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MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
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VOTE NO 16 - BASIC EDUCATION

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**PROCEEDINGS OF MINI-PLENARY SESSION - COMMITTEE ROOM M46**

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Members of the mini-plenary session met at Committee Room M46 at 16:30.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 16 – Basic Education:

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chairperson, hon members and fellow South Africans, in every generation, a choice must be made to be a builder or a breaker. Builders roll up their sleeves, confront hard truths, lead, and work every day to strengthen our schools, support our teachers, and uplift every learner. Breakers, on the other hand, sow

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division, undermine progress, and sacrifice the future of our children for cheap political point-scoring. This budget is for the builders, those who understand that lasting change is not forged in the headlines but in the classrooms and in communities where our children learn, dream, and grow. Therefore, I say this to the breakers: Our children deserve better. If you cannot build, at least do not stand in the way of those who do.

In the past year, we've laid strong foundations to restore the public's confidence in basic education. We committed to five key priorities: one, expanding access to quality early child development, ECD; two, strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy; three, advancing inclusive education; four, supporting teacher training and professional management; and, five, improving school infrastructure, safety, and learner well-being.

Over the past year, I undertook a national listening and learning tour, visiting more than 50 schools across all provinces and engaging with leaders and school communities. We have made real progress. Foundational learning remains central. A child who cannot read, write, and calculate with

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meaning and confidence will struggle in every other subject. Informed by international benchmarking studies and our own systemic evaluation – showing that eight in 10 children in South Africa cannot read for meaning by Grade 4 – we have launched a strategic shift to improve foundational learning.

This strategy, endorsed by Cabinet, places focus on expanding access to quality ECD and early grade literacy and numeracy. We hosted the Bana Pele Summit, where stakeholders affirmed their commitment to the 2030 ECD strategy. We intensified efforts to register more ECD programmes under the care and oversight of education departments, aiming to register 10 000 ECD centres in the current financial year, especially in underresourced areas.

*IsiXhosa:*

Sizimisele ukuqinisekisa ukuba bonke abantwana boMzantsi Afrika bafumana imfundo esemgangathweni basebancinci. Siyayazi ukuba xa abantwana befundiswa ukusukela ekuzalweni ukuya kwiminyaka emine baye bagqwese ezifundweni kwiminyaka eye ilandele.

*English:*

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We are prioritising the Children's Amendment Bill for introduction to Parliament in the current financial year, to create a more enabling environment and a framework to enhance government oversight and support. At the same time, we are developing curriculum-aligned learning materials and a national human resources strategy to professionalise ECD.

In the Foundation Phase, we've continued rolling out mother tongue-based bilingual education, training teachers in bilingual methods to provide quality support material.

*IsiXhosa:*

Abaphandi noochwepheshe kwezemfundo kumhlaba jikelele bayavumelana ukuba abantwana xa befundiswa ngolwimi lwabo lwenkobe bayakhawuleza ukulandela izifundo ekuthiwa zinzima ezifana nezobalo nezobunzululwazi.

*English:*

The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme and teacher development efforts are being augmented to prioritise Foundation Phase teaching, aligned to our focus on literacy and numeracy. We are reviewing the post-provisioning norms to improve teacher distribution and to buffer provinces against budget pressures.

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In addition, we are updating the national catalogue for Grades 1 to 3 to ensure that learners receive high-quality, curriculum-aligned materials. We anticipate that this catalogue will be in place by 2026 for procurement in the 2027 school year.

Quality teaching is a great enabler of quality learning outcomes. We are therefore auditing all training and professional development offerings for teachers to strengthen the teaching of literacy and numeracy, effective classroom management, and professional management of our schools.

On inclusive education, we've increased allocations for assistive devices and strengthened sector co-ordination. We advanced the review of Special Needs Education: Education White Paper 6 on inclusive education, work that will shape how the sector continues to build an adaptive education system that accommodates diverse learning needs. There's still much more work to be done to ensure that special schools and ordinary schools are fully inclusive spaces for all learners.

*IsiXhosa:*

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Malungu eNdlu yoWisomthetho, siyayazi asikabiphi  
ekuqinisekiseni ukuba abantwana abaphila nokukhubazeka  
bayalifumana ithuba lokufunda ...

*English:*

... as enshrined in the Constitution.

*IsiXhosa:*

Yiyo loo nto sifunda ukunyusa isantya salo msebenzi.

*English:*

We've made progress on infrastructure and safety, completing 97% of sanitation projects under the Sanitation Appropriate for Education, SAFE, initiative, as of today, and supporting provinces to eradicate the remaining unsafe sanitation facilities. We are reviewing the public infrastructure regulations to strengthen oversight and enforcement. This review will be completed within the year, with public inputs.

We have signed the new National School Safety Protocol with the SA Police Service and begun developing disaster management guidelines for schools, especially following the Mthatha tragedies that claimed many lives and damaged many schools. We

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are reviewing the provincial school nutrition models to improve efficiency, financial management, and the impact of this programme because we know that 9,7 million learners depend on this programme for a meal every day, and we cannot afford to fail them.

Furthermore, we've actively supported the sector in implementing the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, which came into effect on 24 December 2024. This includes the training of provincial officials, interim guidelines, and an extensive suite of draft regulations. The first two regulations, focused on admissions and capacity, will be published in the coming weeks for public comment, with further regulations to follow. Hon members, predictably, the breakers will come to this podium and pretend that no progress has been made in this regard. The truth is they seek to politicise the implementation of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act for their own narrow party-political ends, not for the 13,5 million learners in our schools. [Interjections.] So, I want to assure you, hon members and the people of South Africa, that I stand firmly with those 13,5 million learners.

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This work continues with pace. Even as we strengthen these foundations, we must address the challenges facing the sector, many of them fiscal in nature. The reality is that our sector faces significant financial pressures, especially in provinces where service delivery mostly occurs. Years of bailing out failing state-owned enterprises instead of investing in education have caused real harm. This has led to unfilled posts due to compensation ceilings, infrastructure backlogs ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister ...

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Yes, sir?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Just take a seat, please. I want to recognise the hon member at the back.

Mr A T THEMBA: Chair, I would like to check ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Switch on your microphone, hon member. You pressed the wrong button.

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Mr A T THEMBA: Alright. Sorry about rules, sir. Chair, I want to check if the Minister would be accepting of taking a question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister, are you prepared to take a question at this early stage of the debate?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: If I was convinced of its wisdom I would, but, unfortunately, I'm not. [Interjections.] [Applause.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please proceed, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: These, hon members, are the threats to the rights to education. I have directed all provinces to submit credible financial recovery plans to be reviewed in July.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister, will you take your seat, please? Yes, hon Mente-Nkuna?

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Yes, sir.

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Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Chair, I'm rising on a point of order. It cannot be parliamentary to be this patronising and treating members with disdain to say you are not convinced of their wisdom. [Interjections.] That's an insult.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon member.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: That is an insult. It must be unparliamentary, and the Minister must withdraw that.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon member. [Interjections.] I'll come back to that matter. Please proceed, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Not convinced of the wisdom of the question – and so these are the threats, hon member, to the right to education.

I've directed all provinces to submit credible financial recovery plans so that we can make sure that we are addressing vacant posts, delivery breakdowns, ghost employees, and compliance with funding norms. Provinces must ring-fence spending on teaching and learning, infrastructure, and learner

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support. No space exists for vanity projects. We are activating oversight tools available under the National Education Policy Act. Where necessary, we will escalate these failures through intergovernmental mechanisms and indeed through Parliament.

We urgently need additional funding for compulsory Grade R, as is required by the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act. We are unable to secure additional funding from National Treasury for this important undertaking, meaning that provinces must fund this within their allocated budgets. We look to Treasury to secure additional funding to ensure universal Grade R access.

In the coming weeks, I'll be constituting an advisory body – the national education and training council – to advise me on matters including school resourcing, teacher workloads, progression, and promotion requirements. Whether the pass mark should be 30%, 40%, or 50% – and in which subjects – must be subjected to a well-researched process of experts and not feel-good statements shouted from rooftops and Twitter streets. We must be responsible with the curriculum of our children. This is what it means to be a builder, hon members.

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We act with discipline. We act with agility. We act with purpose in the face of constraint, protecting children's education at all costs.

This year's budget is a signal of our continued commitment to these investments. The Department of Basic Education receives a total budget of R35 billion, an increase from last year.

Resources are focused on where the greatest need is and where the greatest impact will be in the five national priorities.

The ECD conditional grant therefore increases to R1,7 billion, with over R230 million of that allocated to the ECD nutrition pilot and R162 million set aside for ECD infrastructure.

Our goal is very clear: Every child must enter Grade R ready to learn in all respects.

Our strategy centres on foundational learning, ensuring that all children can read and calculate by age 10. Over R4,6 billion is therefore allocated to curriculum support and monitoring, which is an increase of 14%. Our R1,2 billion workbook programme will continue to provide quality learning

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materials from Grade R to Grade 9, including Braille and adaptive formats.

While workbooks support teaching and learning, they are not substitutes for quality teaching. So, R57 million will be spent in the medium term to support learners who are not being taught in their mother tongue, to roll out the mother tongue-based bilingual education programme. Our message is quite clear: Reading is non-negotiable, and the Foundation Phase is where the battle for equity and excellence must be won.

We will be building an inclusive system that removes barriers to learning for learners with diverse education needs. We will continue supporting full-service and special schools through the inclusive education conditional grant and monitoring provincial spending on assistive devices, transport, and teaching aids in the provinces.

