

education

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Policy & Budget

Speech 2025



Ms. Lindi Masina (MPL)
MEC for Education

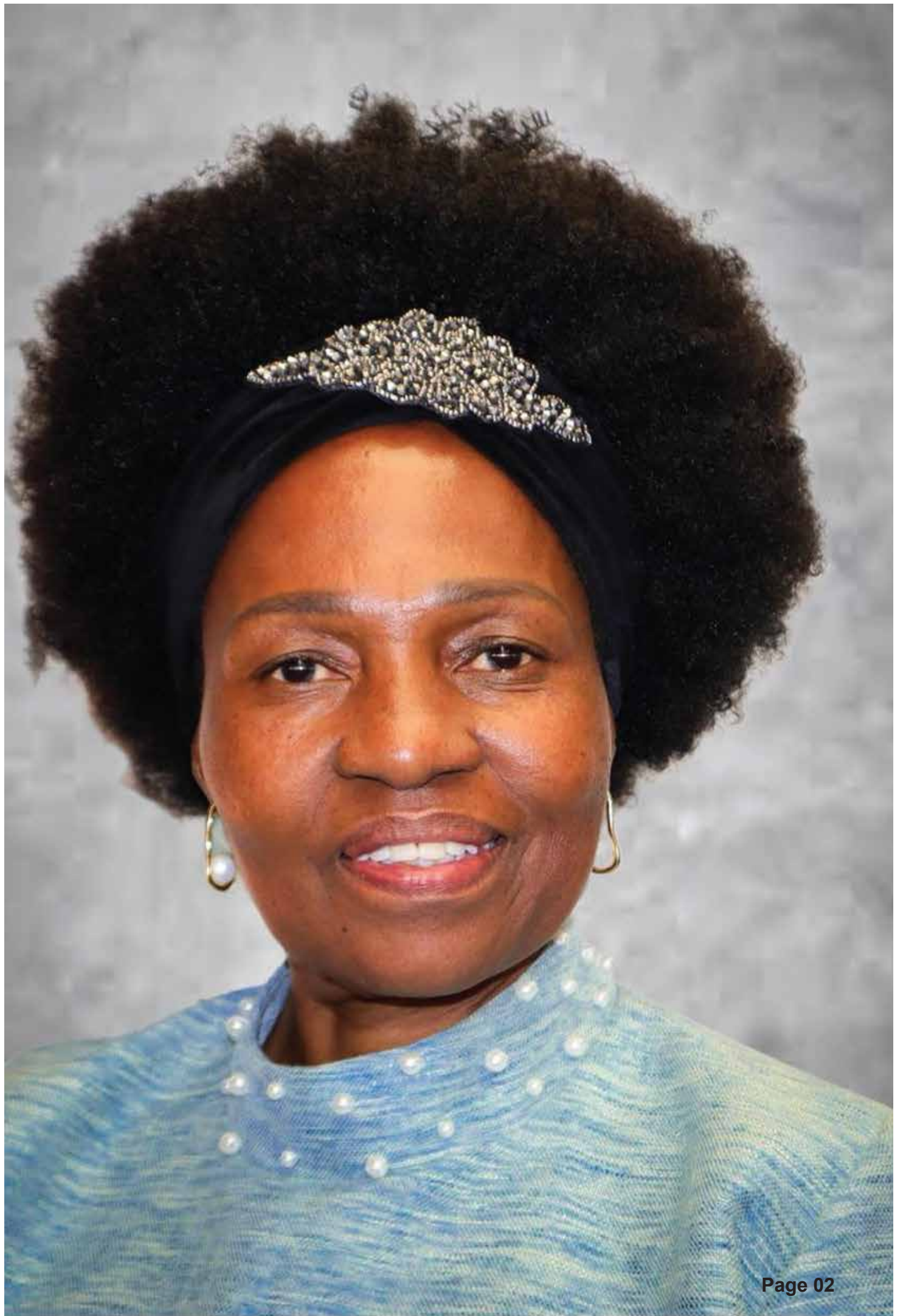


24 July 2025



A PROVINCE
THAT WORKS FOR ALL





THE 2025/26 POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH VOTE 7 DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION, HON LL MASINA AT THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE IN THE CITY OF MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY ON THE 24TH OF JULY 2025.

Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature Hon. M Masilela

Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Hon. S Masango

Hon. Premier of Mpumalanga Province, Mr. Mandla Ndlovu

Members of the Executive Council

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education, Hon. Thulisile Khoza

Hon. Members of the Provincial Legislature

Our Traditional Leaders present in the house

Leaders of different Religions

Provincial Secretary of the Governing Party, Cde. Muzi Chirwa

Esteemed Leadership of the Education Sector Unions

Esteemed Leadership of the Association of School Governing Bodies

Esteemed Leadership of Education Partners

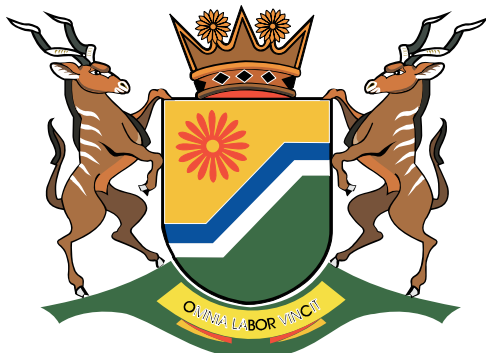
Acting HOD: Education, Ms. Gugu Mashiteng

Members of Senior Management

Distinguished Guests

Esteemed members of the Fourth Estate, the Media

Respectable Community Members who are following us through various media platforms



education

**MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

EDUCATION STILL REMAINS THE ULTIMATE EQUALIZER!

For the starters, let me quickly indicate that education is very important for the development of our nation and the country. Former President Nelson Mandela opined and let me quote him, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.'

The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success, but it can also contribute to nation-building and reconciliation and no country can really develop unless its citizens are educated.

As an Educator, I am very much alive to these powerful utterances from Madiba.

In his profound groundbreaking book titled PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED, the Brazilian Educator Dr Paulo Freire views education as a powerful tool for social transformation advocating for a problem-posing approach that empowers learners to critically analyze their reality and actively participate in shaping a more just world.

He argues that, I quote 'education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world' close quote.

Furthermore, education could be used as a double sword edge for oppression or liberation.

The responsibility of making this country one of the best on the continent and the world at large rests upon all of us. We all have a moral and societal obligation to change the life of our children for the better. It should be re-emphasized that education is a critical backbone of any nation in the world and we as South Africans have invested more on education, for we are cognisant of its transformative agility to bring about real change and development in all spheres of human endeavor.

And indeed, the future of any country rest on the shoulders of its youth that must be educated and empowered with all the necessary skills aimed at managing the economy, efficiently, effectively and proficiently.

We have a responsibility to ensure that we continuously influence the policy discourse of this country to argue for the introduction and implementation of Pro-Poor policies, radical policies that will obliterate the current two-nation economy which favors the rich and defecates on the face of the poor masses of our people.

It is with humility and honor to rise on behalf of the Department of Basic Education in tabling the 2025/26 Policy and Budget Speech before this august house.

To us, this moment is more than a statutory requirement, it is also a solemn responsibility to account, commit and chart a bold path forward in the service of our people through the provision of quality education.

We do so during a most touching period on our national calendar, the Nelson Mandela Month, when we collectively honour the courage and sacrifices of our founding father of our democracy and freedom for all.

His defiant spirit, determination and courage lights the torch of transformation that still burns in our hearts for freedom, democracy and transformation even today.

Dr Nelson Khotsoane
July 1918 - 5 December 2013



This historic context speaks directly to the core of our mandate to free the potential of every Mpumalanga residence, young and old.

Madam Speaker, in the gallery there are esteemed Principals of various schools namely, Sheba Primary School, Grootboom Primary School, Platorand Special School, Witbank High School, DM Motsoasile Secondary School and their choir conductors.

