlama Tlama Primary, and Boitumelong Secondary School. The department later included Sunward Park High School. The new design will promote the use of ICT in the classroom to support the delivery of learning content.

b. The six schools with high admission enrolment that compete with and perform better than the top independent Schools. Those schools are: Laerskool Akasia, Bryanston Primary, Parkview Junior, Northcliff High, Fourways High and Sutherland. The Department is currently conducting capacity audit with a view to provide additional facilities to enable them to manage pressure and compete effectively. These schools would also benefit from the smart classrooms programme over time.

c. The 10 Dysfunctional Schools, which will be provided with resources to achieve high learner attainment. The support provided shall cover the nine focus areas such as quality of teaching and learning and educator development, basic school functionality, infrastructure, leadership and management and communication; governance and relationship, curriculum provisioning and resources, learner achievement, school safety security and discipline, and parents and community. This is with view to improving the capacity of the school to adopt new technologies to support teaching and learning.

The Department has begun to design model schools of the future with smart classrooms to create and promote interactive learning in class. The Department conducted a province wide ICT Audit to identify the nature of resources and intervention required in schools to support the use of ICT to attain effective teaching and learning. Based on these findings and the e-learning strategy, we will develop a fully costed business case to secure the necessary resources for successful rollout.

Currently, the Department is working with various public sector and private sector role-players to secure connectivity at the classroom level to support the use of ICT in schools in Gauteng in this five-year term. Yesterday, through
our partnership with the dynamic Tshwane Municipality, more than 300 of our schools in Tshwane have an uncapped free wifi connectivity to cement our path to a future paperless classroom. We are on the verge of concluding similar agreements with other municipalities. This will ensure that all learners in the province have access to wealth of information relating to their curriculum needs through the use of ICT. The City of Ekurhuleni will map their 400 km broadband infrastructure and indicate which schools can have such access.

The Department has conducted orientation training for all Staff Members on the e-Learning Solution Programme in some of the six schools prioritised for the modelling of the classroom of the future. Through training, teachers have been encouraged to utilise the GDE e-Learning Portal during the teaching and learning process. The Department has registered learners in the GDE e-Learning portal to enable them to participate actively in the learning process and the acquisition of information.

May I extend my sincere thanks to the MEC for Infrastructure Development, Mme Nandi Mayathula Khoza for agreeing with us that as from tomorrow, all the new schools we are about to build, they will be built on our model of a paperless classroom. We have now identified 21 schools for construction so that our first paperless classroom will be ready for occupation in 2016. Our dream is becoming real, Honourable Premier. In the next five years, the Department will focus in the building of schools with smart classrooms whilst embarking on a programme to convert existing schools to accommodate technology and the use of ICT in the classroom. This programme will be supported by the training of educators in the effective application of the available resources to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

The department has further initiated Innovation Thursday whereby various roleplayers in education will make presentations in respect of the available initiatives and applications designed to support effective teaching and learning in schools. This initiative will be in line with the teacher development programmes in ICT. This will enable teachers to use the available resources effectively.

**Teacher Provision and Support**

Education delivery is dependent on quality teachers, who are motivated. To be the best, we must recruit the best. From now on the recruitment of teachers will be mainly and strictly be on merit only nothing. We have strengthened our recruitment programmes to ensure that all staff are recruited on four key attributes, talent, skill, competency and qualifications. Schools stand and fall on principals. We have now reviewed the recruitment of principals to ensure only the best are appointed. We have strengthened our short listing processes and will monitor each appointment of principal to eliminate favouritism and other unwanted practices. We are committed to improve the quality of teaching by focusing on the continuous development of teachers. The department is focusing on strengthening teacher development programmes.
With regards to inclusive education, the rolling out of SBST/DBST programme has been completed and coaching to begin once recruitment process has been finalised. The Accounting Teacher Development programme will commence in August 2014 in partnership with Wits University whereas Geography Teacher Programme started in July 2014 in partnership with UJ. The Certification of Moderators and Assessors Programme has already been completed and graduation took place on 4 July 2014.

As 75% of the budget is spent on salaries, we are committed to improve the efficiencies of key personal management processes:

- We will make certain that teachers are in attendance in the classroom and take swift action against teachers who have been absent for a long time, and other disciplinary issues.
- We are in the process of creating a permanent Labour Dispute Office, which will ensure a maximum of 90-Day turnaround on all labour dispute matters that warrants immediate suspension or dismissals.
- To date, we have profiled all employees who have not been at work for 100 days and 36 cases of suspensions and precautionary transfers have been identified, for immediate intervention and resolution with the case management companies for ill health and internal disciplinary procedures.
- On filling critical posts in HR, ICT and Finance, 164 posts have been advertised and a panel to conduct Senior Management and Middle Management interviews and appointments has been established to ensure that all appointments are on merit and based on competence, trust and integrity.
- The department has identified backlog on Pension Benefits payout and out of the 265 outstanding retirements terminations, 163 have been finalized and only 101 are still pending. I have requested a meeting with Government Pension Agency to speedily resolve all pension related matters.
- In respect to curbing mass resignation of personnel particularly teachers, the department has established partnerships with FSB, FNB, Old Mutual, and Sanlam to conduct financial literacy to employees.

