



SUBMISSION ON THE 2015 ADJUSTMENTS APPROPRIATION BILL AND THE 2015 DIVISION OF REVENUE AMENDMENT BILL TO THE EASTERN CAPE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND PROVINCIAL EXPENDITURE

19 November 2015

This submission was compiled by The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) and Equal Education (EE); civil society organisations working in the Eastern Cape.¹

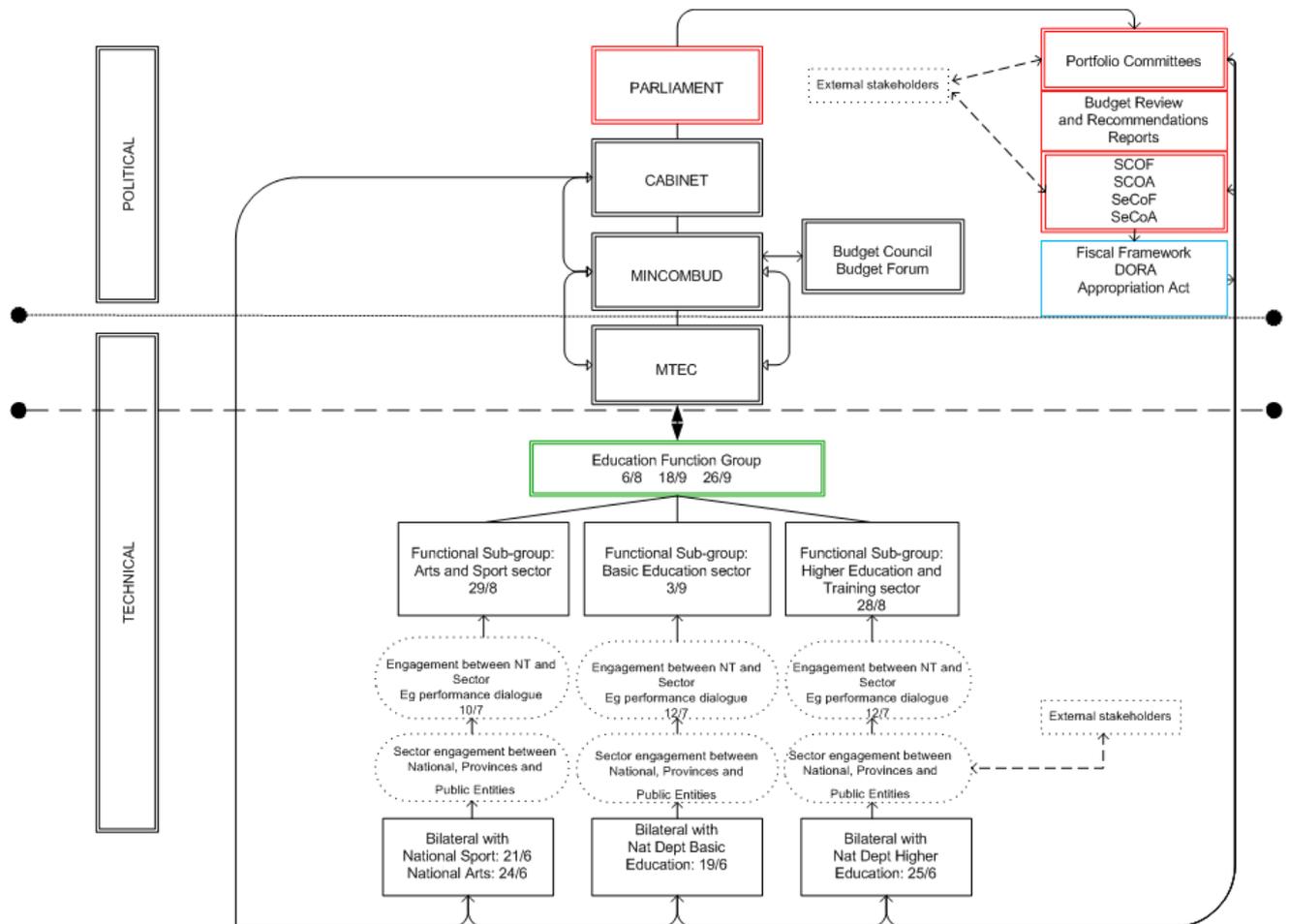
The submission is aimed at commenting on the Eastern Cape Regulations Relating to the Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure (hereafter the 'Norms and Standards'), the Education Infrastructure Grant and educator personnel provisioning. The report provides a brief analysis of the planning environment in which budget decisions relating to these key programme areas of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) are made as well as a brief analysis of budget allocation and expenditure trends within the same programmes. Key challenges in each of these areas are highlighted by pertinent case study examples emanating from field visits to schools in the province.

The PSAM and EE are grateful for the opportunity afforded to our organisations by the Committee to present this report and thereby contribute to improving key programme performance and accountability within the ECDoE in particular and public education sector in general.

The primary purpose of this submission is to highlight areas within the selected programmes that are in need of concerted interventions in relation to budgeting, planning or policy as well as to comment on the adjusted appropriations and outcomes of the 2014/15 budget. The current interventions by the Eastern Cape Treasury and Office of the Premier represent fundamental efforts in the struggle to improve education in the province. In recognition of the important role of a multi-stakeholder approach in supporting such interventions, both EE and the PSAM are dedicated to promoting and supporting effective planning and budgeting in addressing infrastructure needs and, as such, will endeavour to play a complementary role in provincial oversight processes (see Figure 1 below).

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Figure 1: National Treasury, extracted from Budlender, D. 2014²



GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Education Infrastructure Grant

Finding: The Eastern Cape Department of Education has under-spent on the crucial Education Infrastructure Grant in 2014/15 by 15.4% and is projected to under spend on the 2015/16 allocation. This is despite previous positive expenditure in this grant.

Recommendation: Additional financial management support is imperative to ensure sustained improvement in expenditure within this conditional grant. The Provincial Treasury, working with the MEC for Education must expedite the process of filling vacant posts within the infrastructure unit.

² This diagram is a useful guide in understanding where and how various stakeholders are envisioned as role-players within the delivery of education infrastructure.

II. Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure

Finding: While the Eastern Cape Department of Education has released a plan and accompanying budget for the implementation of the Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure, several key areas of information are missing or inaccurate. Furthermore, the Department is vastly behind on its implementation of the plan and is not on track to meet the deadline prescribed for providing schools with water, sanitation and electricity and eradicating schools made of inappropriate materials such as mud and asbestos.

Recommendation 1: The Eastern Cape Department of Education must account for and amend the schools that are inaccurately listed on its priority list. These amendments must be publicised widely through departmental memoranda. Affected schools and communities in particular must be informed.

Recommendation 2: As the law prescribes, an audit must be conducted to ensure that additional schools that meet the Norms and Standards criteria are added to the provincial plans. Where audits have been undertaken, information must be shared with interested and affected stakeholders.

Recommendation 3: Finally, the Eastern Cape Department of Education must provide details of the schools that it has completed to date and provide revised estimates for the remaining school constructions that according to the Regulations must be completed by the end of the 2016/17 fiscus.

Finding: While the number of actors and legislative documents supporting school infrastructure development appears to be increasing in complexity and number- the amount of publicly available information on project progress is severely limited. This has the effect of limiting transparency around school infrastructure projects and limiting the degree of oversight that communities and schools can independently undertake.

Recommendation: Eastern Cape Treasury, working with portfolio committees and the Eastern Cape Department of Education must seek to regularly disseminate information relating to school infrastructure projects that is within the public interest. Examples could include;

- i) detailed, up-to-date infrastructure lists and quarterly performance reports by project from existing sources such as The Education Facilities Management System (EFMS)
- ii) The Infrastructure Reporting Model (IRM) database information containing detailed provincial Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) outcomes

III. School Rationalisation and Merging

Finding: While the Department clearly articulates the significance of the process of merging and rationalising 'unviable' public schools, there is no explicit indication of the impact this will have on critical programmes such as infrastructure development, scholar transport, personnel and the overall implementation of the Norms and Standards for school infrastructure. A hiatus and uncertainty in this process also has a direct bearing on the teaching load in small schools as these also often bear the burden of being multi-grade schools.

Recommendation: This detail must be explicitly incorporated into the departmental statutory planning and financial documents to avoid potential under-prioritisation at the expense of communities served by schools identified as 'unviable'.