No reform succeeds without empowered teachers, and that's why we're investing more in their development. Over R1,8 billion therefore supports teacher training, mentorship, and leadership. The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme will fund over 9 000 students, focused on priority subjects and the

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Foundation Phase. Recruitment will prioritise candidates willing to teach in rural and high-need areas. Teachers are the single most important in-school resource influencing learning outcomes, and so we must continue to support and professionalise them.

Learning depends on safety, infrastructure, and nutrition – all of which is funded by this budget. An amount of R15,3 billion goes to the education infrastructure grant, which will be used by provinces to eliminate pit toilets, expand classrooms, and repair schools. Also, R10 billion will go towards feeding over 9 million children daily, while we are improving menus, delivery, and local sourcing.

This budget reflects our constitutional duty and belief in education as the most powerful lever for transformation. I want to say this to the builders, the teachers, officials, parents, civil society, stakeholders, and members of this House who remain constructive in their criticism: This budget is for you.

To the breakers, I say, and I say again, if you cannot and you are not willing to build ... [Interjections.] ... please do

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not stand in the way of those who are committed to building. Of course, ours is about placing the interest of 13,5 million learners at the centre of every single thing that we do.

[Interjections.] [Applause.]

I want to thank the Deputy Minister who remains my forever-faithful copilot, the director-general, our national provincial officials, our public entities, our teachers, our stakeholders, and, most importantly, the parents of the learners that we serve and the learners of South Africa. Thank you for entrusting us with the kind of work that you entrust us with.

I urge you, hon members, as you consider your choices today, that you support this budget, not only out of party loyalty but in service of the children whose futures depend on it.

[Interjections.] [Applause.] Support this budget not for narrow political gains but because you are placing the future of South African children first. If you care about the future of South Africa's youth, you will support this budget because it is the budget that will fund their education.

*IsiXhosa:*

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Ndiyabulela ...

*Afrikaans:*

... baie dankie,

English:

... and thank you.

Ms K J MAIMELA: Hon House Chair, hon members, esteemed guests and the people of South Africa, it is with profound sense of purpose and unwavering commitment that I rise today to participate in this crucial Basic Education Budget Vote. This Vote is not merely about numbers on a ledger, it is about the future of our nation, the dreams of our children and the continued advancement of democratic gains we have so paint mistakenly secured over the past three decades. The ANC guided by the timeless principle of the Freedom Charter made a solemn pledge to open the doors of learning and culture to all. For 30 years we have diligently worked to honour that commitment, from the dismantling of the Bantu education to the establishment of a single nonracial education system. We have fundamentally transformed the landscape of learning in South

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Africa. Millions of children previously denied access to quality education now sit in classrooms, equipped with textbooks and taught by dedicated teachers. This is not a mere rhetoric, it is a tangible and measurable success story that stands as a testament to the ANC's unwavering dedication to its people. We have expanded access, built schools and provided opportunities that were once unimaginable for the majority. This progress is an imperative we must defend and advance with every fibre of our being.

The budget before us today reflects the ANC government's continued responsiveness to the critical needs of our education sector. We have seen significant allocation directed towards foundational pillars of learning, such as the integration of the early childhood development, ECD, into the Department of Basic Education, which is a landmark achievement rooted in the acknowledgement that the earliest years are the most crucial for cognitive and social development. Our budget prioritises expanding access to quality ECD ensuring that every child regardless of their socioeconomic background gets a strong start.

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We recognise that teachers are the backbone of our education system. This budget continues to support teacher development, training and welfare ensuring that our educators are well equipped and motivated to nurture the next generation. The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme remains a beacon of hope, attracting talented young individuals to the teaching profession particularly in critical subjects. This investment directly addresses historical imbalances and ensures a pipeline of a qualified teachers for all our schools.

The above mentioned is in stark contrast to the ideological and policy orientation of some political parties, particularly the DA, whose policies often lean towards austerity and a reduction in Public Service. While they may speak of efficiency, their track record in provinces they govern often reveals a reluctance to make the bold necessary investment in education that truly transformed lives. Their focus of narrow metrics often overlooks the systematic inequalities that still require significant public investment to overcome.

The Basic Education Laws Amendment Act is a critical piece of legislation that seeks to democratise our education system further. We demand its full implementation, Minister. If you

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are indeed a builder, you ought to fully implement that Act and the swift release of its regulations. [Applause.] This Act is vital for closing the barriers that continue to hinder equitable access to education. The Basic Education Laws Amendment Act empowers schools to adopt language policies that genuinely promote multilingualism and ensure that language does not become a barrier to learning, especially for learners whose mother tongue is not the primary language of instruction. This directly addresses the legacy of a system that privileged certain languages over the others.

Furthermore, the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act strengthens mechanisms to prevent discriminatory admission policies, ensuring that all children have access to school without arbitrary exclusion.

While the ANC champions legislation that promotes inclusivity and access, we often see the DA raising objections rooted in a desire to maintain the status quo. Even when it perpetuates inequality, their resistance to elements of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act demonstrates a fundamental disconnect from the lived realities of the majority of South Africa.

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Our constitutional obligation extends beyond providing education. It demands that we ensure a safe and protective environment for learners. The safety and wellbeing of our children in schools is nonnegotiable. This budget reflects our commitment to addressing all forms of abuse, ensuring that our policies and programmes are geared towards creating environments free from physical harm and emotional trauma with robust reporting mechanisms and support structures.

We urge that the department should increasingly focus on the mental health of our learners, providing counselling and support services to address the growing challenges faced by our youth.

Access to education is not just about having school building, it is about ensuring learners are nourished and can reach schools safely and consistently. The national school nutrition programme has been a lifeline for millions of learners, ensuring that hunger does not impede their ability to learn. This government should commit to expanding this vital programme addressing the growing needs in Quintile 4 and

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Quintile 5, ensuring that more learners from vulnerable households benefits from a nutritious meal.

Similarly, expanding access to scholar transport is crucial for improving attendance and reducing the burden on families, particularly in rural areas and underserved areas. This budget allocates resources to expand this service to more learners directly enhancing their access to education and ultimately their educational outcomes. These are not luxuries, they are fundamental enablers of learning.

Finally, at the heart of quality basic education lies the ability to read, write and count. the ANC is unwavering in its commitment to improve literacy and numeracy in the Foundation Phase. We commend the department's inroads in rolling out mother tongue based bilingual education and extending mother tongue instruction beyond Grade 3. The positive findings from the pilot projects are undeniable. Learners who are taught in their mother tongue in the early grades demonstrate better comprehension, stronger cognitive development and more positive attitude towards learning. We are now strategically expanding this approach even into critical subjects like science, technology, engineering and maths recognising that a

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strong linguistic foundation is key to unlocking potential in all areas of learning.

The ANC's commitment to basic education is not just a policy, it is a deeply held conviction rooted in our struggle for liberation and our vision for a truly equitable society. Through this budget we believe that we will build on and advance our democratic gains, including opening doors of learning, investing in our teachers, prioritising safety, expanding access to vital services and championing mother tongue education. I thank you, House Chair. [Applause.]

Ms P P MNGADI: Chair, today the MKP stands to say Vote 16 must fall because this Budget is not for liberation. It is a Budget of betrayal, a Budget that keeps the poor trapped in poverty and denies black children their rights to dignity and future. This department loves to talk about digitised schooling in 2030 and transformation, but outside these walls, our children still learn under trees in school with collapsing roofs and using pit toilets.

Let's tell the truth, in the Eastern Cape alone, 1 168 schools still have unsafe sanitation. In Limpopo, Over 440 schools ...

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*IsiZulu:*

... azinawo amanzi ahlanzekile.

*English:*

These are not old figures. These are the department's numbers in 2025. Yet in 2025, the department left R620 million infrastructure grant unspent, and R2,8 billion meant for school infrastructure was diverted to disaster relief.

*IsiZulu:*

Ikuphi inqubekela phambili lana?

*English:*

Case in point, Makhaula Senior Secondary School in early 2024, a classroom roof collapsed ...

*IsiZulu:*

... kwalimala izingane eziningi.

*English:*

This school was listed as a priority since 2022 ...

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*IsiZulu:*

... kodwa asikho nesisodwa isitini esabekwa kuze kube yimanje. Isizwe sibhixwa ngodaka emehlweni sikhohliswa.

*English:*

The Auditor-General of South Africa reports paint the same picture every year; roll-overs, underspending and broken infrastructure promises. This department says it is preparing for a digital future.

*IsiZulu:*

Izikole eziningi aziyazi intuthuko. Akukho ngisho ugesi wokukhanyisa. Kwakuyisebenzisa lemishini yokukopisha elethwayo dololo. [Ihlombe.]

*English:*

Now let's talk about the National School Nutrition Programme.

*IsiZulu:*

Asiyikhulumi nje eyokuphakelwa kwabantwana ezikoleni ukudla okuyimpilo. Kuyihlazo. Kwezinye izikole kunabahlinzeki okuphela izinyanga bengakhokhelwa. Kuthiwa bazothenga ngani? Kanye nabantwana bazodlani ezikoleni?

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*English:*

The Minister brags that over 9 million learners rely on this programme in 2025.

*IsiZulu:*

Isabelo salolu hlelo singu-R8,5 billion. Umuphi umehluko ozobakhona abafundi belamba, abanye bequlekiswa indlala uHulumeni eyikhiphile imali engaka?

