



## **PRE-SOPA 2019 BASIC EDUCATION STATEMENT: BETTER SPENDING AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCE CRITICAL FOR THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION**

On 28 June 2019, the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Mr Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane will deliver the first State of the Province Address (SOPA) of the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislature. He succeeds Mr Phumulo Masualle who was the Premier of the Province since 21 May 2014. Phumulo Masualle delivered the last SOPA of the 5<sup>th</sup> Legislature in February 2019.

In the lead-up to the last SOPA, the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) developed a re-imagined SOPA – the People’s SOPA with the objective of providing an alternative perspective on the Premier’s SOPA.

While the former Premier, in the last SOPA, acknowledged the improvement of the Eastern Cape Matric pass rate between 2017 and 2018, the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) continues underperforming on the provision of basic services to schools. For example, the 2018/19 Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) reported that the department only provided 17 schools with water against a target of 169.<sup>1</sup> Also, 14 of the targeted 169 schools were provided with sanitation facilities. Therefore, Premier Mabuyane – in the SOPA tomorrow – should reflect on what has been done to provide basic services to schools and outline plans going forward.

In addition, the Premier and MEC for Education will need to explain how they will resolve to address the challenges faced by the ECDoE. It is worth mentioning that the foundation phase and early child education was not adequately prioritised by the 5<sup>th</sup> administration – a fact evidenced by poor performance in basic literacy and numeracy across several phases over the years. The poor spending, in the 2017/18 financial year, for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in both ECDoE and Eastern Cape Department of Social Development (ECDSD) also evidence this. For example, in its [2018 Expenditure Tracking Report \(ETR\)](#), the PSAM explained that while the underspending for programme 5 (ECD) of the ECDoE decreased from 23% (R130.49 million) in 2016/17 to 16% (R92.80 million) in 2017/18, it is not good for ensuring access of children to quality ECD. This is so, especially, considering the poor performance related to the training of ECD practitioners. According to the 2017/18 Annual Report of the ECDoE, the main reasons for this underspending was related to the appointment of professionally qualified practitioners into mainstream schooling. The training of ECD practitioners started late in the 2017/18 financial year and as a result payments for bursaries could not be made.

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Cape 2018/19 Estimated Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE), at page 147.

The continued poor spending and underperformance of the ECD grant by the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development (ECDSD) is concerning. From 2017 – when the grant was implemented – to last financial year, 2018/19. The PSAM, in its [2018 ETR](#), reported that out of R56.4 million allocated to the Eastern Cape Province for the ECD grant in the 2017/18 financial year, only R27.2 million (48.6%) was spent. R29.1 million of unspent funds were reported for the province. The department also failed to spend its budget allocation of R10.2 million in the 2017/18 financial year, for ECD maintenance component. Therefore, while the ECDSD allocated R10.2 million for the maintenance of targeted 96 ECD centres, it failed to spend this money. This underspending and underperformance context affects the access of children to quality ECD. In the 2018/19 financial year, Eastern Cape was allocated R78.7 million from the total budget of R490.8 million. The ECDSD reported that 63% of the provincial allocation was spent by the end of December 2018.<sup>2</sup>

While the ECD maintenance showed some improvement in the 2018/19 financial year, underperformance was reported in the third quarter where [only 9 ECD centres were completed against an annual target of 26](#). The 26 ECD centres were planned in the first quarter and it was estimated that they were going to be completed by 22 March 2019. The ECDSD, in its presentation to the Select Committee on Appropriations on 13 February 2019, reported that nine (9) ECD centres “were under construction and eight were in a tender process”<sup>3</sup>. As of 15 February 2019, the progress status of ECDs project per district is shown in the Table below.

**Table: ECD Project Progress by District, February 2019**

| District       | Project Progress |                    |                                     |                   |  |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
|                | Completed        | Under construction | Procurement/tendering/re-advertised | Total of projects | Estimated Completion date <sup>4</sup> |
| Alfred Nzo     | 0                | 3                  | 0                                   | 3                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| Amathole       | 4                | 2                  | 1                                   | 7                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| Buffalo City   | 0                | 0                  | 0                                   | 0                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| Chris Hani     | 1                | 1                  | 2                                   | 4                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| Joe Gqabi      | 2                | 3                  | 0                                   | 5                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| Nelson Mandela | 1                | 0                  | 0                                   | 1                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| OR Tambo       | 0                | 0                  | 0                                   | 0                 | 22 March 2019                          |
| Sarah Baartman | 1                | 0                  | 5                                   | 6                 | 22 March 2019                          |

*Source:* Early Childhood Development Grant: follow-up with Eastern Cape Department of Social Development – accessed from: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/27872/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/27872/>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*. The projects were planned at the start of the 2018/19 financial year and were estimated to be completed at the end of that financial year.

It is clear from the table above that out of the total of 26 ECD centres planned, Amathole was leading with 2 centres under construction and 1 was re-advertised. Sarah Baartman only completed 1 against the target of 6. Therefore, only 35% of all the 26 ECD centres were completed and 65% were still to be completed.<sup>5</sup> The ECDSD reported that all 26 centres and 100% expenditure on the ECD grant were going to be achieved by the end of the fourth quarter. However, in light of the poor performance by the department, it is unlikely that all the ECD centres were completed by 22 March 2019. Therefore, the MEC for Social Development should report on the maintenance progress of the remaining 17 ECD centres.

The poor spending and underperformance by the ECDoE and ECDSD negatively impacts the access of children to ECD and quality basic education. As such, the PSAM would make the following recommendations to the Premier, MEC for Education and MEC for Social Development:

- The 6<sup>th</sup> administration should strengthen legislature oversight for expenditure and performance of the ECDoE and ECDSD.
- The ECD poor spending and underperformance calls for urgent intervention by the Eastern Cape Treasury and National Department of Social Development.
- The Premier should outline plans of the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislature to improve the performance of the ECD maintenance component.
- We recommend that the MEC for Education, should be dedicated attention on improving the quality of education from the foundation phase onwards.
- Lastly, the Premier should explain how the [Early Grade Reading Programme](#) announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the SONA last week, will be implemented in the province.

For further information, please contact

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<sup>5</sup> <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/27872/>