IV. Personnel Provisioning

Finding: The Eastern Cape Department of Education continues to employ educators in addition to the establishment while simultaneously failing to eliminate educator shortages in critical areas. This situation necessitates multi-grade teaching in some contexts while contributing to the complexities of classroom over-crowding in others.

Recommendation 1: The Eastern Cape Treasury must be urged to expedite and facilitate the creation of a credible, efficient system through which the provincial Department of Education is assisted in the following;

- i. Cleaning out the personnel database and maintaining regularly updated and audited data to ensure credibility
- ii. Devising a post provisioning model that responds to the needs of the province
- iii. Projecting the medium to long term financial implications of the above and sourcing the relevant funding if this cannot be accommodated within the existing equitable share or contingency allocations

Recommendation 2: The Eastern Cape Portfolio Committees on Education and Provincial Finance and Expenditure must hold the Department of Education to account for failure to fulfil post distribution commitments over several years, resulting in unsustainable and inefficient personnel expenditure at the expense of other programmes.

THE ORGANISATIONS

Equal Education (EE) is a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members. EE works for quality and equality in South African education, through research, analysis and evidence based activism. EE's head office is in the Western Cape, with satellite offices in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape, and a strong presence in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. Since being founded in 2008, Equal Education has led campaigns aimed at the development of learning facilities; improved practice, content and access to teaching; the building of commitment and passion among teachers and learners; and improving the overall efficacy of South Africa's education system. Our focus and attention is directed by the interests of our members, drawn largely from working-class and poor communities.

The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) is a civil society organisation that aims to improve the provision of public services essential to the reduction of poverty by strengthening social accountability initiatives. The PSAM is specifically concerned with improving governance and public resource management in South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.³ This is achieved through the activities of three interrelated programmes: the Monitoring and Advocacy Programme (MAP), the Regional Learning Programme (RLP) and the Advocacy Impact Programme (AIP). The PSAM was established in 1999 and is based at Rhodes University within the School of Journalism and Media Studies in the Eastern Cape. The Monitoring and Advocacy Programme of the PSAM seeks to contribute to the progressive realisation of the rights to housing, health and education. The programme also focusses on strengthening public accountability mechanisms in the areas of environmental governance and local government.



Above Left: Zinc classroom structure at Amatolaville School; Right: Cooking facility at Njongele Junior Secondary School (Photos: Equal Education, Eastern Cape)

³ The PSAM currently has partnerships and country programmes in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Mozambique.

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NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND EDUCATOR PROVISIONING

“The sector’s policy focus over the medium term will be to improve curriculum delivery, providing sufficient learner and teacher support, material, and increasing the supply of qualified teachers. Accelerating the delivery and improvement of school infrastructure has also been prioritised.”-

-Budget Review 2015, National Treasury, p.65

*“The number of teachers produced each year has increased noticeably, but there are still shortages of teachers for certain subjects and age-groups... shortages are compounded by the fact that teachers who specialise in these subjects are not always assigned to teach them.... Geographically, shortages are acute in **township and rural schools**. The availability of teachers in all subject in all school requires ... (A)ddressing **policy blockages that prevent the deployment of teachers to teach where they are most needed.**”*

-National Development Plan, The Presidency, p.306-307

1. INTRODUCTION

This report primarily focusses on the education sector and schools within the Eastern Cape Province where the largest proportion of unsafe and inappropriate school infrastructure exists. Second only to KwaZulu-Natal, the province is also home to a substantial establishment of public schools and, by extension, educator personnel. In May 2015, the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) National Education Infrastructure Managements System (NEIMS) reported that 53% of all schools with no water supply are located in the Eastern Cape along with 73% of those with no ablution facilities. In addition to these key infrastructure problems, the province is also burdened with an uneven distribution of qualified educators⁴. In the recent past, teacher shortages in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth resulted in violent protest action by parents and community members.⁵

The schools profiled in this report are categorised as rural schools which contribute to approximately 50% of all South African schools and accommodate 30% of the country's learners according to a recent National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) report.⁶

The Division of Revenue Amendment Bill 2015 and 2014/15 Budget Outcomes

Over the past three financial years, the ECDoE has ostensibly progressed away from a pattern of recurrent adverse audit opinions and a history of disclaimers as pronounced annually by the Auditor-General (AG). In 2014/15, the Department was awarded a qualified audit opinion by the AG.⁷ There are several reasons that are likely to have contributed to what appears to be a positive shift in the ECDoE's financial management environment. These include the oversight, monitoring and evaluation performed by legislature and relevant Chapter 9 institutions as well administrative interventions by provincial and national government- some of which are ongoing. It is therefore important that the momentum of such interventions is sustained in the case of regular statutory bodies or processes (e.g portfolio committees) and that the supplementary capacity provided by extraordinary provincial and national interventions is institutionalised within the ECDoE (e.g. the Section 100(1)(b) intervention).

According to Section 12 of the Money Bills Amendment Procedures and Related Matters Act, the Minister of Finance is required to table a Division of Revenue Amendment Bill alongside the revised fiscal framework with budget adjustments to the Division of Revenue Act. Sections 30 (2)(B) and 31(2)(b) of the Public Finance Management Act also place responsibilities with provincial Members of the Executive Councils (MECs). For instance- where a national adjustments budget allocates funds to a province, the relevant provincial treasury is obliged to table an adjustments budget within 30

⁴ For the purposes of this report the terms 'educator' and 'teacher' will be used interchangeably to define one who educates or imparts knowledge within the schooling system. This may also signify office-based educators where the discussion relates to staff deployment patterns.

⁵ Mabela, Z. Sobuwa, S. and Chetty, A. 28 July 2015. Police, Residents clash in Northern Areas Schools Protest. *The Herald*, Front Page.

⁶ NEEDU (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit). 2013. *National Report 2013: Teaching and Learning in Rural Primary Schools*. 70 pp.

⁷ The objective of an audit by the AG is to determine the degree to which a department's financial statements form an accurate reflection of the entities financial position and performance at the end of a given fiscal year. In the case of a 'qualified' audit opinion- this is an indication that the financial statements contain material misstatements in specific amounts, or there is insufficient evidence for the AG to conclude that specific amounts included in the financial statements are not materially misstated.

days of the tabling of the national adjustments budget. Accounting Officers also have the onus of motivating accordingly for adjusted budgets.⁸

The analysis, findings and recommendations contained in this report are based on the following primary and secondary sources;

1. *Field visits conducted to Eastern Cape schools between 2014 and 2015 by Equal Education*
2. *Interviews held with various education stakeholders including teachers, parents, learners and members of school governing bodies*
3. *Statutory reports published by various government departments (Eastern Cape Department of Education, Provincial and National Treasury and the Department of Basic Education)*
4. *Reports from the Portfolio Committee on Education in the Eastern Cape*

2. THE NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE⁹

Regulation 4(6)(a) of the Norms and Standards states that the MECs of Basic Education must provide the Minister with an annual implementation plan specifying the manner in which the Norms and Standards will be implemented in their Province. This plan should provide for, amongst other things, the infrastructure backlogs in the Province and costed short, medium and long term plans with targets, including information on the upgrading of existing schools and the planning of new schools.

The Eastern Cape Plan forms a crucial component of the process of implementation of the Norms and Standards. The Plan should serve not only as a clear and guided framework for the spending and development of school infrastructure in the Province, but also as an accountability mechanism to equip Eastern Cape school communities with, amongst other things, the knowledge of what infrastructure items/improvements each school can expect to receive and by when.

The publication of the Norms and Standards Plan was greatly welcomed by various civil society organisations including the PSAM and EE. While this heralded progress towards the implementation of the plans necessary to address the province's chronic infrastructure needs- the plans and their accompanying project lists contain serious shortcomings.

Planning and budgeting for infrastructure projects within the province occurs within a complex environment that integrates various departments, and their directorates, implementing agents, non-government stakeholders and private stakeholders. Inevitably, this presents a challenge where strategic planning and management is concerned.