*English:*

This department loves to wave that matric pass rates like a victory flag. Let's note that 615 429 candidates obtained the National Senior Certificate, NSC, in 2024, and 60% of those Bachelor Pass are from Quintile 1-3 schools. But let's speak honestly, only 30,2% of learners passed mathematics above 50%, in physical science, only 29,4% passed above 50%, which is a drop from 31,2% the previous year. This departments hides dropout crisis behind the pass rate because while we celebrate the certificates, the APP admits that 49% of youth aged 19-24 who passed matric are in NET not in education, employment or training. For those who for those who dropped out before may trick that the NET rate is a strategic 70%.

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*IsiZulu:*

Alukho uguquko olulethwa ngenkohliso. Kuvezwa ukuthi kuphasiwe kodwa kukhona abafundi abangaka abaphumayo ezikoleni ngenxa kokuhluleka kwezikhungo zemfundo.

*English:*

Let's talk about the educators. The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme placed nearly 9 900 teachers in 2025. Yet provinces like KwaZulu-Natal still have over 6 000 teaching vacancies. In the Eastern Cape, those teachers waited up to 12 months for permanent appointments while learners went without educators.

*IsiZulu:*

Kunothisha abathweswa iziqu minyaka yonke kodwa bahleli emakhaya abaqashiwe. Kodwa othisha baswele othisha. Amagumbi abo okufunda aminyene ngesimo sokuswela othisha.

*English:*

In Gauteng, over 700 were not paid for months.

*IsiZulu:*

Sikhuluma kanjani ngemfundo enezigqi uma sisahlulwa ukukhokela othisha ngendlela efanele.

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*English:*

And what about the safety in schools? In 2024, the country was shocked as a report emerged of principals and teachers arrested for sexual abuse in the Eastern Cape, Free State and the Northern Cape. Yet, this department is silent about decisive action.

*IsiZulu:*

Ukuvikela izikole kumele ngabe kuhamba phambili. Ukuqwashiswa ngodlame olusekelwe ebulilini, ukuphepha kothisha nabafundi, umnyango wenzani ngalokho?

*English:*

This vote is the betrayal of the National Development Plan, NDP. The NDP promised safe schools and equal opportunity.

*IsiZulu:*

Kuyabonakala ukuthi kuyothatha iminyaka engaphezu kwengamashumi amabili nanhlanu ukuthi kulunge.

*English:*

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It promised universal early childhood development, yet over 16 million children remain excluded from registering in Early Childhood Development, ECD, centres because the budget only covers about 950 000 children. This Budget falls short in every aspect. One, it failed to fix unsafe infrastructure. It failed to deliver consistent nutrition. It failed to keep teachers in classrooms. It failed to bring real digital access, and it failed to protect children from abuse.

[Applause.]

*IsiZulu:*

Lesi sabelomali asibaseki abaswele. Iyingozi. Isiza abanezindlebe ezikhanya ilanga nezincelebane zabo laba abamnyama asebjika baba i-Government of National Unity, GNU.

*English:*

Today we are calling for a genuine solution with an allocation that truly benefits the people, not just a few.

*IsiZulu:*

Asisho nje ngeqholo sithi lesiSabelomali asizihlangabezi izidingo zemfundo eqotho.

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*English:*

The MKP rejects Vote 16 and demand a Budget truly worthy for the children of this country.

*IsiZulu:*

Akuqali vele ukukwatshaniswa. Aphi amavoti ethu. Kwacima imishini uMkhonto ugwaza. Amandla! Ngiyabonga. [Ihlombe.]

Dr D C CHRISTIANS: Hon Chairperson, hon members, South Africa cannot afford another decade of promises without delivery in the basic education. For too long, the ANC-led majority government has spoken the language of change but walked the path of neglect. The result? Pit latrines decades after apartheid ended, ghost employees consuming resources meant for learners, infrastructure budgets returned to Treasury, and literacy levels amongst the worst globally. This is not just a crisis of policy; it is a crisis of leadership, accountability, and political will.

However, we stand at the dawn of a new chapter, with the Minister at the helm, who brings not only integrity but urgency, Minister Gwarube, into this office, not with ego, but with open ears and a clear vision. Her listening and learning

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across all nine provinces laid bare the failures, and she began correcting them. Under her leadership, 97% of pit latrines identified in the 2018 safe audit have been eradicated ... [Applause.] ... That is real progress, not photo opportunities.

The National School Nutrition Programme was rescued from a R9,8 billion centralized tender disaster halted before the rot could spread. Interim guidelines for the Bela Act have been published, and draft regulations on admissions and capacity will soon follow. Let us be clear, this budget is the first in over a decade that reflects a people-first, not a politically expedient approach to education.

Despite this renewed vision, we are under no illusion that the road ahead is easy. The real storm lies in the wake of 30 years of the ANC's fiscal recklessness. The provincial education departments are on the brink of collapse. In the Eastern Cape, R550 million in education funds were returned to Treasury in 2016. Mpumalanga returned R312 million, and in 2024, some provinces still failed to pay school allocations on time. Now, these same provinces cannot fill educator posts, cannot maintain infrastructure, and cannot keep learner

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transport running. These are not just technical failures; they are violations of children's constitutional right to education.

Under this new Administration, a line has been drawn in the sand. The Minister has ordered financial recovery plans from every province, as we have already heard, demanding action on ghost employees, unfilled posts, and underspending. Ring-fenced budgets for infrastructure and learning support are no longer optional. Accountability will no longer be negotiable.

We are also encouraged by the firm policy direction laid out in this budget. Early childhood development, ECD, is finally being treated as the foundation of our education system. With a target to register 10 000 new ECD centres in this financial year, we are setting up our youngest citizens for success. Literacy and numeracy are being restored to their rightful place, at the centre. South Africa cannot compete in the Fourth Industrial Revolution when eight out of 10 children cannot read for meaning by Grade 4. Curriculum-aligned materials for Grades 1 to 3 are being prioritized. Inclusive education is receiving long-overdue attention. Special schools like Nokuthula in Johannesburg, a state-of-the-art facility in

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concept but decaying in reality, it is finally under scrutiny. School safety is being tackled at the national level through the SAPS DBE Protocol. This includes visible policing, gender-based violence interventions, and disaster management guidelines. For the first time in years, district officers are being asked to account for how they support schools and not just audit them. This is not reform in headlines, it is reform for outcomes.

Tuesday's ambush in the portfolio committee meeting exposed the desperation of those who cannot fault progress. So, they manufacture distraction. We witnessed the doomsday committee members of the ANC, EFF, and MK, turn the DA-run Western ... [Interjections.] ... and its MEC of Basic Education, not because of failures, but ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members. Please, continue, hon member.

Dr D C CHRISTIANS: We witnessed the doomsday committee members of the ANC, EFF, and MK, turn the DA-run Western Cape and its MEC of Basic Education, not because of failures ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members.  
Please continue, hon member.

Dr D C CHRISTIANS: ... but because they fear success ...  
[Interjections.] ... Let us compare. The Western Cape has the  
highest learner retention rate and a functional school  
infrastructure database.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, order.  
Hon members, let us give the member an opportunity, and if you  
interject, please do so in a manner that does not drown the  
speaker ... [Interjections.] ... I am making a ruling. You  
cannot instruct me what to do, hon member. So, let us continue  
with this debate in a manner that is befitting of the decorum  
of the House. Please continue, hon member.

Dr D C CHRISTIANS: Thank you, Chairperson. Provinces like the  
Northern Cape are plagued by persistent infrastructure  
backlogs, unspent conditional grants, and financial  
mismanagement. Where the Western Cape uses data to plan,  
others use it as an excuse for inaction. It is not a  
coincidence that when disaster strikes, from floods to  
administrative collapse, DA-led departments can respond while

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ANC-led ones appeal to Treasury with empty hands and empty excuses.

In the last year, we have also seen the DA-led innovations under Minister Gwarube. The Safe Schools App allows citizens to report pit toilets and safety concerns directly. The human resource development strategy for ECD practitioners is being drafted. The post-provisioning norms are under review to distribute teachers more equitably. A review of White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education is underway - a long-neglected policy, now, finally back on the table. These actions reflect a department no longer content with paper-based progress. Let us not pretend that the GNU is perfect, but it has given South Africa one invaluable gift - the opportunity to break from failures of the past and move towards evidence-based governance.

The budget reflects that the DA supports this Budget Vote not out of loyalty to a person or a party, but because we see a clear shift from excuses to execution, from slogans to service, and from silence to accountability.

In closing, we owe our children more than memorials and apologies for pit toilets, broken textbooks, and ghost

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teachers. We owe them action, protection, dignity, and opportunity. To the Minister, we thank you. To those still determined to weaponize dysfunction for politics, we say, your time is up ... [Applause.] ... The village is rising, the storm is passing, the children are watching, and this time, we will not fail them. Thank you.

Mr M SHIKHWAMBANA: Chairperson, let me take this time and greet the president of the EFF, the CIC, Julius Malema, commissars, fighters and the ground forces of the EFF. The EFF rejects the austerity budget of the Department of Basic Education. The basic education system is chronically underfunded, and the so-called success is just a cover up of a broken system of education.

We have repeatedly questioned the very notion of matric being an indicator of the success of the basic education system, because such valuation marks the deep-seated problems of basic education in South Africa. Every single year, an average of 1,2 million kids register for Grade 1 in South Africa, yet every single year, an average of 700 000 register to write for their matric. This means that, on average, each year, the public basic education system loses about 500 000 young people,

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who drop out of school. The department does not know where these children are.