These schools flew the provincial flag high at the occasion of the National ABC Motsepe South African School Choral Eisteddfod as their school choirs were declared the best in the country.

Let me humbly request that they all stand up so that this house can acknowledge and appreciate them. Siyabonga Kakhulu.

As we gather here today, we are reminded that education is not merely a department's task, it is the instrument through which we affirm our dignity, equality and total emancipation of our people. Hence Dr. Paulo Freire said, "Education could be used for liberation."

This year we mark a profound milestone of the 70th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955.

In its enduring proclamation, it declared, "The doors of learning and of culture shall be opened for all." The revolutionary Freedom Charter demands that access to education is a fundamental aspect of personal and societal freedom. The Drafters of the Freedom Charter understood the patronizing role that Bantu Education played in the mass indoctrination and miseducation of our people, a system that aimed at producing a docile and subservient black human being.

It is therefore critically important to note that the Freedom Charter unequivocally demands that education be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children.

Today, we are ensuring that those words do not merely echo in our commemorations but find expression in every classroom, in every learner's dream, and in every community's hope within the Place of the Rising Sun.

This is the vision anchored in the African National Congress (ANC) 2024 Manifesto which envisages a multi-tiered, skills-driven education transformation: enhancing early-childhood education, boosting literacy and numeracy.

It advocates for modernizing digital and vocational learning, expanding access to post-school and adult education, and improving school infrastructure and student support.

Of significance, is that it emphasizes measurable targets, accountability frameworks, and alignment with labour-market demands.

Ours is a solemn commitment we are making to change the lives of our people through the quality delivery of education which is the cornerstone of our society.

As we reflect on this journey, we must also confront all obstacles for which we are determined to overcome in pursuit of the ongoing struggle for quality, transformation, and impactful education for all.

This is a living struggle that demands urgency, unity, dedication and opportunity for all.

Through this commitment, we honour the vision of those who gathered in Kliptown, whose desire was to advance an education system grounded in human rights, equity, prospects, and the spirit of Ubuntu.

Indeed, this is now our collective mission since education is the heartbeat of our democracy and nation.

Our presence here reflects both appreciation and intent to advance the process of total liberation.

We are here to acknowledge the steadfast, dedication, resilience and the extraordinary efforts of our teachers, support staff, learners and education stakeholders throughout the province.

This was demonstrated by the Class of 2024 in the National Senior Certificate Examinations whose performance surpassed all expectations by exceeding the anticipated performance targets and setting new benchmarks.

We will always congratulate the Class of 2024 because its achievement is par excellent and second to none.

This Class proved what can be possible when we work together, guided by purpose and inspired by a shared vision.

The Class of 2024 recorded an impressive **84.99%** pass rate. This meant that out of the **64 201** learners who wrote the 2024 NSC Examination, **54 567** passed, with **37 885** learners which is **43.4%** obtaining Bachelor pass requirements.

These are the learners who by now should have accessed Higher Education Institutions.

Their ability to rise above adversity, to serve with distinction, and to uphold the values of our democratic dispensation is an inspiration to the nation.

For this, we say: “Siyathokoza”. Your outstanding work did not go unnoticed.”

Indeed, if the authors of the Freedom Charter could rise and witness what we are building together today, they would be proud, not because we have reached the mountain top, but because we are climbing the toughest hills together, resolute and unshaken in our belief that education will enlighten the way.

The 7th Administration is resolute not to reinvent the wheel, but to build upon the firm foundation laid by those who came before us.

Therefore, the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the Department is aligned to the Government Priorities which are, Inclusive Economic Growth and Job Creation, Reduce Poverty and Tackle the high Cost of Living and building a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State.

Madam Speaker, to achieve these priorities, the Department will focus on:

- Improving access to Early Childhood Development.

- Enhancing literacy and numeracy.

- Special needs Education.

- Infrastructure delivery and school safety.

- Learner Performance improvement plan.