The Infrastructure Delivery Management System (IDMS) forms a fundamental component of all infrastructure projects. The IDMS provides for preparation of rolling three-year infrastructure

⁸ Treasury Regulation as per Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1999

⁹ Full title: (South African Schools Act, Act 4 of 1996): Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure Government Gazette No. 37081 Vol. 581. 29 November 2013. Republic of South Africa

programme management plans (IPMPs) which correspond to the three-year medium term expenditure estimates of the budget process. Simultaneous to this is the IDMS' longer time-scale, with ten-year user asset management plans (U-AMPs). Within the provincial planning context, the IDMS processes and documents are pivotal. In addition to this, provincial "conditions assessment" are intended to contribute to the National Education Information Management System (NEIMS).¹⁰ Importantly, while the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI- funded via the indirect SIBG) has a fixed term- as do the Norms and Standards- the EIG does not. Over and above this, the Education Facilities Management System (EFMS) at the provincial level is a fundamental resource that must be enhanced to ensure high quality infrastructure data is readily available.

2.1. INADEQUATE PLANNING INFORMATION

The persistent problem of poor quality information on which the ECDoE bases their planning was highlighted again by the Auditor- General in his audit report released on 31st July 2015. The AG observes that;

"Infrastructure needs were not correctly identified and prioritised as appropriate information was not used during the needs determination process"

and further that

"Projects were not effectively managed and monitored resulting in poor quality of infrastructure"¹¹

From this- it is not unreasonable to surmise that the EFMS is not maintained to the required levels of accuracy. The Department of Education's norms and standards implementation plan is not in accordance with the requirements of the regulations outlined in the Norms. It appears to be largely copied from the U-AMP, rather than developed from existing infrastructure plans and properly adapted. For instance, the plans themselves often refer to "this U-AMP". Moreover, the implementation plan includes FET colleges, the department's own head office, examination centres, district offices, and other non-school entities.

Additionally, information on the school infrastructure backlogs in the Province ought to have been gathered and analysed by no later than 29 November 2014, a year after the Norms and Standards were promulgated. Yet the Eastern Cape Plan states that *"there is no up to date register available"* of the backlogs. Instead it is explained that a contract has been awarded to a service provider to undertake the task of gathering this information. However, there is no indication of who the appointed service provider is, when work began (or is scheduled to begin), or when exactly the data will be available.

Pending the outcomes of the survey, information has been pieced together through the Department of Basic Education's report on the lack of school infrastructure in each province and the Education Facilities Management database. As of consequence, the ECDoE has unreliable numbers on which to

¹⁰ More detailed information pertaining to national and provincial infrastructure planning processes is available in a report compiled by Debbie Budlender *"School Infrastructure in the Eastern Cape; Actors, processes and sources of information"* , undated.

¹¹ *Eastern Cape Department of Education Annual Report 2014/15*, Report of the Auditor General, p.194.

base its backlog determinations. Additionally and disconcertingly, the Eastern Cape Plan has a paragraph heading (paragraph 4.3) called “*Backlog Analysis*” under which no content appears. This is a blatant and inexplicable omission. All of these deficiencies have a detrimental bearing on the usefulness of the Eastern Cape Plan both as a guiding framework for government delivery and a monitoring tool for the public.

Moreover, many schools in the Project List are actually cross-listed in the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) plans, a separate, indirect school infrastructure administered at the national level. For example, Sophumelela Junior Primary School in Keiskammahoek is listed in both the Department’s Norms and Standards implementation plan and in the ASIDI master list. This reflects either a lack of coordination between the Department and ASIDI or misallocation of sorely needed funds for other schools in need.

There are other apparent mistakes or failures of coordination between the Department and ASIDI. For instance, 49 schools are listed in the ASIDI master plan that do not have EMIS numbers in the Department’s master school list.

Other schools are listed in the Department’s Project List with completely inaccurate information. For instance, Jersey Farm Junior Secondary school was completely rebuilt a few years ago, yet remains on the Department’s implementation list for insufficient water and sanitation. The school leadership has confirmed that these are no longer needs. It is unclear why the school is still in the plans and what will happen both to the money that has been allocated, as well as the human resources devoted to planning for a school that is inappropriately included in the implementation plans.

The problem of inaccurate information and poorly co-ordinated plans is unfortunately not novel and has prompted several reports, each with the intention of underscoring the compromising impact that out-dated and/or incomplete data regarding infrastructure backlogs inevitably has on provincial school infrastructure projects.

2.2. GAPS AND OBSCURITIES IN THE PROJECT LIST

The Eastern Cape Project list names the infrastructure projects to be delivered to each school under a column described as “IA Programme Column”. However at times these description are incomprehensible (e.g. the description “EIRHIII” or CDC HS Recap” is not defined) and at other times quite unclear (e.g. “refurbishment” is referenced without any details as to what is being refurbished).

These vague descriptions render the plan of very limited value in monitoring the implementation of *the Norms and Standards* both by the public and by the very schools themselves that are address in the plans.

Whilst the Project List gives a cost breakdown per infrastructure item and per school, a significant number of columns in the budget field are left empty, or the name of the project does not appear.

Additionally the delivery date is not listed per year but per MTEF cycle. This would mean that a school that it is entitled to receive water within the first three years may only receive it within the first three year MTEF cycle, a date which stretches beyond the first three year deadline under the

Norms and Standards. It also means that even if schools are to benefit by 29 November 2016, they would still have no idea as to precisely when they will benefit.

Despite the legislated requirement that the provincial annual implementation plans must also provide for long term costed targets, the Eastern Cape Plan has only a minuscule number of infrastructure items budgeted for post the 2019-2020 MTEF period (at the 7 year mark). In the 2021-22 MTEF only 7 items are listed.

All of these gaps and obscurities in the Project List significantly diminish the ability to use the Norms and Standards to hold the ECDoE to account for timeous delivery.

2.3. GAPS IN THE NORMS AND STANDARDS LEGISLATION

The following case studies offer up-to-date examples of gaps in the Norms and Standards legislation. These gaps include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Schools that are partially but not “entirely” made out of inappropriate materials, but nonetheless pose dangerous threats to learners and staff members
- Schools that were planned and budgeted for in MTEF 2013/2014, but have not been adequately addressed
- Schools that are planned for rationalisation yet continue operating

These gaps in the law pose serious, including lethal, threats to learners and staff members. The following case studies document the issues facing schools that are not in the Eastern Cape Norms and Standards implementation plan, but require immediate assistance. They are only a selection of the schools in the province that are in such need.

Case Study 1 below encapsulates some of the experiences of the staff and learners at Kalalo Primary School. The school is amongst those that are not in the Eastern Cape’s provincial plan for the implementation of the norms. It has two buildings where students learn: one mud and one concrete. Had its two school buildings been separate schools, the mud school would be urgently addressed in the first time frame of the law, including ensuring water, electricity, and sufficient sanitation facilities. But because its school is not built “entirely” out of mud, it is not prioritised under the three-year time frame of the law, and no details are given for when it will be addressed.

Case Study 1: Kalalo Primary School

On August 19th, Mtundini Saphepha arrived at Kalalo Primary School and carried out his normal routine as school caretaker. After finishing his morning sweep of the school at 5:30, he went to relieve himself in the staff toilet. All of a sudden, the floor began to collapse beneath him. As he began to fall his head smacked against

the wall. Within moments the platform caved in and he fell into a pit of human waste, stale rainwater, and floating sanitary pads.

Mr. Saphepa frantically grasped the cracked floor, the toilet door, and the door frame, but he kept falling back into the pit toilet waste, drowning and struggling for his life. He eventually managed to grab hold of a small step in the doorway and was able to pull himself out to safety. He had been in there for twenty-five minutes.

When the clerk arrived and helped arrange for clean clothes to be brought to Mr. Saphepa, he took a stick to measure the pit: it was over two metres deep.

The principal of Kalalo Primary School immediately notified the Department of Education about the horrific incident with its toilet. The district sent officials to visit a few weeks after Mr. Saphepa's fall. They promised the immediate construction of new toilets. They even instructed the school and surrounding community to stop the construction of new toilets that they were funding with their own money.

More than two months after the incident, the toilets have still yet to be built. Moreover, the students who learn in classrooms in the mud building will continue to suffer. Currently, when it rains textbooks are destroyed by the moisture. When it's windy, it is impossible to for the teacher and learners to hear one another. In many classrooms, there are large holes in the floor that pose serious threat of injury, as well as live wires that are exposed.

"If our school building were in good condition, this never would have happened." Mr Saphepa explained. "I'm just glad it was me, and not one of the learners. I was old enough to survive, but if it were one of the children -- they wouldn't have made it."

