

STRATEGIC PLAN EVALUATION 2018/19 AND DRAFT APP 2019/20

Presentation to the Strategic Planning Unit of the ECDoE

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Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM)

- The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) forms part of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, Makhanda (Grahamstown), South Africa. PSAM's activities include research, monitoring, advocacy and capacity building.
- PSAM has the following three strategic programmes:
 1. **Regional Learning**
 2. **Monitoring and Advocacy**
 3. **Advocacy Impact Programme**

- I am on the Monitoring and Advocacy Programme (MAP), employed as an Education Researcher.
- My activities involve the evaluation of planning, budgeting, expenditure and performance of the DBE and ECDoE. Major outputs include budget analysis, strategic planning evaluation, expenditure tracking report and service delivery review.
- All of these outputs are available on the PSAM website:
<http://psam.org.za/monitoring-advocacy/>

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- The PSAM has some of the following strategic objectives:
 - To see improved governance through civil society-state interaction and increased public participation resulting in effective service delivery.
 - Enhance interaction between social accountability stakeholders (CSOs, government, citizens and oversight) and a willingness to engage on issues meaningfully.

TO WORK TOGETHER/PARTNERSHIP

- In alignment to the Strategic Goal 7 of the Department, on “improved learning outcomes through partnerships and stakeholder engagement”, PSAM would like to establish an active partnership and engagement with the ECDoE.
- In this regard, we welcome that “the proposed Education System Transformation Plan 2019 to 2023 will be the strengthening of strategic partnerships with organised labour, social partners, civil society, parents, teachers and learners’, as outlined in draft APP.
- Through this partnership, I would share PSAM’s work within the education space – for example, through presentations, making submissions, and sharing outputs.
- Of relevance to this committee is our work on the Strategic Plan Evaluations (SPEs).
- The SPEs are the analyses of the coherence and responsiveness of a government department’s Annual Performance Plan (three-year plan) and Operational Plan (one-year plan). The evaluation focuses on the final draft of plans for departments.

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- Previously, PSAM had a representative on the ECDoE research committee.
- This was an important opportunity for consultation and collaborative engagement with the Unit/Department and researcher stakeholders in the Eastern Cape.
- Therefore, we would like this to continue so as to enhance interaction between PSAM and the Department.
- This is important in order to provide support to the education sector

2018 Education SPE

- The Education SPE in front of you (and available here: http://psam.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Education-SPE-2018_Final.pdf) determined the degree of alignment between the following planning documents: *Revised Strategic Plan 2015/16-2019/20; Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2018/19; Operational Plan (OP) 2018/19; Schooling 2025: Action Plan for improving basic education in South Africa; the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014-2019; and the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030.*
- In determining the degree of alignment between these planning documents, the SPE also considered two examples of 2018/19 operational plans (OPs) from two districts, namely: the Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) Metro district and Sarah Baartman district.

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- Using all these planning documents, the SPE evaluated whether the one-year plan (OP) is consistent with the longer-term planning documents.
- This consistency between the short, medium and long-term plans was established by comparing the policy priorities, strategic goals and strategic objectives for Programme 2 that caters for public ordinary schools.
- The evaluation of these plans measured the extent in which government is making dedicated efforts to plan for the realisation of quality basic education.
- The evaluation assessed whether the performance targets set out in the plans are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reliable and Timely (SMART). In other words, the SPE assessed whether the targets set out in the OP, in relation to programme 2 of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE), are SMART.
- Below, I provide key findings and recommendations from the 2018 Education SPE. Please read through the whole document and provide feedback when you have time.

Key Findings and Recommendations

1) Finding

It appeared that there was an alignment between the *NDP Vision 2030; Revised Strategic Plan 2015-2020; APP 2018/19; and OP 2018/19* of the department by responding to the needs of learners for the quality basic education.

However, it was difficult to assess the SMART-ness of the set targets in the 2018/19 OP of the department, because some of the targets were not time-bound. In other words, it was not clear how and when some targets were going to be attained within the 2018/19 financial year.

For example, what was provided was an annual target of 4 700 educators trained on literacy/language content methodology. It was, therefore, unclear what was going to be done each quarter – out of the four quarters – to train educators. Will they be trained once a year?

1) Recommendation

The 2018/19 OP of the department should include plans for implementing the set targets in the 2018/19 financial year. It should have been clear how many educators were going to be trained per quarter of the 4 700 annual target.

In other words, the department should clarify whether it will train educators in the beginning or towards the end of the academic year. It is important that educators be trained before the start of an academic year, so that educators are academically prepared to educate learners.