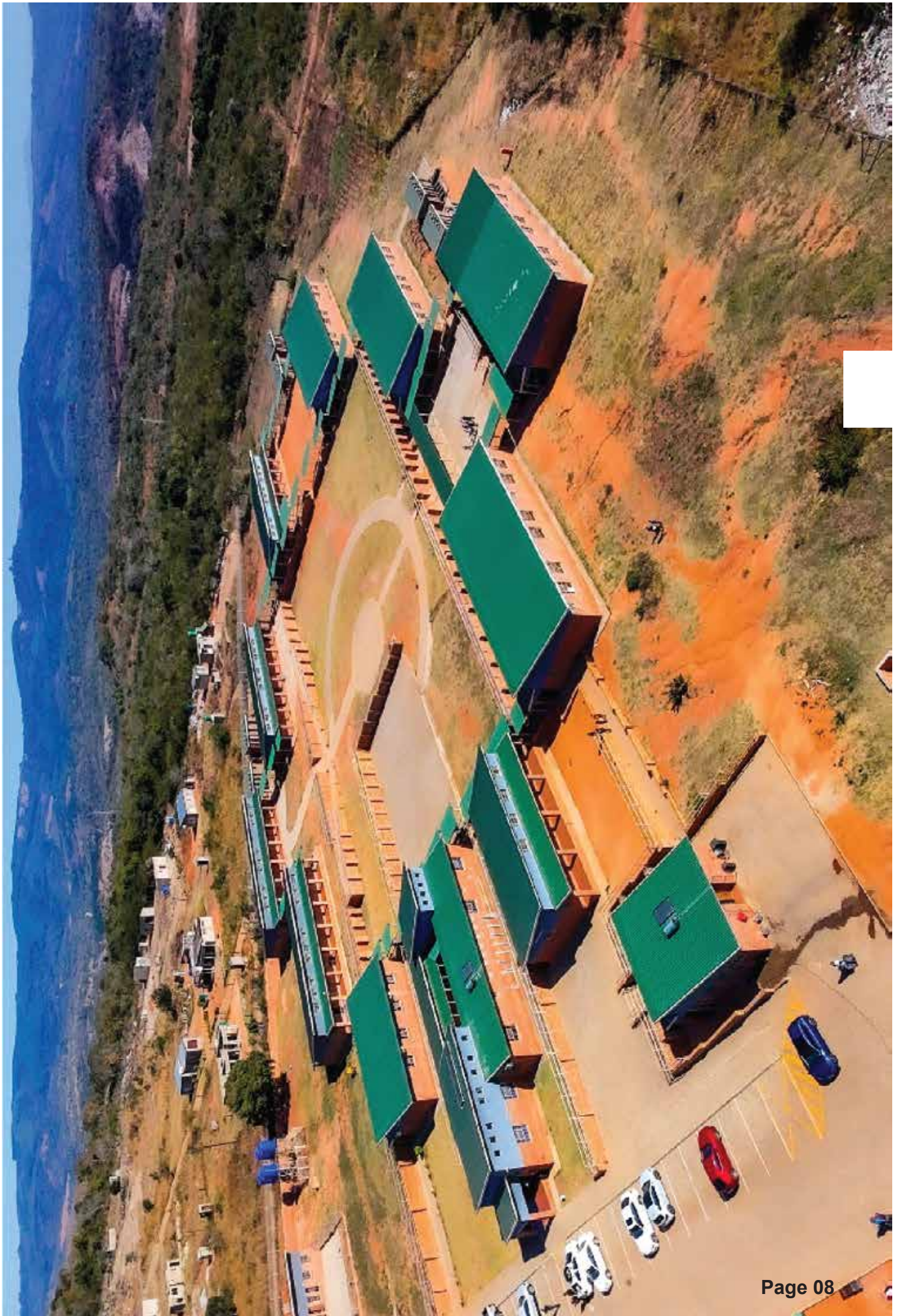
- School of Specialization

- School safety

- National school nutrition program.

- Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust and

- Basic Education employment initiative.



IMPROVING ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

This will ensure universal access to quality early learning programs and that every child benefits from at least two years of pre-school education before Grade 1.

In the 2024/25 fiscal year, the Department was allocated **R1.1 billion** to Early Childhood Development services mainly to subsidize 70 887 children accessing ECD programs and 1300 community based registered ECD Centers within the Province.

The Department is intensifying its advocacy campaigns to increase these numbers through recruitment and Bana Pele Mass Registration Program this financial year.

This will help to achieve the ECD targets in the next five years of registering 83% of children from 0-4 cohort and 95% of children from 5-6 cohort.

The Mpumalanga Early Childhood Development Institute has provided accredited training to 400 ECD practitioners on Occupational Qualification on NQF Level 4 in 2024/25 financial year.

To this end, we wish to express our appreciation to the President of the Republic, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa for signing into law the Basic Law Amendment Act (popularly known as the BELA Act) which serves as a progressive vehicle to transform the sector.

In relation to making the Grade R compulsory, sections 4 and 5 BELA Act require that School Governing Bodies must review their school policies.

The Department has issued circular 24 on learner admission for 2026 and expressed how schools should comply with the BELA Act in processing admissions.

The Mpumalanga Province has established learner admission committees at Head office, district, circuit and school level and admission period starting from 02 May to 30 August 2025.

Currently, there are **74 254** Grade R learners who have been admitted in **1122** primary schools. The province has only 65 schools which do not offer Grade R classes. Our efforts are intended to progressively introduce Grade R in the remaining 65 primary schools.

The Department has 95% professionally qualified Grade R Diploma in teaching at NQF Level 6 qualification.

R11,6 million was set aside last financial year for the rehabilitation and maintenance of ECD centers to ensure that they meet the necessary standards for early education.





ENHANCING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Madam Speaker, our plans to improve literacy and numeracy skills across all schooling phases, we need to equip learners for future success to perform above 90% of learners in Grades 3, 6, and 9.

Added to this, the Department will place more focus on strengthening the intake and pass rates in STEM Subjects by increasing the number of learners taking Mathematics, Sciences, Engineering and Technology, improving the success rates in the subjects and improving teacher capabilities.

Through the OR Tambo Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy (MSTA), the Department was able provide consumables and ICT resources to the MSTA schools,

We conducted a school-based MST Competition for 15 000 learners, district-based and provincial-based Mathematics Advancement Competition (MAC), Science Advancement Competition (SAC) and Technology Advancement Competition (TAC) for qualifying learners.

We recorded 100 lessons for Mathematics GET; Mathematics FET, Natural Sciences, Electrical Technology and Technology GET subjects.

We also conducted MSTA Advocacy campaign reaching 700 grade 5-7 learners to increase participation in MST subjects.

The Department trained 420 Mathematics Grade 3, 6 and 8-12 teachers on Content Knowledge (CK) and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK).

The Department is intensifying its programmes to improve learner retention rates, ensuring that at least 80% of learners complete Grade 12, thus increasing opportunities for further education and employment.

The State Funded Boarding Schools are equally adding impetus towards the attainment of this goal.

The Department will implement the Provincial reading strategy, train educators on content and methodology, provide coaching and mentoring for individual educators, conduct accountability sessions for underperforming schools and quarterly review sessions for districts

All these plans are embedded in the 2025 Learner Improvement Performance Plan for which the Department has allocated **R20 million** towards its full implementation.



SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Madame Speaker, we are determined to further improve access and quality of education for all learners, particularly those with special needs, to promote equal opportunities and to free their potential.

Inclusive education promotes and places emphasis on society removing obstacles, correcting attitudes and rendering quality services and continuous support at all levels with the aim of achieving educational outcomes and recognizing individual potential.

We are encouraged to report that the Department employed 21 therapists/specialist staff, 453 teachers, enrolled 4029 learners, screened 65 learners aged 0-8 for developmental delays and trained 900 teachers on Screening, Identification, Assessment (SIAS) policy.