Case Study 1 continued...Reports from Teachers

“There are 437 learners at our school. We are 11 teachers including the principal but we are not enough and this means that our classes are overcrowded. I teach grades 4, 5 and 6. Presently there are 50 learners in my grade 4 class and 45 learners in my grade 5. The physical environment within which i work is not easy. Our school does not have internet, a fax machine or landlines. There are only two ways in which we are able to contact the education district office in Mthatha, we can use our personal cell phones or we can travel into Mthatha about 65km away. Even then we have to use our own airtime or our own petrol money and we are not reimbursed

.... Although we do have fencing around our school it is inadequate as someone can easily jump over it. We have experienced many thefts. When our printers, fax machines and all our computers were stolen then we were forced to dip into our own money to purchase a new printer. And we have to take from our school budget which already is not enough. There is insufficient furniture at our school. Before lessons some learners will fetch bricks that they can sit on in class. When our children are writing their exams then they have to sit three in one desk. This is heart-breaking. We have now been helped because a neighbouring school has borrowed us some of their desks.

We receive quarterly payments from the department towards our nutrition programme. This money must go towards the cost of food, the cost of transporting that food, purchasing utensils and to pay our meal service provider who prepare and hand out the food to our learners. What we receive is no where near enough to cover these costs. We have not, however, received a payment for this quarter. I do not know why this is so but I am planning to visit the district in the next few days to find out.

Some of our learners have to walk quite far to get to school. Some walk a total of five hours to and back from school. On rainy days learners who have to walk far often do not come to school. When the Mbashe river is full then there are learners who are forced to stay home or risk their lives crossing the river.

Our school is composed of two structures. The one houses seven classrooms and is composed predominantly of mud and there is cement that placed over this mud structure. The other is a stable structure. The seven mud structure classrooms were built by the community in the late 1990's. I teach my grades 4 and 5 in the mud structures and my grade 6 in the other structure.

It is horrible teaching in the mud classrooms. I always feel a bit happier and eased when I have to go teach my grade 6 class because the conditions in the other structure are a bit better.

In the summer we have our rainy season. When the rain starts I know things are going to become terrible in the mud classrooms. There are holes in their ceilings so if the rain is very heavy it pours into the classroom. The learners will move from one corner to another corner trying to protect themselves and their books from getting wet. The moisture often destroys the books. Sometimes in the summer it can become really hot and stuffy and sweaty and I have to open up the door and the windows. But the windows are so few. If it is rainy and windy then I am forced to keep the door closed. It becomes so difficult to teach even for an experienced teacher like me. In winter things are also bad. The windows are not enough to let the light in and there is no electricity. This means that I have to teach my learners in the dark and my learners cannot see what I am writing on the board and they cannot see their books.

When the wind blows it feels like the whole classroom is shaking. I fear for my children because it is dangerous for us to be inside the mud classrooms when the wind becomes strong. I also become very scared. The noise that picks up is shocking and it becomes impossible to teach anybody. Everybody becomes so afraid of the wind. The learners complain because sometimes it is so bad that we are forced to leave the classroom.

There is a hole, almost like a ditch, in the floor in both my grade 4 and 5 classrooms. This makes it difficult to teach because in the one classroom the one hole is situated right in front where I have to walk. I can't focus on

my lesson because I always have to be alert, even when writing on the chalkboard. I once tramped into this hole and fell. Fortunately I was not badly injured. My learners laughed when it happened and then went outside to collect some soil and mud to fill in the hole. Some of my learners have also fallen when accidentally tramping into this hole.

It is difficult to maintain this mud structure. We try our best. The community puts plaster over the cracks in the walls but it is not long before there are cracks again. There are broken rafters, exposed wires, large cracks in the walls that run in all directions, there are pieces of metal lodged into the entrance wall serving as a frame to keep the wall from falling in. The plaster that has been placed over the wall is falling apart. As you enter the one classroom there is a huge ditch at the entrance so you have to be careful when you are walking inside.

I will have to continue teaching and my learners will have to continue learning in unbearable conditions. The conditions under which I teach my grades 4 and 5 are unacceptable. They make effective teaching and learning very difficult and sometimes impossible. These classrooms need replacing as a matter of urgency.”

It is also important to outline the intertwined/dualistic problems of infrastructure and personnel provisioning. As illustrated by a teacher at Kalalo, for example this creates issues of over-crowding (and under-utilisation of school space in other contexts) as discussed below. Furthermore-enmeshed within issues of inadequate and inappropriate learning spaces are threats to teacher and learner safety resulting from inadequate security measures in public schools.

In addition to the need to be forward-looking in making recommendations, it is rather telling that many of the problems within our provincial education sector have remained largely unchanged. The lamentations of the staff from Kalalo in relation to the very dire state of communication facilities is a serious issue both at school and district level.

In September 2012, the PSAM published a Strategic Plan Evaluation in which a primary finding was that several district offices in the Eastern Cape had limited internet and dysfunctional or unreliable fax and telephone services. This followed a brief survey of all 23 Education districts. The report emphasised the need for decisive provincial intervention given the direct impact this has on the daily operation of every district. The ability for ECDoE officials, schools and the public to communicate, access information and for the officials and schools to disseminate information is severely hampered by dysfunctional communication systems.

In addition to the administrative assistance provide to the ECDoE by Treasury and the Office of the Premier- the prioritisation of improving communication systems and supporting schools in this regard is vital and urgent.- This must include the identification of means by which to repair and undertake regular maintenance on existing infrastructure. There are existing performance indicators used by the ECDoE to guide this process within internal strategic planning frameworks. The development of both a plan to address backlogs within school and districts as well as comprehensive maintenance plan is therefore not beyond the scope of current interventions.

Case Study 2: Amatolaville: Report from a Student

"I am a 13 year old grade 9 learner at Amatolaville School located in Stutterheim, King William's Town Education District, Eastern Cape. When I grow up I want to be an astrophysicist because I love science and space. My class at my school is made of zinc. It is not nice to learn in a class like this. Where I sit, right by my back, there is a crack in the wall. The wind comes through quite easily. Because the wall is zinc the wind makes the whole class very, very cold. It is so uncomfortable for me and uncomfortable for everyone else in my class. I cannot learn properly, I cannot think and I cannot focus in these conditions.

When it is too hot we get easily tired of thinking and writing and it is super difficult. There are also the desks in my class that are broken and haven't been changed for a long time. You cannot sit properly in them.

You have this feeling as if you are left out. Why do others learn in better classes but we are left out? My classroom is not properly built and it is not safe. When it rains the water comes into the classrooms and you get so wet and you have to do this continued process of moving from one side to another side to try to stay dry. It is extremely disturbing. The first thing that I would change with this school if I were in government is to change the structure of this building."

The example above is a stark reminder of the impact of inappropriate infrastructure on individual learners' education. The difficulties experienced by learners and teachers alike on a daily basis at this and many similar schools in the provinces is an urgent call to action for all stakeholders, emphasising the need for fundamental change in the manner in which these challenges are addressed through improved planning and efficient expenditure.

Report from Staff Members (1)

"I am a teacher at Amatolaville School located in Stutterheim, King William's Town Education District, Eastern Cape. I have been a teacher at this school since 2011.

I teach science and mathematics and I teach in a zinc classroom located in my school. I am unfortunate because some of the teachers are able to teach in classrooms that are made up of proper material. It is very discouraging to teach in the zinc structure. When you leave your house you get into your class and you are discouraged even before you start your lesson. You try by all means to make sure that the learners do not see that you are deflated.

Just yesterday it was very hot and this was the first hot day in this term. It gets very hot inside that zinc class. The class is already overcrowded with about 50 learners, and it makes it difficult to breathe let alone teach in the heat. It is really bad and teaching and learning is just not the way it is supposed to be. There are holes in the floor and just yesterday one of the learners saw a big snake coming from the grade 4B to the 4A class. You pray that the snake won't come through the holes in the floor because this has happened in my class before. When a child sees a snake passing by a hole first he screams and then everyone screams and then the whole class is disrupted.

If it is raining everything gets wet inside the class and it is unpleasant. There is a hole in the wall near the chalkboard and the wind gets through there and also through the window. You cannot even teach because the noise becomes too loud. The wind makes the classroom all dusty and dirty and uncomfortable.

...I have taken a picture of what my classroom looks like and I showed this to my children. They ask me mama why do you teach like this. If I could speak with Minister Motshekga I will ask her can't she build us proper classrooms as soon as possible?"