II) Finding

According to the NDP Vision 2030, government should make early childhood programme (ECD) a priority in order to improve the quality of education. Consequently, the 2018/19 OP of the department provided SMART targets and budgeting for the training of Pre-Grade R practitioners on ECD NQF Level 4 qualification.

While the 2018/19 OPs from the districts of the Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) Metro and Sarah Baartman, provided SMART targets of 50 and 58 Pre-Grade R practitioners to be trained respectively, the plans did not contain budget for this. Why did they not have budget for this?

II) Recommendation

In the district OPs, the department should provide clear planning and budgeting for the training of educators in order to realise quality education. In other words, it should be clear how much is budgeted for the training of educators in each district, to make it possible to assess whether the district will be able to deliver on target with the resources it has.

III) Finding

In its 2018/19 OP, the department provided an annual and quarterly targets of 10 special schools to be upgraded.

However, it is unclear how 10 special schools were going to be upgraded per quarter when the annual target is 10.

In other words, how is it possible that the department would have an annual target of 10 special schools to be upgraded and yet plan to upgrade 10 schools per quarter?

III) Recommendation

The PSAM recommended that the department should have provided clear plans for upgrading special schools within the 2018/19 financial year. In other words, it should have been clear how many schools were going to be upgraded per quarter of the 10 special schools.

Comments and Proposals on the Draft 2019/20 APP

- Firstly, the PSAM values the opportunity afforded to it by the Strategic Committee of the Department, through Mr Tshepo Masoeu, to submit written comments and proposals on its draft Annual Performance Plan (APP) for the 2019/20 financial year.
- The following are our evaluations of the draft document.

COHERENCE WITH THE TREASURY FRAMEWORK

The National Treasury, in its Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, lists the following necessary three parts for an Annual Performance Plan:

- 1. Part A: Whole department/public entity**
- 2. Part B: Programmes and sub-programmes**
- 3. Part C: Link to other plans**

While the Treasury Framework provides Annual Performance Plans (APPs) of departments should have three parts as shown above, the draft APP only has two parts – Part A and B but not a detailed Part C as outlined in the 2018/19 APP.

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- The department should ensure that its draft APP is formulated in coherence with the Treasury Frameworks.
- In other words, the department should outline details of budgets for
- infrastructure and capital infrastructure. The conditional grants; public entities; and public-private partnerships should all be under Part C

Education Transformation Plan (ESTP) 2019-2023

- On page 16, the draft APP lists four pillars of the ESTP. In particular, the third pillar reads as follows: “the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the impact it will have on how the department operates and how we educate our learners to prepare them to thrive in the future.”
 - However, it is not clear how this will be done? In other words, how will the department Encourage Innovation; Implement Productivity Enhancements; Upscale e-Learning; and Integrate e-Administration?
 - So, how will these be done in the context where computers are not being used? What does the Department plan to do to address this?
 - Will training be offered to teachers and learners?

ECDoE Guiding Principles

- On page 17, the draft APP notes that “the Department’s approach and plan in the 2019 MTEF will be guided by four Guiding Principles, namely; Strong Communication, Accountability, Performance Management and Improved Audit Outcomes”.
- We recommend that the Department explains each of these principles. For example, how will the Department improve its performance through performance Management? Also, how will the Audit Outcomes be improved?
- Therefore, before the 2019/20 APP is submitted to the legislature for consideration, it is important that the department explains how the principles will permeate the education system.

Organisational Environment

- On page 25, the draft APP mentions the following:
 - “Over the past 11 years there have been a number of interventions aimed at improving the organisation of education in the Eastern Cape
 - Analysis of these interventions suggests that the existing Service Delivery Model (SDM) does not support the effective functioning of the Department.”
 - However, we propose that the Department explains the interventions taken over the past 11 years.
 - We also recommend that the Department write what it proposes since the existing SDM does not support the effective functioning of the Department.

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- Following this, on page 26, the draft APP explains that the Department has a newly approved Service Delivery Model (SDM) and the developed Organogram has been submitted for final approval.
- The PSAM recommends that department includes the organogram in the final APP. This could be included as an appendix.
- It is important to see how the organogram will look like.

Head Office Restructuring

- Also, on the same page under Head Office Restructuring – the draft APP notes that “the Head Office Restructuring will be finalised in 2019 and will give prominence to institutional operations and curriculum delivery. Through the new organisational structure, the Department hopes to maximize the administrative, management and curriculum delivery capabilities of schools.”
- We propose that the department provides more details on how the restructuring will look. In other words, there is a need to articulate this clearly.