We can only assume that they are going to swell to the ranks of unemployment, in the ranks of not being able to be employed, and prisons, and become criminals. The principal causes of these problems are multifaceted. Notwithstanding, the department must take the ultimate responsibility for its inability to retain learners at school until they pass matric. In light of these problems, therefore, the proposed budget is simply insufficient to deal with the extent of the challenges faced by the public education system in South Africa.

Rural and township schools continue to be disadvantaged by infrastructure backlogs, where there are simply not enough classrooms, not enough learning facilities, no laboratories, no computers. In many rural schools, they still use pit toilets. At Taung High School in Fetakgomo, Tubatse, in Limpopo, for instance, there have been no flushing toilets in the last over past 50 years of their existence. Yet, the same school produced 100% pass rate in the 2024 academic year.

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Nationally, more than 1 million children aged between 3 to 5 years are not enrolled in any kind of early childhood development and nutrition. And those enrolled struggle to go to these facilities, because transport remains a huge problem in this sector.

The lack of digital connectivity in many of our schools prevents a large majority of our learners from accessing cutting-edge technology, enabling them to learn. In your budget, Minister, there is no allocation for Internet and Wi-Fi to schools in rural areas. Yet, you claim the budget to be pro-poor. The majority of our schools in the rural areas that have connectivity of any kind are only for administrative purposes.

We continue to have a serious teacher shortage across the country. Approximately, 15 000 teachers graduate annually. However, the demand is close to 25 000, indicating a significant shortage, while your department prides itself on a budget that will continue to make our qualified teachers unemployed. Despite all of this, we still have thousands of unemployed teachers in this country. Please, make sense of this thing.

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The Minister came here and claimed to have supported the implementation of the Bela Act. Which Bela Act? When the Department of Basic Education here in the Western Cape told the portfolio committee that, for them to fully implement section 5 and 6 of the amended South African School Act, they are waiting for regulation from the Minister.

From where do you get instructions, Minister? Do you get it from the legislative instruments that are centre to your department or from the racist leaders of your party? Please, don't come here and claim to be implementing the Bela Act, when, in actual fact you are the stumbling block of the full implementation of the transformation and the inclusive act of our people.

The regulations that you have just published, Minister, are thoroughly unlawful and you know that you have received a script from AfriForum that they form part of these guidelines that you have actually published.

Corruption remains prevalent in the Basic Education Department. A recent prime example is the purchase of laptops

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at an exorbitant price in Mpumalanga. Another example of blatant misuse of public funds is the MEC of Education in the North West, who spent over R1 million to visit Italy for the Olympics, when the province was not even part of that Olympics. How do you expect us, in our right conscience, to approve a budget that will be managed by such careless and selfish officials?

The feeding scheme tender is fertile ground for corruption in the education sector, while learners' nutrition and quality of food remain of poor quality.

As the EFF, we call for the abolishment and eradication of tenders, as they continue to enrich politically connected people, at the expense of the poor, with inflated prices that do not match the quality of food that our learners eat in our schools. We, therefore, as the EFF, reject this Budget Vote. Thank you.

Mr S L NGCOBO: Hon Chairperson, excuse my coat. Hon members of the House, as a nation, we continue to grapple with deep legacies of inequality, especially in the education sector.

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The IFP maintains that no true freedom can exist, without access to quality, equitable and inclusive education. That is your mandate, Minister, to provide quality education. The Department's Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030 and Annual performance plan 2025-26 outline several ambitious goals, including improvements in early childhood development, literacy and numeracy, curriculum delivery and school safety.

These are commendable priorities. However, noble intentions must be met with the institutional capacity, adequate funding and implementation of accountability, to truly shift the trajectory of our education system.

The budget for the 2025-26 financial year of R218 million is an increase of 5% from the previous year. While any increase is welcome, we must also ensure that this increment is sufficient to meet the escalating demands placed on this vital sector.

Furthermore, the IFP has always emphasised the importance of strengthening the early childhood development centres, ECDs, recognising it as the foundational stage towards lifelong

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learning. Consequently, we are encouraged by the increased targets in the ECDs.

The ECDs will benefit from the approximate 1 million children who are accessing the registered ECD programmes. Thumbs up for that. The development of an early childhood administration and reporting system is also a crucial step towards better management of oversight.

The IFP ...

*IsiZulu:*

i-IFP ngeke ibe nolunye ulimi kwi-Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, Ngqongqoshe, awusebenze unjalo. I-IFP iyokweseka kakhulu ukuba kube nokufundiswa ngolimi lwebele. Engathi ungakunakekela lokho. I-IFP ngeke ize iyeke ukuqaphela ngeso lokhozi njalo ukunakekelwa ukufundiswa kwezingane zebanga u-Grade R, kunikezwe indawo efanele futhi bakhokhelwe abenza lowo msebenzi. I-IFP ifuna kubhekwe ukuthi kususiza ngempela yini isizwe ukuphasiswa kwabafuni ngo-30% esifundweni ezintathu kanye no-40% kwezine ...

*English:*

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... respectively, however you explain it. Minimum.

The IFP believes that deepening inequalities in our basic education system, particularly between no-fee schools and their well-resourced counterparts, require urgent and targeted intervention. We call for increased investment in rural and township school infrastructure, reduced learner-teacher ratios and strengthened support for educators, as these are essential steps towards dismantling the structural barriers that continue to disadvantage the majority of our learners.

Furthermore, the ongoing interference of the officials of the Department of Education, particularly, in KwaZulu-Natal, by the head of department is not assisting the department. He continues to behave more like a union representative than a senior government official. And that is severely undermining education co-ordination in the province, and we call on the Minister to urgently intervene and ensure that the HOD remains within his bounds, continue fulfilling his administrative mandate, and refrain from overstepping into union affairs.

Therefore, let us be true to our words. We want to assist in making sure that learners receive quality education. And let

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us do just that. In the light of the matters highlighted, the IFP supports the Budget Vote.

Ms J S PETERSEN: House Chairperson, greetings, hon members, Minister, Deputy Minister and members of the public. Today, the PA arises in support of Budget Vote 16 for Basic Education, not as a rubber stamp but as a call to conscience. We support this budget because we believe in the transformative power of education, but we do so with a firm demand that the department urgently addresses the plight of thousands of educators whose contracts have not been renewed, across provinces, particularly, in the Western Cape. Over 2 400 teaching posts are being or were cut due to budget shortfalls. These are not just numbers, but their livelihoods. They are mentors, role models and community anchors. Many of these educators have served with distinction, only to be told that their contracts will not be renewed, not because of performance but because of fiscal constraints.

This is not just an employment issue, it is a crisis of continuity in our classrooms. We cannot speak of improving literacy and numeracy, while destabilising the very workforce tasked in delivering it, Minister. The department's own annual

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performance plan, APP, for 2025-26 outlines ambitious goals, expanding mother tongue-based bilingual education, improving foundational learning and enhancing inclusive education. How do we achieve these goals when the experienced educators are being let go? The PA, schools and the department, to audit and absorb qualified contract educators in permanent posts where vacancies exist, reallocate budget savings from underspent infrastructure grants to retain the critical teaching staff and engage with provincial departments to explore cofounding models and donor partnerships. We must act swiftly, the longer we delay, the more learners will suffer from overcrowded classrooms, inconsistent teaching and diminished outcomes.

Section 29 of our Constitution guarantees the right to basic education, the right is hollow without educators in the classrooms. Education is not just a budget line, Minister, it is a moral line we must not cross. We ask the department to prioritise educator retention as a strategic imperative. Let us not build a future on the backs of discarded contracts, let us build it with the hands of those who have already proven their worth. Hon members, we support Budget Vote 16 because we believe in its vision. However, vision without action is an illusion. Let this budget be the renewed commitment to our

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learners, to our educators and to the promise of a better South Africa. We support, thank you.

Dr W J BOSHOFF: Hon House Chair, hon Minister and Deputy Minister, I think we could call the past three years leading up to 2024 as the Basic Education Laws Amendment, BELA, ward. It was the three years BELA ward. Now, the BELA ward has been won by the ANC, using its last majority in the South African Parliament, and the President put his signature to it in a highly contested time during the December holiday. Presently, the Minister is drawing up the peace accords, and she's doing quite well. However, we must recognise and take into consideration that the election didn't have a result in which, let's say the DA won the constituency of Education and the FF Plus won the constituency of Correctional Services and so on.

The President is ANC's President and is appointing to his Cabinet whomever he likes. Therefore, it's not a good idea, really, to put one's trust into a Minister who can be taken away from the post, it's as easily as though she was nominated to it.

*Afrikaans:*

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Wat hierdie stadium waar ons nou trek met die hele Bella-wet en met onderwys nou eindelijk doen, is om vir mense te sê, gaan terug na die wortels toe, en gaan vra jouself opnuut, wat onderwys is. Wat wil jy bereik met onderwys? Waarmee is jy besig? Is onderwys bevrying? Ja, natuurlik. Is onderwys die oordraag van kennis? Ja, sonder kennis is al geen onderwys nie.