Report from Staff Members (2)

"Amatoleville does not charge any school fees. We have 969 learners. We have 29 teachers and 2 practitioners for grade R. I taught previously but we very recently got a new teacher, so for at least six months I've been able to focus on the things I need to do as principal.

Learners come from as far as Amabhele, about 15km away to attend our school. The pass rate for the last few years has been about 85-95%. Even in the face of decades of crumbling classrooms our school has managed to succeed because of our committed and passionate teachers.

We have very limited toilets for learners at this school. There are only three urinals for the boys and five toilets for the girls. Without taking into account gender, that is 121 learners per toilet/urinal facility. We also struggle with overcrowding in classrooms.

We received computers from the department many years ago, but only one or two now work. And there's no space for them. We have no staff room and this makes things very difficult and it is sometimes very embarrassing when teachers need to meet with parents. Sometimes teachers have meetings in their cars.

We have a prefabricated structure that has been used since 1989 and which we continue to use. As early as 1991 we have applied for the building a proper school. We received one mobile classroom from the government in 1995. In 2005 Premier Nosimo Bhalindlela donated R200 000 to our school. We used this money to build three proper and adequate classroom blocks. In 2009 parents in our community came together and made whatever contributions they could towards building our six own classroom blocks. Later in 2011, business people in our community assisted us by sponsoring two extra classrooms.

Then the year after we wrote letters to two NGOs and an NGO called the Roundtable helped us. Thanks to them we were able to build another two classes in 2013. Now we have 25 structures at the school. But six classrooms are made of zinc. Our grades R to 4 have to make use of these zinc classrooms.

...

We went to our circuit manager about the infrastructure but when that didn't work a delegation of us visited the district in King William's Town. When we received no help we turned to the MEC for assistance, not once but twice. We composed a profile that shows communications that we have had with government dating back as far as March 2004 in which we have pleaded for, amongst other things, the construction of a proper school building. This profile contained atrocious pictures depicting the appalling state of the zinc classrooms.

We really try with the limited resources we have. You can see in our enrolment. We're one of the only schools in this area where numbers are increasing yearly and there's a reason for that. Parents don't just send their kids from a nice proper building to a ityotyombe (a shack). Parents tell me we're sending our kids to a shack school because there's real learning going on there. Our learners come back from Gauteng and come back to us and say thank you that we really prepared them to succeed. "

The principal of the school explained their proactive attempts to obtain assistance, approaching their circuit manager and compiling a profile of the state of their school for the MEC. The school was

subsequently visited in 2014 by a high level delegation of provincial officials with the objective of inspecting the school's infrastructure. Following several attempts to solicit intervention on the school's behalf, there has been no action and no feedback received to date. At the very least, the ECDoE must radically improve communication with individual schools regarding the state of lodged requests for assistance and- more importantly the status of schools within infrastructure priority lists. The lack of information is itself a challenge for schools and the communities they serve.

Reports from Staff Members (3)

I started teaching at Amatolaville in 2009. I teach in one of the zinc classrooms at my school. I teach grade 2. It is one of the foundation phases. We are taught to move between learners when we teach foundation phase. But my class, with 45 learners, is too full and it is not built to move around in. Assessments are almost impossible because learners can easily see off each other's scripts.

My classroom is built on poles and old flooring. There are a number of holes in the floor. My heel broke through the floor and I fell in the middle of a teaching lesson. The principal took me to the doctor but fortunately I was not seriously injured.

In May this year a whole side of the class wall collapsed. I was inside the classroom with my learners when it fell down. I was so scared. I came to my principal to complain. I almost toyed asking when my classroom will be replaced. I asked where else I could teach for the day.

On sunny days like today the snakes come out of the holes in the floor. You can see the snakes' heads and then everyone screams and jumps and the whole lesson is disturbed. When it is windy you cannot talk and the learners cannot talk because you are competing with the wind outside. And when it is raining outside then you cannot talk because the rain is competing against you. When the wind is bad you hear boom, boom, boom and you look up and it is like the ceiling is going to fall on you. It is impossible to focus on what you are teaching.

My teaching portfolios were already rained on when I left them in my classroom. My classroom is just not a safe space to store things in. My learners and I have to constantly shift around when it rains so that we can avoid getting wet.

It becomes almost impossible to complete the core business of teaching and learning. Last year the MEC for finance, Mr Sakhumzi Somyo, visited our school to help paint it as part of his 67 minutes of service in honour of Nelson Mandela. This was arranged by the Municipality. When he saw the conditions of the zinc classrooms he said that something must be done about this. He then called the MEC of Education, Mr Makupula to ask if he was aware of how bad and serious the situation of the zinc classrooms at our school was. My number one performance area is to create a nice learning environment but it is not possible to do so when I have to teach in a broken and falling apart zinc structure."

3. BUDGET OVERVIEW OF KEY PROGRAMME AREAS

The table below illustrates key performance across various programmes as at the end of the 2014/15 financial year. It is important to make note of performance in these areas alongside adjustments referred to in the 2015 Medium Term Budget. The following is, therefore, worth noting¹²;

1. An under-expenditure of 15.4% was reported for the Education Infrastructure Grant in the Eastern Cape
2. Where performance for provisioning of water, sanitation and classroom appear to have exceeded the targets- this is actually as a result of delayed completion of 2013/14 projects indicating continued slow delivery on provincial infrastructure projects
3. The targets for educator provisioning in the province was exceeded by 2 253
4. Approximately 1 256 fewer support/non-educator personnel were appointed in 2014/15 than the planned targets
5. The School Nutrition Programme in the Eastern Cape served 9009 fewer learners than planned for in 2014/15
6. The Scholar Transport programme (Eastern Cape) reportedly served 760 fewer learners than planned for in the 2014/15 financial year



Above left: Mud structure classroom wall at Njongele Junior Secondary School; **Above Right:** Classrooms at Amatolaville

¹² While points 4 and 5 are not discussed in detail in this submission- their significance is duly highlighted in the school case studies contained within it.

Table 1: Key performance targets and budget expenditure (2014/15)¹³

Programme	Performance Measure/Programme Objective	Performance Target (2014/15)	Actual Performance (2014/15)	Variance	Main Appropriation	Actual Expenditure	% of Funds Unspent	% of Funds Spent
Infrastructure Development (EC)					1,237,092	1,100,072	11.1%	88.9%
Education Infrastructure Grant (EC)	schools provided with water	157	242	85	1,177,914	996,571	15.4%	84.6%
Education Infrastructure Grant (EC)	Number of public schools provided with electricity	87	85	-2				
Education Infrastructure Grant (EC)	Number of public schools provided with sanitation facilities	154	180	26				
Education Infrastructure Grant (EC)	Number of classrooms built in public schools	763	821	58				
School Nutrition Programme (EC)	Number of learners benefitting from NSNP	1,755,000	1,745,991	-9,009				
Scholar Transport (EC- Transport)	Number of learners benefitting from Scholar Transport	57,936	57,176	-760	356,076			
Norms and Standards ASIDI (DBE)	<i>(REFER TO NARRATIVE FOR DETAILS PERTAINING TO PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET PERTAINING TO ASIDI AND NORMS)</i>							
Educator Personnel	Number of educators employed in public schools	54,031	56,284	2,253	22,903,276	22,774,478	0.6%	99.4%
Educator Personnel	Number of non-educator staff employed in public	5,976	4,720	-1,256				

3.1. THE EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT (EIG) AND EQUITABLE SHARE

The 2015 Adjusted Appropriation of the national education budget reflects that of the total R 224.7 million unspent funds for Vote 14, 72.5% is attributed to under expenditure within the Education Infrastructure Grant. Continued fluctuation in expenditure on this conditional grant has a direct bearing on allocations from Treasury. In the case of provinces that are able to effectively manage expenditure on the EIG, performance-based incentives are effected. On 15 July 2015, the National Treasury published a report on the 4th quarter provincial budgets that revealed, for instance, that an amount of R 397.7 million would be converted from the indirect, national school infrastructure backlogs grant to (direct) EIG for the Western Cape province.

There is a need for additional infrastructure information to be made publicly available. This includes financial oversight information that is detailed and updated on a regular basis. It must be acknowledged that both provincial and national Treasury annually provide certain infrastructure project lists that are complementary to the Division of Revenue allocations. However, information

¹³ Figures sourced from 2014/15 ECD&E Annual Report

relating to school-level priority projects and progress is not as easy to access. In order for school communities (principals, school governing bodies, parents etc) to track progress and perform public monitoring and oversight, information pertaining to delivery targets, implementing agents and progress must be made available at the school level on an ongoing basis. Such information can be made available jointly with the assistance of provincial Treasury and the ECDoE as guided by the Portfolio Committees on Education and Finance and Provincial Expenditure.