If we believe that education is number one priority of the state, then the implementers of this priority must be appropriately rewarded and incentivised. It is within this context that we are leading, on behalf of the National Ministry and other MEC’s a process to approach the Presidential Remuneration Commission, with a view to create new incentives for educators to curb the mass exodus of teachers from our schools.

**Prioritise leadership and management**

The department is prioritising leadership and management at schools by introducing targeted training for principals and senior management teams
In respect to Management training, a Simulation Centre has been established to capacitate District Officials. The training of SMTs in 530 Primary schools and 852 Secondary Schools is ongoing. The training provided to HODs in Foundation Phase is also being implemented. The training of HoD from ordinary schools includes leading and managing a Grade R class, while the HODs from Special Schools are receiving training on Early Screening and Identification of learner experiencing barriers in learning.

Representative Council of Learners members from an initial 613 secondary schools have already received training in the new financial year. This training is based on the needs assessment that was undertaken by the department during the previous financial year.

In preparation for the SGB elections next year, the department through MGSLG has completed SGB induction training of 150 Principals. The preparations for SGB Handover training as well as SGB training roll out are, also, underway.

In collaboration with SAICA for SGB Financial Management Training, 15 priority schools to be provided with Chartered Accountants (CAs) to strengthen their School Financial Management capabilities. All CAs have been taken through school governance orientation training.

The department will continue the rollout of the successful Parental and Family Support Programme (including psycho-social programmes) and will train parents from 1500 priority schools, and SMT and SGBs members from 130 schools. The full training programme comprises 8 days and so far, 4 days of training has been concluded.

**Accelerate Infrastructure development and maintenance**

We will work towards ensuring that all schools in the province are appealing and safe. As part of our contribution to women’s month, we will be launching a programme for young handywomen to focus on repairing broken windows, doors that do not close, toilets that do not work, water supply and general degradation that de-motivates learners and teachers. The department’s infrastructure delivery programme for the 2014/15 financial year will focus on the 580 schools which had challenges with sanitation, I am happy to announce that contractors have been appointed at 504 of the schools and a total of 115 schools have been completed to-date. With regard to other maintenance, a total of 500 schools have been identified and to date 275 schools have been completed. A total 24 schools have been identified for major renovations in this financial year and to date a number of schools are nearing completion.

The province is faced with rapid urbanisation and interprovincial migration. Annually the learner enrolment increases by on average 2%. Such enrolment pressure needs to be dealt with as a high priority via a variety of strategies including placing excess learners in schools nearby where space is available;
expanding available classroom space at the schools feeling the pressure or at nearby schools; and building new schools where necessary. In this financial year, the Department has planned to open 10 new schools, of which two have recently been completed.

In line with the target of building of modern schools facilities, the Department has developed the new specification of new schools to be built that are compatible with the technological demands and the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in the classroom. All new schools in the tender phase will be built according to the new requirements with the first of these schools being delivered in 2016.

**Improving information and data systems**

The department is currently improving its information and data systems. It has already developed reporting apps and tools for principals to use as part of the Principals tools of trade programme. In addition, we are working on introducing a fully electronic learner admission system, electronic Learning and Teaching Support Material and further develop systems to streamline and integrate procurement and maintenance.

In addition, the department is finalising school support systems to improve data driven educational planning and support to schools. This includes the full utilisation of SASAMS by schools to improve school based data collection and management to support management decisions and interventions. The department is also working on an admission app to improve enrolment processes in our schools.

**Social Cohesion in education is crucial to building a quality education system**

Over the last twenty years, our educational transformation has been driven to ensure that we focus on the cognitive development of learners, while nurturing the creative and emotional growth of learners and in helping them acquire values and attitudes for responsible citizenship. Key to our transformation of education is the principles of redress, equity, quality and efficiency.

Honourable Speaker

As we witness, levels of dissatisfaction in some communities across the province, it would be apt to quote Amilcar Cabral, who said: “People do no struggle for ideas, or something that exists in the mind of individuals, but for change in their material living conditions. National liberation, transformation, struggle for human rights, all these words remain meaningless if they are not related to the transformation of the daily lives of the oppressed people.”

Despite the massive gains made in education, twenty years into democracy, we still sit with an education system characterised by apartheid — the
dominant discussion across all spheres of society is the reference to ex-model C schools and no-fee schools as a proxy for black or townships or ex-DET schools. How is it that a single public school system has not produced a single vision of a new public school?