The Department trained 160 teachers on Curriculum Differentiation, 520 teachers on Hearing Impairment, 450 teachers on visual impairment and 520 teachers on Intellectual Disabilities in 2024.

The Department will further train teachers including foundation phase on SIAS policy, Screen and support 100 children aged 0 - 8 years with developmental delay and/or disability, train 100 caregivers on implementation of the Learning Program integrated and differentiated lesson.

To further intensify programmes to advance the delivery of Education for Special Needs Learners throughout the Province, the Department has allocated **R520 million** in the 2025/26 Financial Year.

The Department is making the necessary inroads to fast-track the construction of the school of the deaf and blind at Emalahleni Local Municipality. Currently, Phase Three of planning and design is about to be completed and ready to initiate procurement during the fourth quarter.

The Department is rehabilitating the hostel facilities of Silindokuhle Special School and finalizing planning and design for the provisioning of additional boarding facilities and specialized classrooms.



INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Madam Speaker, the Department is making the necessary inroads in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies to create conditions that are favorable for learning and teaching to thrive throughout the province.

This intends to address the huge backlog on school Infrastructure, do away with unsafe structures, limit overcrowding and adhere to the acceptable Learner Classroom Ratio.

The Department managed to construct six states of the art boarding schools, moreover the seventh one will be officially handed over on the 5th of August 2025 by the Hon. Premier Mr. Mandla Ndlovu.

We are encouraged to report to this house that as things stand there is not a single school in our province that relies only on Pit Latrine as a form of ablution facilities.

Currently, there are schools which have both waterborne facilities and pit latrines which are only considered when such schools do not have water supply.

The Department has since the beginning of the last financial year demolished Pit Latrines in 24 schools.

Every effort is being made working with our stakeholders to find lasting solutions in this regard.

In the previous financial year, the Department managed to implement and complete 148 maintenance projects and 48 storm damaged projects.

This resulted in the reduction of the maintenance backlog by 7% which totals the backlog to 73% of total schools from 80% in 2024 of the completed maintenance projects.

In this financial year, we have planned to construct four New Schools, undertake eight Replacement Schools, provide new sanitation to 23 schools, Provide and Upgrade of Water Systems in 17 schools, undertake 221 maintenance projects, construct 218 Additional Classrooms (Conventional) as well as 26 Grade R Classrooms.

We intend to fix unsafe structures which include 53 old and dilapidated schools, most of which were built by communities and attend to 81 schools with asbestos structures.

We also made an undertaking to deliver 20 200 school furniture consisting of 18 250 learner furniture and 1 950 teachers' furniture.

We further urge School Governing Bodies to use the allocation for maintenance appropriately for the intended purpose.

Truth be told, several schools which are said to be dilapidated, when you go close, one notes that if maintenance was prioritized, the situation was going to be better.

To this end, the Department has issued guidelines and further trained Circuit Managers and Principals on school maintenance.

In addition to this, the Department will collaborate with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs to intensify the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign to mobilize communities to take ownership of schools by volunteering their time and skills to clean, plant food gardens and to fix broken furniture.

This is informed by the landmark Memorandum of Understanding that the two Departments signed on 04 July 2025.

We intend to use this campaign to improve the ambience of all our schools and surrounding environment.

The Department is also undertaking a school infrastructure conditional assessment which must be concluded in October this year.

This will assist the Department to ensure informed prioritization of projects going forward.

The Department will forge ahead with the installation of the micro-grid solar system in identified schools including monitoring the installation of the micro-grid solar system for Blinkpan Primary School in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality donated by ESKOM,

The Department has allocated **R1.7 billion** towards the improvement of School Infrastructure throughout the Province in this financial year.



LEARNER PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Madame Speaker, our efforts to ensure that our learners compete with their counterparts throughout the world rest on how we integrate our programmes with ICT.

To this end, uBuhlebusile e-Learning Programme and School Connectivity are but some of the progressive initiatives undertaken to achieve this imperative.