As an example of an area where a greater level of detail is necessary for community and general oversight is illustrated by gaps in the departmental documents. The ECDoE's six-monthly financial oversight report does not present disaggregated infrastructure targets by quarters which make it impossible to gauge progress towards gauging target completion in-year for certain infrastructure targets. Examples include the following;

- i. PPM 603; the number of public ordinary schools to be provided with sanitation facilities (246 in 2015/16)¹⁴
- ii. PPM 606: Number of new schools completed and ready for occupation (includes replacement schools (24 by the end the of the 4th quarter)

Table 4 below illustrates allocations and expenditure within the Education Infrastructure Grant by province beginning with audited figures from 2011/12. Performance on specific infrastructure targets as at the end of the 2014/15 financial year indicates that 15.4% of the total budget available for education infrastructure via the EIG was not spent by the Department. This level of under expenditure is concerning given the vast need for school infrastructure across the Eastern Cape Province. An additional reason that this underspending should be warned against is the perverse implications that this has on the overall allocations for this grant. The Eastern Cape Treasury has highlighted that amongst challenges related to conditional grant allocations in the province are the quality of business plan inputs as well as the slow rate of spending by departments.

The implications of ineffective, inefficient spending on the school infrastructure grant are felt directly by learners. A case in point is the poor provisioning of infrastructure at Njongele Junior Secondary School in the Duytwa District of the Eastern Cape.

¹⁴ The report does however indicate that 12 schools were provided with sanitation facilities in the first quarter of the year and 49 in the second quarter; leaving a total of 185 to be built in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2015/16)

Report from the Principal

"I am the principal of Njongele Junior Secondary School. I have been a teacher at Njongele from 1996 and the principal of this school since 2004. I teach EMS, English, Social Sciences and Creative Arts.

Njongele is situated in the Dutywa district in the Eastern Cape. The school offers grades R through to grade 9. Njongele has five teachers and one practitioner who teaches grade R. Our biggest challenge is that there are not enough teachers at our school. There is no library at our school. We have some books, a few books that were given to us as samples which we store in cupboards since we have no library. We hand these books out to the learners for extra-reading.

Our school has three pit toilets with no ablution facilities. We try our best to maintain them so that it can be decent. The girls go there, but it is completely unsanitary. They can't even wash their hands. Although there is fencing around our school, we have experienced thefts from the school. We have electricity, and there are water tanks, but sometimes the tanks run dry and there is then no water for the learners to quench their thirst.

Njongele has no internet facilities, no fax and no telephone. I communicate with the district by using my personal cell phone. A district officer usually visits us once a year. We have only had one visit from a district representative this year. The school has six classrooms that are being taught in. They accommodate a total of 180 learners. In three of these six classrooms multi-grade teaching takes place. This means that different grades are taught in the same classroom. Grades 1, 2 and 3 share a classroom and are taught by one person.

Initially the school had only three classrooms, but in 1996 the community came together and with its own resources built three more classrooms. Grades 4 and 5 are taught together in one of these extra classrooms and grades 6 and R each have their own. These three extra classrooms were made of mud. But these classrooms have kept falling apart, and so we have to try to repair and maintain these classrooms.

Currently this three-classroom structure is a combination of mud, cement and hardboard with a zinc roof (mixed structure). It is difficult to manage this mixed structure, because it requires a lot of maintenance. We are always maintaining this structure, but it is always falling apart. It feels like an uphill battle all the time. I teach in one of the classrooms in the mixed structure. These classrooms have broken windows. They also do not provide proper shelter during the rainy period in the summer. Sometimes when I teach the rain starts coming through the roof. When this happens I tell my learners to shift their desks. and I shift my desk. We try to manage by shifting the desks but it is hard. It becomes impossible to teach, and sometimes learners' books get wet.

In the summer the classrooms can get very hot. The teachers and learners complain about the heat, and when classrooms are overcrowded this makes it worse. Sometimes the heat becomes so bad in those classrooms that the teachers prefer to teach the learners outside. There is a big tree outside and the teachers sometimes go there and teach the learners under the tree. July and August is the windy period. The winds can become very strong here, and it is not easy to teach in the wind. The roof of my classroom is not a proper roof and the wind makes a beating-beating, rattling swirling sound which is extremely loud. I can't hear myself teach, and the learners can't hear me. Sometimes we have no choice but to stop class and wait out the wind.

It has been explained to me that the Minister has published regulations that will make sure that no learners have to learn in mixed structures like the structure at my school. I have also been told that only schools that are built "entirely" of material like asbestos, metal and wood will receive assistance within the first three year timeframe under the regulations. This means that because there are some brick classrooms at my school, we will not receive help by when the three year time frame ends, towards the end of next year. I will have to continue teaching and my learners will have to continue learning in unbearably windy and hot and rainy conditions.

I believe that the conditions under which I teach are unacceptable. They make effective teaching and learning very difficult and sometimes impossible. The mixed structure classrooms need replacing as a matter of urgency."

Table 2: Allocation and Expenditure: The EIG by Province and School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant (2011/12 to 2015/16 MTEF)

Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) by Province ('000 Rand)	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Nominal Change Over MTEF	Nominal Change Between 2014 and 2015 (%)	Real Change Between 2014 and 2015 (%)
Eastern Cape	797,187	937,140	1,130,962	1,177,914	1,177,914	1,228,269	1,703,877	1,532,003	1,400,000	-6.34	44.65	38.04
Free State	420,881	512,348	476,218	554,313	607,581	531,146	762,553	707,553	742,931	-0.87	25.51	19.77
Gauteng	473,393	512,866	537,892	623,602	623,602	623,602	935,725	1,274,825	1,428,566	15.15	50.05	43.19
Kwazulu Natal	1,175,956	1,413,001	1,306,421	1,385,781	1,385,781	1,385,781	1,978,683	1,857,648	1,950,530	-0.48	42.78	36.25
Limpopo	897,937	942,091	1,225,382	1,108,625	1,108,625	1,108,625	805,128	845,384	953,589	5.80	-27.38	-30.70
Mpumalanga	590,184	530,711	536,370	623,602	623,602	623,602	857,247	802,247	842,359	-0.58	37.47	31.18
North West	522,021	295,637	587,459	623,602	695,787	695,787	995,107	853,678	842,359	-5.40	43.02	36.48
Northern Cape	290,426	248,939	364,966	364,445	364,445	364,445	446,998	359,545	300,000	-12.45	22.65	17.04
Western Cape	385,039	431,397	821,831	485,024	1,021,334	1,021,334	1,032,237	874,263	860,226	-5.90	1.07	-3.56
National School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant (SIBG)	76,084	859,628	1,370,124		2,513,627		2,024,310	2,348,743	2,590,590	8.57	-19.47	-23.15

Note: a detailed analysis of Table 2 as well as the 2015 adjustments is contained in a comprehensive Expenditure Tracking Report.

The budget decreases in real terms between 2014 and 2015 are well worth noting (23.15% for the SIBG, 30.7% for EIG in Limpopo) as well as the nominal decrease of 6.34% over the MTEF for the EIG in the Eastern Cape. In the absence of concrete, credible and up-to-date information pertaining to progress in meeting schools infrastructure targets it is difficult to determine whether or not the province will be in a position to accept decreased EIG allocations. Further to this, the information collected by Equal Education outlining gaps in the priority listing of schools suggests an incomplete database where provincial infrastructure needs are concerned. The findings by the AG relating to information gaps must also be taken into consideration when motivating for funding for infrastructure as well as in determining areas where strategic support is needed.

a. 'UNVIABLE' SCHOOLS AND THE SCHOOL RATIONALISATION POLICY

Sections 33 and 12A of the South African Schools Act provides the MEC with guidelines for the closure and merger of schools respectively. Further to this, a document entitled "*Guidelines for Rationalisation of Small or non-viable Schools*" published by the national Department of Education in 2009 represents a foundational guide for the process of closing down or merging South African public schools. Notably, however- several structures outlined within this document have since been phased out in the current education set-up of the DBE- prompting questions about the need to revise the guidelines.