Is onderwys 'n voortsetting van die kultuurgoedere van die gemeenskap? Ja, dis ten diepste wat het is. Onderwys is daar waar die gemeenskap homself herontwerp van jaar tot jaar, van geslag tot geslag. En onderwys moet daar in die gemeenskap gewortel wees. Onderwys kan nie sonder kultuur bedink word nie. Om te dink, daar is een objektiewe, oorhoofse, kultuurvrye onderwys, wat jy gebruik om een nasie te bou, in terme van universele waardes, is net nie so nie. Dit werk nie so nie.

Daarom sal elke skool een plaaslike kultuur, 'n eie kultuur ontwikkel, wat uitdrukking gee aan dit wat daardie gemeenskap van die onderwys wil hê. Wanneer die onderwys stelsel dit nie doen nie, kry mens dinge soos tradisionele skole. Dis nou wintertyd in die Oos-Kaap en in die berge is al honderde, duisende kinders besig met 'n vorm van kulturele onderwys, wat

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hulle nie in die skool vind nie. Dit is goed so en het hoort so.

Waarheen gaan ons nou met hierdie onderwys? Ek hoop ons gaan in 'n rigting, waar die greep, wat die Suid-Afrikaanse Demokratiese onderwysersunie, Sadtu, op die onderwys het, gebreek word.

Die verslag het dit reeds byna 10 jaar gelede bevind uit anekdotiese verslae van mense by skole waar onderwysers sê, man, Sadtu onderwysers is untouchable [onaantasbaar]. Hulle kan doen wat hulle wil. Hulle kom daarmee weg, want die kringbestuurder word deur die Sadtu shopsteward [verteenwoordiger] vertel wat hy gaan doen.

Ek hoop daardie mag word gebreek, sodat onderwys werklik die gemeenskap is, wat jaar vir jaar opnuut gebore word, versterk en verdiep word, en in staat is om die land met elke gemeenskap verder te neem. Dankie.

Ms L M NGOBENI: Good afternoon or good evening, hon members.  
Chairperson ...

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*Setswana:*

... bathing, re mo mathateng. A ke re tlogeleng baagi le bathubi ...

*English:*

... we are so confused because now ...

*Setswana:*

... baagi le bathubi ba robala mmogo.

*English:*

If there was ever a ministry that is an important ministry, is this one, and this government has dismally failed to deliver quality education in this generation. This is not just crisis, it is a crisis of epic proportions. It is not only unfair, it is unjust that we have political leaders who remain more committed to their party interest than to the future of our children. Minister Gwarube, every single Minister, since the dawn of democracy has stood where you are sitting, making the same promises to replace danger with dignity, you also did exactly the same thing, "I will eradicate pit latrines by March 2025." Well, target missed, deadline missed, another promise made, another promise broken, you've recommitted, that is fine. Today, our children still face the same deadly holes

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in the ground that have already stolen so many of our young lives.

So, while we are on the subject of the headlines of builders and breakers, maybe let me give you a suggested headline, end the excuses and flush the failure. While our children need more, they get less. The spending per learner has dropped by 5% since 2019. Every year we are told that our children cannot read for meaning, worse still, a lot of them cannot read at all for meaning in any language. Minister, the numbers do not lie, you and other colleagues have already said that 80% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning. I can attest to this because I have a six-year old nephew who attends the school called Emfundisweni in Alexandra. He struggles to read, and yet there is nothing wrong with him, there is something very wrong with this system. School buildings are crumbling. We know, infrastructure budgets are cut by almost 30% since 2017, pit and bucket toilets still shame our democracy, and so, our children continue to suffer.

Minister, hear this today as I present Action SA's support for this budget, only because without it, we cannot hold your tenure to the fire, to end the excuses and flush the failure.

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Our support is not a blank cheque, it is a demand, a demand for every child sitting in a freezing and leaking classroom waiting for the future that you all keep promising. So, for goodness sake, fix the infrastructure, fix the governance, fix the spending, stretch the rand and fix this one thing for the sake of our children. Finally, my colleague, Dr Letlape, has called for every member to use the public service, and maybe finally, the people of South Africa should compel each and every one of us to use public schools for our own children, and maybe then, we will once and for all end the damn excuses and flush the failure. Thank you, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, before I call the next speaker, I just want to make a ruling. There was earlier a point of order on a comment that the Minister made for a question that has not been asked yet. I consulted with the NA Table staff and the point of order is not sustained.

*Siswati:*

LISEKELA NGCONGCOSHE WELITIKO LETEMFUNDVO YEMABANGA LAPHASI:

Sihlalo weNdlu, ngisukuma nokusekela Ngcongcoshe

ngaloluphakelo timali laletfulile, ngekutsi likhuluma

ngekusita bantfwana labatinkhulungwane letingemashumi

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lamatsatfu. Uma sikhuluma ngalelinani sikhuluma ngesive lesikhulu. Laba labatsi abati kutsi kwentakalani bayamangalisa ngekutsi singaba njani nebantfwana labangetulu kwetinkhulungwane letingemashumi lamatsatfu uma loluhlelo lingakhuli.

Loluhlelo lukhule layofika etinkhulungwaneni letingemashumi lamatsatfu netisebenti kanye nabothishela. Angifuni kutsi sibuke emuva lapho sibuya khona ngoba lapho sibuya khona besinematiko lalishumi nemfica, kodvwa kwatsi nakungena hulumende wentsandvo yelinyenti ahlanganiswa onkhe amatiko enta Litiko Letemfundvo lavelonkhe lelineminyango yetemfundvo etifundzeni letiyimfica.

Akusiwo nemsebenti longentiwa ngunoma ngabe ngubani, ngumsebenti lomkhulu kakhulu. Lokusho kutsi kuleminyaka lengemashumi lamatsatfu nakunye sisebente kakhulu kute sifike lapho sikhona.

Siyabonga kakhulu nangedokhumenteni leyemukelwa eminyakeni lengema70 kwentelwa kutsi iminyango yemfundvo ivulelwe wonkhe umuntfu, ngoba ngalesosikhatsi bekufundza ingcosana kantsi futsi nelwabiwo timali lwahulumende belentelwa bantfu

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labayingcosana. Beyingafaki bonkhe bantfu baseNingizimu Afrika. Kodvwa ledokhumenti leyasayinwa yatolikwa kuMtsetfosisekelo lapho uMtsetfosisekelo ukhuluma khona ngemfundvo lephocelekile kusukela ebangeni R kuya ku 9.

Siyabonga kuMengameli ngokusayina i-Bela Act. I-Bela Act iletsa i-total transformation kulemfundvo yakulelive. I-total transformation isho kwekutsi bantfwana bavumeleke - njengoba ngisho kutsi uMtsetfo Sisekelo uvumela kusuka ebangeni lokucala kuya ebangeni lemfica. Kodvwa litiko lona lichubekele ebangeni lema-12. Kantsi loku kutawenta nelibanga la R libe yincenye nabothishela belibanga R nabo batohola ngekusho kwe Bela Act, lokungiyi leletse i-total transformation eNingizimu Afrika. Njengoba Ngcongcoshe ashito kutsi icale kwetfulwa kusukela ngamhla tinge 24 enyangeni ye Ngongoni 2024, kufuneka siyisebentisa ngekusheshisa ngoba ivula eminyango yekufundza ngalokuphelele.

Siyabonga kuMengameli ngekuletsa imfundvo yebantfwana basetinkhulisa kutsi ingene ngaphasi kweLitiko Letemfundvo Yemabanga Laphasi kute kutsi nangabe sifundzisa umntfwana simcalise kufundza enkhulisa asemncane kunekutsi acale

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sekangena ebangeni lokucala. Nyalo umntfwana utawucala kufundza asemncane ate ayongena lapho kucala khona emabanga.

ENingizimu-Afrika lokubanga kutsi bantfwana bafundze bangavisisi kusukela kulesikhatsi lapho bebefundza ngetilwimi tekubolekwa kwatsi nakufika ebangeni le 4 kwabese kwetfulwa luhlelo lokufundza nokundzisa ngeSingisi kantsi nabahlolwa bahlolwa ngelulwimi leSingisi lebasuke bangakalucondzi kahle ngalesosikhatsi seluhlolo. Loku kuba yintfo lematima nalengabayinkinga nakunoma ngubani.

Kungako silitiko sitakwenta siciniseko sekutsi umntfwana ufundza ngelulwimi lasekhaya. Ngoba bonkhe laba lekutsiwa benta kahle eskolweni bafundziswa ngetilwimi tasemakhaya kubo bese kutsi laba labanye bafundziswa ngetilwimi temave.

Lalabangafuni leBela Act ngulabasaphila etikhatsini takadzeni, labasafuna siphile ngokuhlukana. Kantsi leBela Act icedza konkhe loko. Iletsa i-total transformation kwentela kutsi wonkhe umuntfu abe yinceye kungabi nalosala ngaphandle singehlukani ngelibala nangemadolobha. Kungako ke silitiko siyisekela leBela Act kantsi futsi naNgcogncoshe ucinisekisile eme khona lapha kutsi uyayisekela. Imitsetfo leyashaywa

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nakungena umbuso wentsandvo yelinyenti ... [ Kuhlaba Lulwimi.]

...

*English:*

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): Hon Deputy Minister, please hold on a moment. Hon members, the rules of the House allow you to be in a position where you can talk but do not drown out the speaker. Do not make it difficult for the speaker to heard.

The House needs to be orderly because this debate is very important. The viewers at home are also tuned in to listen, so if you drown the speaker on the platform, she will not be able to convey or put her debate across. All I ask is, as you heckle, do it in a manner that you do not drown the speaker on the podium, that is my submission continue. Thank you.