Strategic Direction

- It is clear from the draft APP that the MTSF 2014-2019; NDP Vision 2030; Education System Transformation Plan 2016-2018; and the DBE Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030 guide the department.
- The department further notes that “to achieve the strategic outcomes of quality basic education and the aims of the Department’s transformative strategies, the Department will be required to sustain and improve core activities whilst driving a change agenda that sets the organisation on a higher trajectory” (on page 17).
- However, it is not clear how the Department will sustain and improve core activities for this achievement to be met.

Performance Delivery Environment

- It is explained in the draft APP that “in the preparation for the 2019 MTEF, the Eastern Cape Department of Education has considered demographic trends carefully, including in-migration, out-migration and migration within the province” (on page 18).
- PSAM would like to comment that in addition to these demographic trends, learner-dropout should also be considered. This means that the department should provide clarity on how it will deal with factors leading to learners dropping out of school.
- We are actually planning a roundtable on learner migration and we will be happy for you to participate in this. This is scheduled for June 2019. I will send an invitation once completed.

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- While the draft APP explains migration as “an important demographic process as it shapes the age structure and distribution of the provincial population”, it is not clear how the Department will address the factors leading to learner migration.
- Therefore, the Department should provide plans for addressing the factors that lead to learner migration.
- PSAM notes that the start of the academic year continues to be impacted negatively by learner migration, with learners migrating from rural public schools to urban public schools.
- How is the Department going to address the factors leading to learner migration? This should be explained in the APP.

Programmes and sub-programmes

Programme 1: While the draft APP has a key policy priority “to monitor programme spending performance and ensure transfers are made timeously to schools”, it is not clear how this monitoring will take place.

In other words, how will the Department monitor programme spending performance and conditional grant spending performance? The Department should provide this clarity.

Programme 2: Table 4.2.1 on page 42 lists the strategic objective and annual targets for 2019/20 without providing indicators for the strategic objectives. In fact, there is no indicator for all the strategic objectives.

For example, on the strategic objective of improving the quality of monitoring and support provided to schools by the Department, it is not clear what this means in practice.

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Programme 3: This programme does not have quarterly targets for some of the strategic objectives and PPMs.

The only PPM with quarterly targets is that of the ‘percentage of registered independent schools visited for monitoring and support’.

It is clear from Table 4.3.3 that the Department will visit 59% of the registered independent schools for monitoring and support.

Programme 4: While noting the lack of clearly outlined quarterly indicators and targets, it worth mentioning that PPM 403 (number of therapists/specialist staff in special schools) has quarterly targets of 85 therapists each quarter.

Programme 5: It is worth noting that the Department made ECD a policy priority in alignment with the NDP Vision 2030. The NDP is very clear that government should make ECD a top priority to improve the quality of education.

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While the key policy priorities outlined on page 60 seek to improve access to the foundation phase, it is surprising that the “two years of compulsory ECD for all children before they enter Grade 1”, as mentioned by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the 2019 State of the Nation Address (SONA), is not listed as a key policy priority.

Programme 6: Table 4.6.2 on page 69 lists the PPMs for programme 6, with just annual and no quarterly targets. This makes it difficult to gauge the achievement of targets on each PPM.

While the table is only dedicated to outlining annual targets, table 4.6.3 on page 70, which is dedicated to providing quarterly targets for 2019/20, only provides annual targets and no quarterly targets.

For example, on PPM 601 (number of public ordinary schools provided with water supply), the draft APP only provides an annual target of 178. Without the quarterly targets, it is difficult to determine the SMART-ness of the PPM. In other words, it is difficult to see whether it will be achievable over the financial year.

Programme 7: PSAM notes that one of the key policy priorities is ensuring “the obtainment of quality curriculum outputs in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12” (on page 72).

The APP should provide an outline of how this will be done in the 2019/20 financial year.

Also, the department should outline how the focused e-Learning support interventions to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process across the system will be implemented.

Conditional Grants

- It is worth noting that all the conditional grants do not have set targets in order to gauge the performance indicators.
- For example, on the Infrastructure Grant (page 80), it is not clear how many public ordinary schools will be provided with electricity supply annually and per quarter.
- This information is also not provided in the technical descriptions for PPMs, on page 82.
- The PSAM recommends that the department provides clearly outlined targets before the APP is submitted to the legislature.

Conclusion

- We will conduct more evaluations once the 2019/20 Operational Plan has been made available.
- We look forward to further engagements with the ECDoE in order to contribute to *Strategic Goal 7* and the *Education System Transformation Plan 2019 to 2023*.
- These are in line with our strategic objectives