Faranaaz Veriava- a South African human rights lawyer- argues that while there may be numerous cogent reasons for the closure of some schools- particularly those in which learners' education is negatively impacted- there is a related risk of restriction of much-needed public participation in the process of closing schools.¹⁵ This, Veriava outlines, relates to the Minister of basic education's announcement of her department's decision to close thousands of small schools across the country.

¹⁵ Mail and Guardian, Veriava, F. 23 January 2015. Public Participation in Education Under Threat. Available online: <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-01-23-public-participation-in-education-under-threat>

While the ECDoE acknowledges that the rationalisation of very small and small schools must be taken into consideration in the process of replacing existing inappropriate and unsafe structure, there remains inadequate information relating to;

- a. The expected impact of school mergers on the implementation of the norms and standards plans*
- b. The impact on the overall number of learners that will subsequently need scholar transport as a result of school closure*
- c. The overall cost of school mergers/closures with respect to infrastructure and the delivery of new infrastructure*
- d. The total number of educator and non-educator staff that schools mergers are envisioned to affect. This is particularly significant where educator staff provisioning is concerned*

The Eastern Cape Plan recognises that the programme of rationalising schools in the Province will have significant implications for the implementation of the Norms and Standards. This notwithstanding, the Plan fails, largely, to give any real guidance about (a) which schools will be rationalised, (b) when precisely these schools will be rationalised; and (c) what the implications of specific rationalisation projects would be for surrounding schools/new schools.

The Project List indicates that about 61 named schools will be re-aligned and a budgeted amount is allocated to each school for this purpose. However, the bulk of schools to be rationalised are not named or accounted for at all in the Project List and the Plan. Also, there is no indication in the Project List or the Plan as to which schools will be closed.

This gap regarding rationalised schools in the Eastern Cape Plan seriously hinders the utility of the plan as a public tool for effectively implementing the Norms and Standards. Additionally- the ECDoE places emphasis on the presence of ‘unviable’ schools within the province as a risk to the Department.¹⁶ According to the 2014/15 Annual Report of the ECDoE, “approximately one third” of schools in the province are not viable in that they have learner enrolment numbers below 135.¹⁷ This likely also means that many of these schools are affected by multi-grade teaching as will be discussed in sections to follow.

¹⁶ Eastern Cape Department of Education *Strategic Plan 2015-2015*. p.21.

¹⁷ Eastern Cape Department of Education *Annual Report 2014/15*. p.55.

Figure 2: Utilisation of School Space in the Eastern Cape by School Type and Phase¹⁸

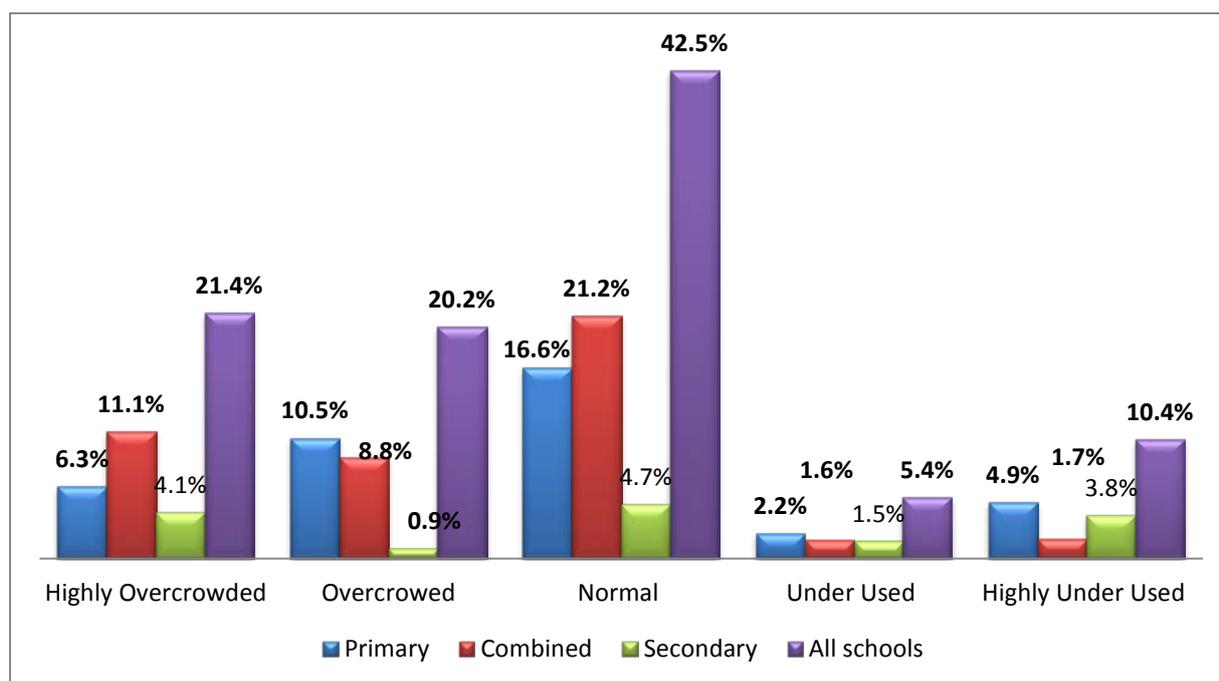


Figure 2 illustrates the overall usage of space per school type and overall in the province as at September 2013. During this period, statistics reported by the ECDoE’s Education Management Information System (EMIS) indicated that 41.6% of Eastern Cape schools were categorised as overcrowded or highly overcrowded. Three years later, the ECDoE EMIS statistics indicate that the status quo has hardly changed with 41% of schools reportedly overcrowded or highly crowded as at March 2015 (see Figure 3 below).¹⁹ This is rather perplexing given a) the progress in addressing school infrastructure reported by the DBE and ECDoE and b) the oft-reported rates of learner out-migration to other provinces in South Africa to the extent of a reduction in the provincial equitable share to the point at which budget allocations are reduced.

The current budget caters for the replacement of inappropriate structures as well as various maintenance projects. While there is clear quantification of the over-crowding and under use at schools, the Department is noticeably quiet on the budgetary implications of this situation. This observation was also made in a previous report by the PSAM in 2012.

Alongside the current infrastructure implementation plans catering for Norms and Standards within the province, it is imperative that the ECDoE proactively addresses the needs for a sustainable infrastructure provisioning plan with the requisite budgetary allocation to reducing constraints in overcrowded and highly overcrowded Eastern Cape schools.

The current situation has dire implications for teaching and learning in affected schools. In cases where teaching and learning occurs under conditions of over crowdedness and poor infrastructure,

¹⁸ The categories used are those identified by the ECDoE and relate to the population of schools/class rooms in relation to optimum numbers for teaching and learning as well as in the optimum use of space and resources including educators. The ideal category in this case is ‘normal’.

¹⁹ According to the EMIS database from which this information was elicited- the statistics were last updated in March 2015

there is added strain on educators and learners alike in the immediate term- as the case studies illustrate

In the long term- this will also have adverse implications for the maintenance and longevity of current and new infrastructure. A thorough audit of the total cost to the Department emanating from under-utilised schools in terms of personnel and operational costs is recommended. It is recommended that the Department should present a succinct plan to address underutilised schools which also add pressure to an already strained, poorly managed budget in the Public Ordinary School Programme.