*Siswati:*

LISEKELA NGCONGCOSHE WELITIKO LETEMFUNDVO YEMABANGA LAPHASI:

... Ngiyabonga kungivikela Sihlalo. Ngitsi, ngalesikhatsi kungena umbuso wentsandvo yelinyenti kwabukwa imigomo letawusita labaphuyile. Kungako kwabaneluhlelo le-scholar transport, ne National School Nutrition Programme, leyentiwa

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etifundzeni, ayikho phakatsi nelive kodvwa yentiwa tifundza. Bantfwana bayadla etikolweni njengoba Ngcongcoshe sekashito kutsi kuloluhlelo kudla bantfwana labatinkhulungwane letiyimfica.

Siphindze sakha netikolo letitawutsatsa indzawo yetikolo letisemaphandleni kufaka ekhatsi ema-boarding school. Uma emalunga lahloniphekile angavakasha etifundzeni angakubona konkhe loku kutsi kuyenteka nanoma kungeke kwenteke konkhe ngelilanga linye. Loku kusho kutsi bantfwana basemaphadleni baniketiwe litfuba lokutsi baye etikolweni, baphumelele bese bayoceceshwa etikhungweni temfundvo lephakeme.

Umbuso wentsandvo yelinyenti unikete Litiko Letemfundvo lavelonkhe kutsi aletfule luhlelo le-Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative, ASIDI, ne-Sanitation Appropriate for Education, SAFE. Kungako sesiku 7% ngekuvala imithoyi yemigodzi njengoba Ngcongcoshe ashito. Sesingatisho tinombolo letisuka enhloko kodvwa futsi akusho kutsi uma ubone sikolo sinemthoyi wemgodzi bese sowutsi tonkhe tikolo tinjalo. Sisebentile sakulungisa konkhe loko.

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Ku-Learning and Teaching Support Material, kwacalwa kukhulunywa ngalenzaba ngemnyaka wa2011 kutsi akwetiwa tincwadzi letibhalwe ngelulwimi lebantfwana lwasekhaya. Betihlangene tati telulwimi lomnyaka lophelile, bantjintja tonkhe tincwadzi letiphatselene nebuciko batibhala ngelulwimi lasekhaya. Kulomnyaka libanga lesine licalile kusebentisa letincwadzi letibhalwe ngelulwimi lasekhaya, kulomnyaka lotako liya ebangeni lesihlanu. Umtali utatikhetsela kutsi ufuna umntfwana wakhe afundze ngaliphi lulwimi. Tsine sitsi umuntfu akatigcabhe ngelulwimi lasekhaya nemntfwana afundziswe ngelulwimi lasekhaya khona atokwati kutsi buve nemasiko kuselulwimini lemuntfu. Uma sibavimba kutsi bakwati kukhuluma lulwimi lwabo senta kutsi bangatati buve babo.

Siyabonga kumalunga elikomidi. Ngaso sonkhe sikhatsi uma sivele phambi kwelikomidi emalunga asidvonsa ngendlebe kutsi sibuke loku nalokuya. Siyabonga kakhulu sihlalo kanye nemalunga elikomidi. Siyabonga Ngcongcoshe ngemhlahandlela losikhombisa wona, kanye nemcondzisi jikelele lohola litiko. Asibambaneni njalo ngoba kufundza kwemntfwana akusiyo ipolitiki, imfundvo yemntfwana kukhula kwesive nekukhulisa sive. Siyabonga kini nonkhe malunga ngako konkhe lenikushito. Siyabonga.

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*Siswati:*

SIHLALO WENDLU (Nks L S Makhubela): Siyabonga Sekela Mphatsiswa. - kunelilunga leliphakamise sandla?

*English:*

You are recognised hon member.

Ms P P MNGADI: Hon Chair, I just wanted the records to show that South Africa is indeed led by a national government of confusion.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): That is a point of debate, hon member. Order hon members. I urge you to raise your Point of Orders and Point of Privileges in line with your rule book. That is grossly out of order, and you know it, hon member. You had an opportunity to speak in your allocated time.

*IsiZulu:*

Mnu A T THEMBA: Sihlalo, sicela umama abe uNgqongqoshe.

*English:*

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): Order hon members. You are raising spurious points of orders, and I caution you to refrain from it. Hon members, the House is still in session, and I urge you to uphold the decorum of the House - hon members you cannot be conversing that loud! Maintain the decorum of the House as hon members.

*Xitsonga:*

Ttn S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu, ndzi kombela ku pfumeleriwa hi wena ku ya eka Holobye, swi lava leswaku mhaka ya Nawu wa Ndzulamiso wa Milawu ya Dyondzo ya Masungulo yi simekiwa hi ku hatlisa swinene leswaku lembe leritaka hi nkarhi wo fana na lowu, ku nga ha vulavuriwi hileswaku hi fanele hi endla hi ndlela yihi. Lembe leritaka hi fanele hi hlela leswaku masimekelo ya wona ma fika eka xiyimo xihi. Hikuva eka van'wana mhaka ya Nawu wa Ndzulamiso wa Milawu ya Dyondzo ya Masungulo onge i xiyimo xa xidyoho, eka van'wana ...

*English:*

... to some, the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act represents an original sin. Hon members, this afternoon I rise for the child who must dodge bullets to get to school, only to face more dangers within its gate. I rise for the parents who send

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their children to school, believing that it is a safe space that will empower them for good future, only for the schooling system to fail them. I rise for the teachers and administrators who do their best every day despite not having the most basic tools of trade.

As Rise Mzansi, we are committed to building a safe, prosperous, equal and united South Africa. Such a future is impossible while our early childhood development, ECD, centres and schools remain war zones. We welcome the recent tabling of a collaborative protocol between the department and the SA Police Service on school safety. However, the content of this plan, as I've said, is not new. The dangers faced by our children are not new. We do not need new plans, we need implementation. Therefore, we, as Rise Mzansi, will continue to keep a close eye on the implementation of this protocol and hold both Ministers of Basic Education and Police accountable at every step.

Rape, murder and assault on school premises must become a thing of the past, Minister. We have also seen increasing reports, Minister, increasing reports, warring reports of school children illegally taking part in sports betting during

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school hours. Hon members, the age limit on sports betting and gambling is not a frivolous rule, it was adopted to protect our children whose minds are still developing from the harms of sports betting and gambling. It is disgraceful that we have children who are already problem gamblers and gambling addicts. Their futures are deemed before they have even had a chance to build it.

We see this department to have a role to play in bringing innovative solutions to this problem, including through awareness campaigns and curriculum changes. Lastly, as I've said around the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, it's important that it gets implemented as soon, fully implemented, so that next year we assess it, and not continue with these debates of it being used as a political campaigning tool.

*Xitsonga:*

Ndzi khensile, Mutshamaxitulu.

*Setswana:*

Mr M A MAIMANE: Bagaetsho, dumelang.

*English:*

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Hon members, we hold this debate at a time where ... I think it's important when the Minister speaks about a budget for builders and those breakers to ask the question, what exactly are we trying to build? When we began with the inherent question of Building One South Africa, we understood that underpinning that question is that there are many South Africa's. There's South Africa upon which, if you've got money, you can afford a quality education, and if you don't, if you end up in Quintiles 1-2 and 3, the probability is that in certain instances your teacher to pupil ratio begins to exceed over 35 learners in the classroom.

There is a South Africa upon which infrastructure is so poor that our young people must swim to get to school, that may not all be exclusively a function of education. However, if we really are to break the back of apartheid, it is about time that we begin to ask ourselves the question how do we use this Budget Vote? How do we use education to ensure that we do build one South Africa? I hold the absolute view that the Minister is on the correct track in raising the question that says we must invest more in ECD centres. The reality of it is that we can promulgate Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, the

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funding thereof has not followed quite to the level that it should.

Minister, I'm here to challenge one notion that if you want to continue with this assessment in the subject of 30%, you will achieve in some instances the outcomes that Verwoerd wants, that others are set up in an education system that will mean they are not only unemployed, but they are unemployable. We must scrap this notion that you can pass a subject at 30%. You might argue, it doesn't quite exist, but in truth, if you were to assess mathematics, physical science marks, economics marks, you'll discover that if you assess them at 50%, you discover that the average past mark then decreases significantly.

Our young people are not taking maths and science when they get to higher education. In fact, the numbers thereof are dropping off, which means we are preparing a future where our economy has already indicated that the one sector that is growing is the financial services sector. Yet, it cannot employ simply because we live in a country that's without those skills. Minister, your predecessor promised robotics in

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school. I would urge that we begin to introduce that because our kids must be competing in the economy of the future.

Therefore, I stand here today because I honestly believe that this is a moment. It's a moment we can reform education and deal decisively with the idea of empowerment in education. Therefore, Minister, if you scrap the 30%, if you ensure that we fund especially poor schools, we can finally appreciate in South Africa the extrinsic value of education, which it's not just about learning, but it's also about preparing young people for workplaces of the future.

*Xitsonga:*

Ndza khensa.

*Setswana:*

Ke a leboga.

*English:*

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): Thank you, hon member. Hon member, Zungula, you are invited to take the debate forward.

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Mr V ZUNGULA: Chairperson, it's Zungula, not Zungula ...

[Laughter.] ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... mandibulele kwaye ndibulise.