The Department is currently distributing 60 000 tablets to the Class of 2025. Once this is done, the project will for the first time be distributed to 80 000 grade 10 learners this financial year.

There are eight schools (two in each district) where all learners from Grade 8 to 12 are using tablets. This is part of the UBuhlebusile eLearning full-scale pilot Programme.

The Department is still looking at how this is unfolding to decide how the future will look like. Through this Programme, the Department intends to completely change the landscape of learning and teaching. Our desire is to be purposeful, progressive and act in the best interests of all learners.

The Department has allocated **R240 million** to achieve this in this financial year.

SCHOOLS OF SPECIALIZATION

Madame Speaker, the Department is still intensifying its Programme to increase and improve education delivery in schools of specialization.

Currently, there are 22 Agricultural Schools, 45 Technical High Schools, 101 OR Tambo Mathematics, Science and Technology Schools.

The Department has operationalized the Lucky Dube Secondary School for Arts in Msukaligwa Local Municipality.

The Department is determined to ensure that there is at least one technical High School in each of the 71 Circuits.

We are working collaboratively with the private sector to increase and improve schools of specialization including Agricultural Secondary Schools, OR Tambo MSTAs and to establish a mining school and schools of sports excellence.

SCHOOL SAFETY

School Safety is paramount towards the provision of quality education and skills of the changing world.

The Department is encouraged by the protocol that was signed by the Minister of Basic Education and that of the South African Police Service on 24 June 2025.

The Protocol has now been strengthened, refocused and reinvigorated with a clear vision to create safe and child-friendly schools.

It seeks to ensure that all schools are linked to local police stations and supported through functional School Safety Committees.

This Committee will also be responsible for ensuring that incidents are reported to the police.

It will implement school-based crime prevention programmes that address Gender-Based Violence; bullying; gangsterism; alcohol and drug abuse; and possession of weapons, deploying visible policing in hotspot areas, especially during high foot traffic times before and after school.

In addition, it will establish victim-friendly rooms and community response forums to improve support services for vulnerable learners; and improve the vetting of educators and staff in schools against the National Register for Sexual Offences and Child Protection Register.

Equally, we wish to appreciate the leadership of the Department of community safety, security and liaison under the leadership of MEC Jackie Mancie for way they support the department and intensify the search and seizure programmes.

The Department is allocating R30 000 through the transfers to all schools to enable them to devise innovative ways to fight crime.

We urge parents to be extra vigilant, talk to their children about their movements and the people they talk to.

NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME

Madame Speaker, the National School Nutrition Programme is yielding its intended results and is assisting in upholding the rights of children to basic food and nutrition in Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools.

The programme is currently benefiting 999 685 learners in 1 520 schools.

The Department has allocated **R982 million** towards the success of this programme.

Schools are encouraged to initiate innovative ways such as establishing vegetable gardens to complement this endeavor.

Equally, we urge parents to be always on the lookout of what their children consume on their way to school or back home. The advent of foodborne poisoning is something that we must all work to address proactively.



MPUMALANGA REGIONAL TRAINING TRUST

The Department through the Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT) will train and avail opportunities for skilled labour force including for Just Transition.

It will further train learners targeted for workplace opportunities and incubation programme, learners in the full qualification and train learners on SAQA skills programme.

The priority will be the artisan and trade skills; skills related to the Hospitality & tourism industry due to Mpumalanga's appeal as a tourist destination.

Green-energy and digital/4IR skills: including coding, robotics, drone operation, and digital/cloud literacy, vital for diversification beyond coal and enabling South Africa's Fourth Industrial Revolution response.

The Department has allocated **R92,5 million** to advance the programmes of the MRTT.

BASIC EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (BEEI)

Madame Speaker, we appreciate all the efforts that are being made by the Presidential Stimulus in the form of the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI) phase five where 200 000 Education and General School Assistants were appointed in schools throughout the country.

17 500 of these education and general School Assistants have been placed in our schools within the Province.