Figure 3: School size by phase: 2015

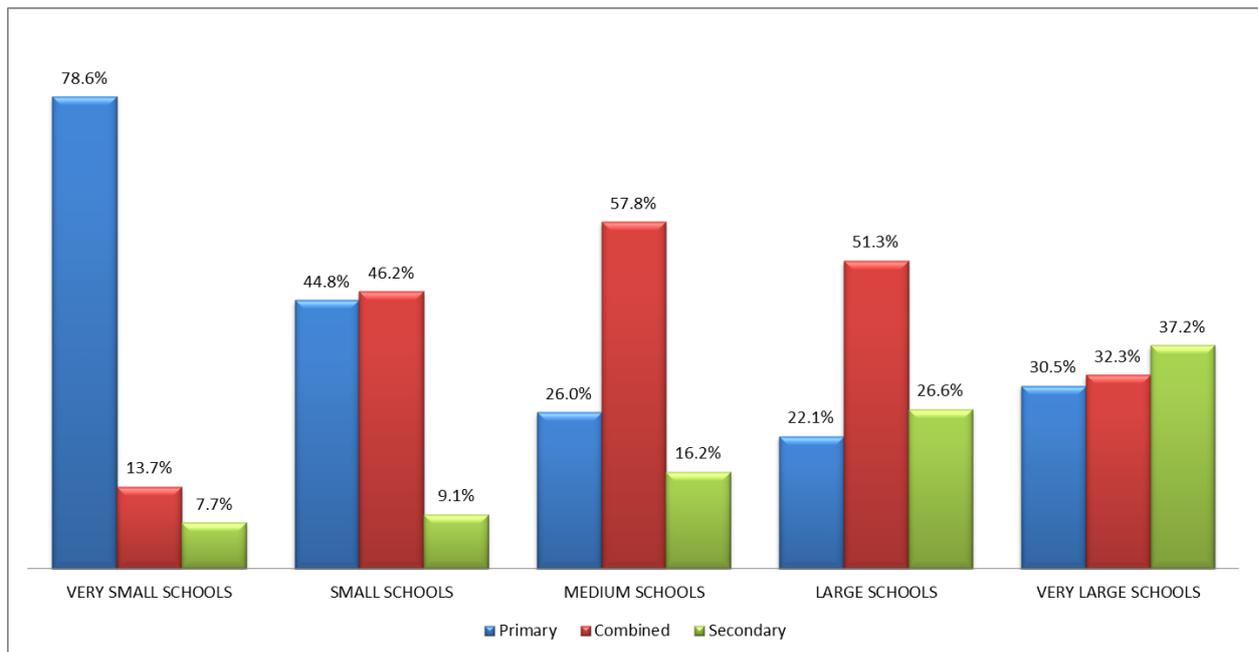


Table 3: Descriptions of school size category²⁰

SIZE CATEGORY	# LEARNERS	SCHOOL PHASE	PERCENTAGE OF ALL SCHOOLS
VERY SMALL SCHOOLS	<100 learners	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	45%
SMALL SCHOOLS	>100 and <250	COMBINED SCHOOLS	15%
MEDIUM SCHOOLS	>250 and <500	SECONDARY SCHOOLS	34%
LARGE SCHOOLS	<500 and <750	EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT	1%
VERY LARGE SCHOOLS	>750 learner	LSEN	1%

Figure 3 above illustrates the percentages of each school phase by size category in 2015 while Table 3 directly below it quantifies the size categories and type of schools including Early Childhood Development (ECD) and LSEN (schools for learners with special education needs). The highest percentage of schools categorised as “very small” are found within the primary school phase. This means that of the estimated 934 schools in the Eastern Cape in this category approximately 734

²⁰ As per EMIS data available via www.ecdoe.gov.za

cater for primary school learners and their educators. Combined schools and secondary school account for a further 13.7% and 7.7% respectively. It is important to note the proportion of schools in each category- noting specifically that primary schools account for the largest single category in the Eastern Cape (45%) followed by Secondary schools (34%). The continued presence of combined schools in itself poses a challenge to provisioning in the province and is an issue deserving of speedy resolution- in part through the implementation of decisive school infrastructure plans.

Case Study : Nzima Primary School

Nzima Primary School, located in Butterworth, has been notified by the Department that it will be merged with another nearby school next year. However the principal has reported that no details on the merger have been provided. The school that they will merge with in January has not been communicated with her, and no timeline has been shared.

In the meantime, her school infrastructure and staff have been completely neglected by the department. The merger has been used to justify not providing additional staff and not improving the infrastructure of the school.

Their nutritional centre is a shack made out of zinc. There is a mud rondavel that the current principal taught in for over twenty-five years. It's now used for storage because she was so afraid that it would fall down and harm learners, given how many cracks had appeared in the walls.

The only support the school has received has been from AngloGold after the school wrote them a letter requesting a donation. The community took the R45,000 and built brick classrooms. Nothing has come from the Department. Their toilets were built twenty years ago by the Imvula Trust, and have been in terrible condition for over a decade. They aren't sanitary, and the taps are not working.

It's nearly the end of the year. It is appearing more and more likely that the school will not actually merge. This will remain a promise and an excuse for the Department not to invest in the school. In the meantime, learners will continue to suffer.

3.2. POST PROVISIONING AND COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES

The issue of inadequate personnel provisioning is often cited as a significant impediment to daily operations at schools by principals and teachers alike. In the case study above (Njongele Junior Secondary School), for instance, the school offers classes from Grade R to Grade 9 but several of those classes are taught as multi-grade classes.²¹ In addition to the strain of managing such classes- it is widely recognised that many teachers do not have adequate support and training to undertake what is essentially a unique form of instruction.²² The observation by the principal of Njongele that *"Our biggest challenge is that there are not enough teachers at our school"* is one emphasised by a the NEEDU (2013) report in which the following statement is made;

²¹ Multi-grade teaching is a relatively common phenomenon in rural schools- particularly in smaller schools. Teachers are obliged to provide instruction to learners across various grades with different curricula at the same time within the same learning space.

²² Joubert, J. 2010. Multi-grade Teaching in South Africa. *Commonwealth Education Partnerships*. p.58-62.

“Perhaps the greatest challenge faced by rural schools is the lack of sufficient and sufficiently qualified teaching staff. Teachers and learners often live far from the school and access is difficult. Poor roads and lack of public transport make daily commuting to schools time-consuming and difficult. Inclement weather severely affects the learners' and teachers' ability to get to school regularly and on time. Given the difficulties associated with teaching in rural schools, it is no surprise that attracting and keeping qualified teachers is a challenge...”

(NEEDU, 2013, p.2)

Reflecting on the state of educator appointments and control of provincial post establishment, there is a case to be argued for provincial government intervention in aid of the ECDoE. The continued over and/or poor expenditure in the personnel line item- partly due to educators in excess is cause for concern. Expenditure has tended to exceed the 80:20 ratio of personnel to non-personnel prescribed nationally over several years. This occurs at the expense of other, non-personnel line items. An example of the impact of this on goods and service was the needs for an additional allocation of R 65 million in 2013 to mitigate against the extreme pressure resulting from personnel costs.²³ Between 2010/11 and 2012/13, this ratio worsened from 84:16 then 89:11 and 90:10 respectively (NEEDU, 2013).

Table 4: Estimated Personnel numbers 2012-2014: ECDoE

Year	Number of posts allocated via PPN (to public ordinary schools)	Number of posts filled	Number of vacant posts	Number of excess educators
2012	64,742	59,543	8,465	6,781
2013	60,850	62,637	5,545	6,870
2014	55,796	54,031	(conflicting figures)	6,022

In 2011, severe budget constraints had a dire impact on the ECDoE. This was primarily a result of the appointment of additional teachers after a failure to distribute teachers in response to learner migration patterns.²⁴ The NEEDU 2013 emphasises that population migration is a significant factor that further complicates post establishment; particularly in relation to the outflow from the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. Despite the identification of this as both a hindrance to education in the province as well as to ECDoE's budgets, the Department has continued to struggle to address educator distribution issues- placing further strain on limited budgets. Figure 4 above presents figures between 2012 and 2014 highlighting the striking imbalances in educator numbers resulting from distribution challenges. The lack of credible data is also present where human resource planning is concerned- as illustrated in conflicting data presented by the ECDoE for 2014 outcomes. In addition, according to the AG's 2014/15 Audit report, the overall inability of the department to produce reliable and credible information has an adverse impact on the ability of leadership to make necessary decision.

²³ Kota, Z. 2013. Budget Analysis: Eastern Cape Department of Education. Public Service Accountability Monitor, Grahamstown.

²⁴ NEEDU 2013 Report

4. CONCLUSION

While school infrastructure challenges, teacher shortages and multi-grade teaching are not unique to the Eastern Cape- or to South Africa for that matter- these are challenges that place significant pressure on schools, teachers and affected learners. Many schools in the province are consequently in a state of emergency. At the centre of this are issues of the effective rollout of school infrastructure as well as the effective distribution of personnel across the province mentioned above. Given both organisations' experience within the education sector- we are at pains to underscore the complexity of the problems facing the education sector in our province. It is also clear that continued failure to effectively address one problem has a direct bearing on other problems especially where infrastructure budgeting and planning are concerned. It is with these issues in mind, that we hope the overall findings and recommendations contained in this report will be of use to relevant committees and decision-makers within the provincial education realm.