*English:*

The department is critical in building a future free from poverty, unemployment and inequality. The core of the department, Minister, must be what learners are taught. It will never help to have a curriculum that does not speak to the needs of the economy, the skilling of the learners, including the mineral wealth of the country. History as written by us, must be taught to all learners. The learners must be taught about the role our kings played in the fight against land dispossession. They must be taught about Robert Sobukwe, Mama Winnie, Steve Biko, King Sekhukhune, and other leaders who fought for this country.

We must not be apologetic about teaching the learners about the evils of apartheid. Jews aren't apologetic about teaching their children about the Holocaust. Why should the department tiptoe around the issue of teaching all children about the

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real impact of colonisation and apartheid? The education system must be skills driven to ensure that by the time a learner lives metric, they have a skill they can utilise to make a living. There are basic skills that must be imparted, especially digital skills, as they are in high demand. The issue of sports is critical, Minister, not all learners are academically inclined. There must be sports programmes like we had LoveLife when growing up. Scholar's transport is another issue that must be addressed. It can't be that learners have to walk over 20 kilometres just to get to school. Currently, in Rhino State School, Elliot in the Eastern Cape learners must walk over 20 kilometres to get to school. Minister, use the department as an instrument of economic transformation.

Currently, there are companies owning over 80% of the market share of the school uniform industry. There is no reason why co-operatives in the different municipalities cannot be positioned to supply uniform in their municipalities. Co-operatives belong to the parents of the same learners, and even if the department provides food at school, but if the learners go back to hunger at home, it will affect their learning. Minister, we plead with you protect ...

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*IsiXhosa:*

... abanantwana abangamaNazaretha ...

*English:*

... who are forced to cut their hair in contravention of their faith. It is very disheartening that in schools the faith of other learners is respected, but the faith of African indigenous spirituality is undermined. Hence ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... abantwana abanengulo ...

*English:*

... are ill-treated and demonised in schools. This is a widespread problem where everything African is undermined and belittled. Hence, township schools there is overcrowding, teacher shortages, lack of infrastructure, and pit toilets. These problems are not adequately addressed in this budget. That is why we are rejecting it. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr W M THRING: Hon Chairperson, the ACDP has championed the cause for education reform and parental rights in education.

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Today, this House will hear the lament of growing infrastructure backlog, with our classrooms being fuller and our teachers fewer because we have R129 billion shortfall. The education budget has been inconsistent decline and our spend per learner shrinks year on year. We consistently grow the incapable state at the expense of our children with poorer education outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

*Afrikaans:*

Ons kinders kan nie tel en lees nie, maar ons spandeer meer geld om vir burokrate werk te skep.

*English:*

Every child without a quality education increases the inequality gap that exists in this country. The ACDP implored the President on behalf of the thousands of parents, civil organisations and children who participated in the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act public participation process, not to enact the then proposed legislation into law. Our contention was, and still is, that the legislation does not prioritize the needs of our children and that it is an administrative act that gives jobs to cadres. It is a bureaucratic nightmare that prioritises spending on the wrong

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priorities. What we need is to build more schools where the mother tongue of the learner is promoted. What we need is to employ more teachers to reduce the high teacher-learner ratio in a country where the school dropout rate stood at 40% in 2024. This legislation, the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act will punish parents for being poor. Consider this how many disadvantaged parents does the state plan to put in jail because their children are not in school because of poverty rather than wilful neglect. Criminalising poor parents for being poor is not a deterrent to school absenteeism.

Education reform is what the ACDP champions and the freedom in education is a principle that removes the burden from the state and provides for innovation and education entrepreneurship that will improve our economy. This is the bridge, the education bridge that we will have to build over the troubled waters of a broken education system. And to fulfil the promise that we, as lawmakers and parents have made, that is to build a better tomorrow for our children in this country. Hon Minister, I also again wish to implore you in these few seconds that I have, to honour your commitment to remember Joshua Peterson, a school pupil from the area of

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Maron Ridge that was stabbed and left paralysed. Honour your commitment to intervene on his behalf. I thank you.

Ms T K BODLANI: Hon House chairperson, hon Minister, colleagues, fellow South Africans ...

*Setswana:*

... dumelang, bagolo.

*English:*

Today we consider an investment in our children's future. Hon members, this budget is not about numbers, it is about creating a society in which every South African child can reach their full potential by being given an opportunity, a chance to succeed in life. Minister Gwarube, I speak with great conviction that when you took this office, you took on the good, the bad and the ugly. But from where I am standing and what I have heard since arriving here today, you will be painted black for the sense of this department that happened even before your schooling careers.

*IsiXhosa:*

Qina, Mphathiswa.

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*English:*

So much could have been achieved if the young, educated, erudite members of this committee could make peace with their reality, working alongside an equally young and capable Minister ...

*IsiXhosa:*

... xolani maqabane.

*English:*

Reality is that the DA is a key partner in the Government of National Unity, GNU. The pain of these erudite gifted members of the portfolio committee is that they missed out on political and ministerial positions. [Interjections.]

*IsiXhosa:*

Xolani maqabane, tutwini maqabane.

*English:*

I regret to inform you that I cannot even tell you that next time, because the era of a majority of your political organization will not happen again.

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*IsiXhosa:*

Xolani.

*English:*

Hon Maimela, for your information, under the ANC-led government, my primary school in Moletsane, Soweto, where I was taught ...

*Setswana:*

... tikologo, dipalo ...

*English:*

... I am not that old that I would have been educated under apartheid. Hon Maimela, that school where I was taught in Setswana, my mother tongue was closed years ago and children of Moletsane who could walk to school are now forced to travel kilometers for ill informed decision to just go to former Model C schools because the ANC failed post 1994 to have the wisdom to immediately invest in township schools. Hon Maimela, you spoke about the provinces that the DA governs in. We govern in one province. That is the Western Cape and in the Western Cape you can ask the Auditor-General, our governance and good governance speaks for itself. Our ability and

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willingness to tell speak for itself. [Applause.]

[Interjections.]

Hon Mngadi of the MK party. Remember, you were crying at the wrong funeral. The basic education debate was not the place for you to cry about your stolen votes. The vote that you are crying about, you were crying at a wrong funeral.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): Hon Member, hold on, please. Hon members, you are grossly out of order. Hon Members, you are grossly out of order. You are grossly out of order you operate and participate in this mini plenary, guided by your own rules, and if you break your own rules, it means you do not want to participate, and I urge you. I urge you to refrain from the gestures that you are making and also drowning the speaker from both sides, from both sides. Hon members, I am going to name you. From now on, I am going to name you. Meaning you do not want to be participating in this debate because you cannot do what you are doing when you are on the platform you expect to be respected and you expect to be heard. Once you operate in the manner in which you are doing, it means you do not want to conform to the rules of the same House that you have adopted. Hon member, you are

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protected and continue. You are left with 30 seconds. Hon members, order. Hon members. It is well within her rights to request that her 30 seconds are readjusted. Thirty seconds, yes. Her 30 seconds, it is 30 seconds, continue, yes.

*Setswana:*

Moh T BODLANI: Ke a leboga.

*English:*

The unholy friendship between the EFF and the ANC speaks to their failure to understand that their Congress of South African Student, Cosas, days are over. They are now elected public representatives. You are now MPs. You have sworn allegiance to this Republic and your friendship of convenience has been displayed here today. Minister Gwarube you are fit for purpose. Carry on. We are right behind you and we support this budget vote. [Applause.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): Hon Shikwambana, I had indicated that I am going to name you, hon members because you cannot scream at the loudest of your voice and drown the speaker. I have urged you to conform to the decorum of the

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House, and that is what I ask of all the hon members here. Hon member low. You are invited to proceed with the debate.

Mr S T D LOUW: Chairperson, as a conscience builder and not a pseudo builder, let me greet you and the members present. Hon House Chair, hon members, distinguished guests and fellow South Africans, the Freedom Charter that was adapted 70 years ago, amongst its clauses, states as follows: "The doors of learning and culture shall be open to all". This Charter's clause demands for free and compulsory education as a driving force behind efforts to expand access to education in South Africa.

There is a significant and verifiable evidence of the ANC-led government's good work towards achieving this apex priority. Although the ANC-led government has, over the last 30 years, significantly and continuously worked towards attaining this clause in its entirety, we have a community of Ikhutseng in Warrenton in the boundaries of Magareng Municipality, crying foul to authorities for the construction of a secondary school to cushion the pressure of overcrowding from Mogomotsi Secondary School that caters for learners coming from three

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primary schools. It needs real builders and not pseudo builders.

The current state of Mogomotsi Secondary School is not conducive. Visible signs of structural defects, malfunction of abolition facilities, inadequate computer centre and school laboratories, which is designed for hands on learning and experimentation in various subjects, particularly science and related fields. Hence as the ANC we support the Budget Vote on Basic Education.

This Budget Vote stands for more than a routine allocation of funds; it reasserts the ANC's steadfast dedication to advance a just inclusive and high-quality education system that ensures every child is afforded the opportunity to thrive. As we reflect on the progress made, we must equally confront the deep-rooted disparities that persist across our schools' infrastructure and landscape.

This allocation must also speak boldly to the urgent task of equitable resources redistribution, prioritising historically marginalised communities in Taung, Galeshewe and in Pampierstad. It will ensure that every learner from the most

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remote rural classroom to the township corridor has access to safe, dignified and conducive learning environment. It is only through deliberate and targeted investment in infrastructure that we can lay the physical foundation for a meaningful transformation. I know there are those who get irritated when you speak about transformation.