As we enter this fifth term of our democratic government, we remain with challenges arising out of our past that undermine our efforts to strive for a truly non-racial, non-sexist education system that will assure equity to any learner irrespective of their race or class. In short, there is no social cohesion that is underpinning the single most important lever of transformation, Education. We remain with schools characterised by race, class and exclusion. There are high levels of protectionism to maintain the historically privileged white status quo of pre-1994.

One of the key elements to improve social cohesion is to extend the quality base of successful schools by ensuring that scarce skills and expertise at management and governance levels is shared with other schools on the verge of success in poorer socio-economic contexts. This will be initially be undertaken through twinning and using current provisions of establishing SGBs that manage more then one school as provide in SASA.

The department has completed a legislative review to identify legal provisions and policy gaps that may impact on the implementation of this objective. We are mindful of the rights of the school stakeholders and as a consequence we are now preparing the necessary concept notes, procedural guidelines and supporting operational policies that will be used to drive a pilot. The purpose of the pilot to establish both the operational basis for the governance over more then one school and the legal and procedural compliance framework for the success of the model. At all times the department will ensure administrative justice served balanced against the interests of quality education. In the next few weeks we will finalise these documents for discussion with affected stakeholders in preparation for the rollout of the pilot. The pilot will also advise on the need for policy changes to existing laws and regulation to support the further the creation of schools with single governance and management structures over multiple campuses. We have identified two schools in each municipality who as from next year, will be governed by one school governing body thus ensuring equity and access to quality education. This will allow learners to immediately share resources such as libraries, laboratories and sporting facilities. This will be our first step to break the backbone of apartheid education.

We are also taking steps to ensure learners are not negatively impacted by gangs operating in some of our schools. We have profiled these gangs and together with the South African Police services, we will intervene in the identified school.

Skills Development
Skills development in the province is driven by the approved Master Skills Plan. The plan identifies three main areas of development namely:

- Public Sector Skills Development;
- Skills for the Economy; and
- The transition between school and the world of work or Further Education and Training.

In response to these areas of development the Department, through Gauteng City Region Academy (GCRA), we will introduce training for all government front line staff so that we can serve our people with a smile. This programme will focus on front line staff especially security guards, receptionists and telephone or switchboard operators. Our call is simple, treat our people who require our services with respect and a smile. We are here because we serve them.

This 5th Administration will also have its first meeting with all Senior Managers of the State to emphasise on the need to work with the highest level of integrity, honesty and trust. That corruption must not be theorised but crushed. So our Honourable Premier will on the 13 August 2014 address a conference of all Senior Managers of the State and establish the Provincial Skills Development Forum.

To develop the skills required by the economy the Mass “Back-to-Training” project will be implemented. Through this project the Department will implement a Mass Recruitment and Skills Training Programme for 20 000 unemployed youth in the province. A regional approach for the rollout will be initiated. These Harry Gwala Brigades will be trained in filling potholes, be traffic cop assistants as well as traffic lights technicians. As from next year all our Grade 11 learners will be given free K53 drivers licenses to equip them.

In terms of facilitating the transition between the school and the world of work or Further Education and Training, the Department has initiated the following:

- The introduction of 100 Youth Teacher Aides into schools.
- In order to assist with the School Refurbishment “Cleaning” project, a total of 500 girl-learners have been identified for development as “handywomen”.

Concluding Remarks

Through strategic pillars in our new education strategy, we in the education sector, will contribute to the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality. We are committed to the vision that the Premier outlined in his State of the Province Address:
“We all want children to grow up in safe and clean neighbourhoods. We all want a decent standard of living and a better future for our children. We all want quality education, quality health care and a better environment.”

Honourable Members, as I conclude, let’s pause and reflect on the words of Mme Martha Mahlangu, may her soul rest in peace, the mother of the late Comrade Solomon. This is what she said: “My son had aspirations of becoming a school teacher...He was very conscientious and humble. He stood firm and unshaken in his beliefs.”

I am pleased to be part of a department, and indeed a province, that has made great strides in education. I am delighted to share with you the plans for the year ahead that build on the gains made in Education by my predecessor.

I thank the Premier for his vision and commitment to quality education. To my colleagues in the Executive Council thank you for your support; to Mr Boy Ngobeni, our Head of Department and the team at GDE for their hard work and dedication; to Comrade Joe Mpsisi and members of the Portfolio Committee for their insight and oversight; the on-going work that each and every member of this House is doing to make education a national priority; my family for their loving support. Allow me to convey a special word of appreciation to the many thousands of principals, educators and school governors in our province who, despite daunting challenges, make their learners’ education their number singular priority.

School Governing Body Elections will take place from 6 to 28 March 2015 and we encourage all parents to support the elections by standing as candidates or by participating as voters in the SGB elections as voters.

Without parental and community support, education can never be a societal issue as envisaged by government.

Let us not forget the spirit of Solomon Mahlangu! Let us instil his tenacity and commitment in every one of us so we, too, can strive and work hard towards a better life.

It is my privilege, Honourable Speaker to commend Budget Vote 5, to this house.

Kea leboga!

ENDS