All properly and regular appointed participants have been paid their first stipend. The Department is on top of this programme, after putting in place all policies and guidelines.

CHALLENGES

In some of our schools we do have challenges, such as:

The protracted community protests in some parts of the province are a serious threat to the attainment of our goals.

Continuous disruptions of schools by some members of the communities remain a grave concern. Crime, violence, bullying incidents of corporal punishment, and breaking in schools are some of the issues that take us backwards.

We must work together to free our schools from anything that has the potential to hinder learning and teaching.

Let's free our schools from these challenges, work with community leaders and traditional leaders including non-governmental organizations.

The issue of time on tasks must be a priority, let us make it our responsibility that teachers are motivated to be in class teaching throughout the school calendar days.

CONCLUSION

Madame Speaker, we remain steadfast in ensuring that education delivery is done in a manner that directly responds towards the attainment of the current administration priorities which primarily include the economic growth rate.

Indeed, all the programmes mentioned above are confirmation of our intent to move at a greater speed towards a better tomorrow and a better world. All that we need to do is to act in unity to improve the delivery of education.

In this regard, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Ms Thulisile Khoza and to the Hon. Members of the Committee including my colleagues in the Executive Council. Their insight and guidance are always appreciated.

We also wish to extend our appreciation to the former MEC Ms. Cathy Dlamini.

We are grateful to all education stakeholders including but not limited to the leadership of the Education Sector Unions, Association of School Governing Bodies, Learner Formation, Religious Leadership as well as that of the Moral Regeneration Movement, Business Sector for their support.

I must say that I am grateful to the management and the entire working force of the department for their commitment and dedication. These are men and women who go an extra mile at times under challenging circumstances to improve the delivery of teaching and learning in our beautiful province.

This was not going to be possible if it was not for the support from my political home -the African National Congress Umbutho Wabantu under the leadership of the chairperson Mr. Mandla Ndlovu the Premier of the Place of the Rising Sun and the Provincial secretary, Cde Muzi Gibson Chirwa.

Thank you leadership for your caring and intellectual prowess and support.

We owe great gratitude to every member and citizen of our province including my family for committing to make education thrive in our Province.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE DEPUTY PRESIDENT MABUZA

As I am about to close, I wish to pay tribute to the late Comrade DD Mabuza, a visionary leader, educator, and committed servant of the people.

As a former MEC for Education and Premier of the Province, he championed the transformation of education by integrating fragmented systems, promoting inclusivity, and breaking down racial barriers in schools.

His passion for Mathematics and Science led to the establishment of the OR Tambo Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy and the promotion of these subjects across over 100 schools in the province.

His legacy lives on through improved learner outcomes and a generation of youth empowered by quality education.

DD Mabuza believed in collaborative governance, fostering strong partnerships with unions, parents, and the private sector to ensure a functional and inclusive education system.

He spearheaded innovative interventions such as fully resourced boarding schools for rural learners

and the Mpumalanga International Bursary Programme, which expanded access to higher education locally and abroad.

His unwavering commitment to equality, access, and educational excellence remains a guiding light for the sector.

The Department calls on all stakeholders to honour his legacy by advancing quality education and supporting the implementation of the BELA Act. In honoring his spirit, we recommit our target of 90% pass rate with 50% bachelor requirement achievement.

May His Soul Rest in Peace!

Madame Speaker, I therefore request that this august house grants approval for the Mpumalanga Department of Education to utilize the allocated 28 billion 732 million and 642 thousand Rands to improve the delivery of education throughout the province.

Ngiyabonga.



SUMMARY OF THE 2025 BUDGET ALLOCATION

Programme	2025/26
Equitable shares	25 806 918
Conditional Grant	2 604 255
Own Revenue	321 468
EIG	1 366 715
HIV&AIDS	19 845
LPID	34 482
MST	46 386
NSNP	982 451
ECD	152 262
EPWP IG	2 115
Social Sector EPWP	-
Total Payment	28 732 642