The ANC stands that quality basic education is the most powerful tool we possess to break the chains of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is key to unlocking the full potential of every South African child regardless of their background or geographical location. This budget reflects our unwavering dedication to building an inclusive, equitable, high quality education system that truly serves us all.

A fundamental pillar of our commitment is ensuring that equitable resources allocation and robust infrastructure development will recognise that a conducive learning environment is not luxury but a necessity. Therefore, we commend the significant strides made by the sixth administration under the leadership of Mama Angie Motshekga who was the Minister of Basic Education. She made sure that, at the time, when there were complaints about pit toilets, out

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of 3372 total of pit toilets we were only left with 139 that overlapped to this financial year for the seventh administration, under Minister Gwarube, to finish the work that was done by Mama Angie Motshekga.

Her tenure made significant progress in ensuring access to basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation in schools across our nation. While all of these challenges remain, statistics indicate a clear upward trend in the provision of these essential services, transforming many previously disadvantaged schools into environments where effective teaching and learning can truly occur.

This restores dignity and creates a foundation for healthy productive learning. Furthermore, the budget accelerates the efforts in infrastructure development. We are not just building schools, who are creating the future. The construction of new classrooms is a direct response to the urgent need to address overcrowding, ensuring that our children learn in spaces that are conducive to concentrate in engagements, not congested but beyond classrooms.

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This government should invest in sports and recreational facilities. These are vital spaces that can keep our youth engaged healthily away from social ills that plague our communities, such as crime and substance abuse. A healthy body, and healthy mind go hand in hand in fostering well-rounded citizens.

The world is rapidly evolving, and our education system must evolve with it. This budget underscores our commitment to modernising education through comprehensive curriculum reform. We are preparing our learners not just for today's challenges, but for tomorrow's opportunities. The key aspect of this modernisation is the inclusion of coding and robotics in our curriculum, which is quite important. Minister, we need to know progress on how far you are with coding and robotics as included in our curriculum.

This forward-thinking initiative equips our children or will equip them with critical 21 century skills that foster innovation, problem solving, computer national thinking skills essential for participation in digital economy. It is not for you to say, when I was not here, what happened? It is for you to say, we are going to make progress in implementing robotics

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and this is how far we are. You are a Minister now and no longer the chairperson of Basic Education. Lead the department and take responsibility for anything as a collective and as a Minister who understands the rules.

Our vision encompasses building a developmental, responsive and labour-oriented education system. We are shaping an education system that not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates a deep understanding of our history and prepares our youth for the world of work. The reintroduction of our history as a compulsory subject is a testament to our commitment to foster a strong sense of national identity, critical thinking and appreciation in our rich heritage.

It should be Afrocentric history that reflects the real primitive years that took place during apartheid. During apartheid there was segregation of schools where we saw a minority group having special treatment, having access to resources, limiting education from our black children and not making sure that they fall under an Act. They came with an Act called Bantu Education Act that made sure it segregates, divides and gives our children limited education of religion and things they didn't understand while others were enjoying

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the benefits of the majority who are the black people of this country.

The three-stream model is another innovative approach allowing learners to pursue academics, vocational or occasional pathways catering to diverse talents or career aspirations. At this moment, Minister, you are supposed to tell us how far you are on collaborating with Technical Vocational Education and Training, TVET, in making sure that learners are ready to be absorbed by TVET colleges when they leave Grade 12, to respond to the current demands of the economy, as announced by the President of the Republic, which is your President, President Ramaphosa.

Our commitment to inclusivity remains steadfast. This budget must ensure that our resources are responsive to the unique needs of learners with disabilities and special needs. We are committed to developing an educational system that values every child, regardless of their abilities, and support in their teaching and their full potential. This includes early screening initiatives to identify special needs promptly, allowing for timely intervention and support.

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Furthermore, government is allocating resources for specialised infrastructure and learning materials tailored to the specific requirements of learners with disabilities. This is about creating accessible and enabling environments where every child can thrive.

I think it is quite important to assist the DA. The political ideological miscarriage we did when we got into the Government of National Unity, GNU, with those who care less about the motive force of the majority of our people, is what we are seeing today. The DA-led Minister has imposed guidelines that were not even coming from Heads of Education Departments Committee, HEDCOM, Committee on Basic Education, CEM, or all stakeholders.

We can tell Parliament today that the guidelines were rejected by the majority of our stakeholders who said, you need the regulations because regulations are enforceable, they are going to align with the Constitution of the country and they are going to expose the DA-led government department that wants our learners to give photos before they can apply for schools in Western Cape. They want to exclude them because they want to be special as a minority.

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Today the DA-led government of the Western Cape, through the Minister, is excluding and are making sure that they take the powers given by the Act and the law away from school governing bodies, SGBs, because they know that during apartheid 1994 they took every resources they had to the SGBs to run their schools. That is why today hon Boshoff is confused and speaking about initiation schools. He does not even know that our initiation is not done in schools like those who claim that there are cultures at schools. We get our cultures from home and we are going to make sure we embrace them at our schools.

It is quite important that as we adopt the budget, we take decisive steps forward, building on the solid foundations laid by the previous administration and accelerate our progress. We must unite in supporting the budget because the budget is speaking about the motive forces, the budget is going to supply teachers and learning trainings that are aligned to the economical demands.

The budget will give learners school material with immediate effect and the budget will respond to the deeply rooted

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problems that are confronting the villagers in getting transportation. It will also respond to the long-term policy of the ANC in making sure that 9 million learners are getting food, breakfast and medical attention.

This portfolio committee, united as it is, has always embraced collaboration and unity amongst us in making sure that kids have access to schools, whether you Quintal 4 or Quintal 5 schools, they are not special because the Constitution affords our kids to go there.

As a committee we are going to start with the Western Cape and make an example in making sure that all the schools that have been excluding our learners from Khayelitsha and Nyanga do include them so the budget can benefit them. I thank you.

[Applause.]

The MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House chairperson, I want to say a sincere thank you to the members of this House for the constructive debate. Some of you were incredibly constructive in the things that you have raised. It is also clear from this debate that we can see who the breakers and the builders are. We can see people who are committed to building our country and those who are intent on sowing division and who are intent

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on simply breaking down what works. It is all right, hon members. I cannot help you with your chest pains, I am afraid, regardless of how much you may wish for a different outcome, I am your Minister of Basic Education ... [Interjections.] [Applause.] ... I am afraid I cannot help you. As much as I wish I could, I cannot.

Hon members, we must always welcome legislative oversight. That, for me, on a very serious note, is the importance of Parliament. The work of government can never go unchecked by Parliament. That is why we must always be under scrutiny, be held accountable by yourselves, and being asked the difficult questions. I want to assure you that my department and I stand ready to make sure that we answer those difficult questions and where we fall short, we will be able to account and say this is where we have not been able to meet the standards, because ultimately, in building this country, we must work together in concerts - we as the executive and you as the legislature.

So, there are key things that I want to quickly point out that I thought were incredibly important. Hon Mngadi is talking about the issue and the plight of Grade R teachers. I want to

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quickly say, hon member, that you are right in the coming into effect of the Bela Act, which has now made Grade R compulsory. We must do a lot of work to make sure that those teachers who are getting a stipend are now fully employed by the department, but also have been upskilled, and that is the work that we are currently doing and the work that we presented on the portfolio committee. You raised the issue around school safety again, which is part of the reason why we have signed the memorandum of understanding with Minister Mchunu and the SA Police Service to make sure that we have visible policing in our schools. Hon Shikwambana, I want to agree with you that austerity budgets and chronic underfunding are undesirable, but at the end of the day, I am sure you may very much be aware that we are where we are because of decades of mismanagement and decades of underfunding of the education system. We are where we are today, dealing with an insufficient budget because of these kinds of decades of years of mismanagement. And so, what are we going to do? We cannot simply put up our hands and say this has long been in the making. We roll up our sleeves and we say this is how we are going to do it. And that is why these financial recovery plans are so incredibly important that provinces must look at their budget envelopes and receive advice on how they are going to

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make sure that they meet their demands. But I agree with you, it is an undesirable place to be in, but ultimately, this is how we must proceed. We must make sure that we do not falter in our desire to make sure that every single South African child has access to good quality education. Hon Zungula, you mentioned the point ... I want to also make the point that the Bela Act, hon Zungula, would prohibit schools from forcing children to do and suppress their religious beliefs, for instance, shaving their heads as you have raised. And so, that point is something that we take very seriously and should be updated in the code of conduct in schools. Hon Louw, I want to assure you that the quality of your argument is not measured by how loudly you make it ... [Applause.] ... I have heard from you and some of the points that you have made, and I look forward to engaging further in the portfolio committee as we continue working together. But hon members, I want to end by saying the following. The constructive criticism that we receive in delivering education is important. The lives of 13,5 million children in South Africa depend on the choices that all of us make here in this room, and the choices that we make about the budgets that we pass in this room. And so, yes, this may be the political square where these kinds of arguments are made and digs are made, I hope that when the

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quiet is gone, and that when the political noise is gone, that we can realize the importance of the work that we do here and why we must hold ourselves to a much higher standard than some of us have today. Thank you. [Applause.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela): Thank you, hon members ...

*Siswati:*

Malunga lahloniphekile sesifike emaphetselweni enkhulumo mphikiswano yeluphakelo timali Yelitiko Letemfundvo Yemabanga Laphasi. Indlu iyaguca.

The mini-plenary session rose at 18:09.