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2020

Education Budget Analysis Brief

Public Service Accountability Monitor Eastern Cape, South Africa



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2020 EDUCATION BUDGET ANALYSIS BRIEF

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Monitoring and Advocacy Programme

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INTRODUCTION

The South African Constitution commits government departments to the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights, including the right to education, healthcare, housing and social welfare, within available resources. Social accountability is central to good governance and relates to being accountable or responsive to citizens. Through social accountability the citizens as users of public services voice their needs and demand for an improved delivery of basic services.¹ The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) defines social accountability as the obligation by public officials and private service providers to justify their performance in progressively addressing the socio-economic rights through the delivery of public services. State departments and private service providers responsible for the management of public resources must implement effective accountability and service delivery processes. These include planning and resource allocation processes; expenditure management processes; performance monitoring processes; integrity management processes and, oversight processes. These processes, together, combine to form a social accountability system, which acts as the central pillar of a responsive democratic space.

In the weeks following the tabling of the 2020/21 national and provincial budgets, schools were closed due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) which has spread to pandemic levels. The tabling of the Provincial Budget by the MEC for Finance followed the National Budget tabled by the Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni, on the 26th of February 2020. However, given the disruptions to schooling caused by COVID-19, and the need for government to respond to the economic and social impacts, the tabled budgets needed to be changed for them to be responsive to the current situation.

¹ Baez Camargo, C and Jacobs, E. 2013. *Social Accountability and Its Conceptual Failures: An analytical framework*. Basel Institute on Governance: Working paper series No. 16.

In order to curb the spread of the Coronavirus, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a national lockdown starting midnight of 26 March 2020, and related regulations were issued in terms of Section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002.² Schools were however closed a week before this, which has resulted in longer disruptions to teaching and learning and has implications that go beyond the curriculum, but impact on health, nutrition and safety.

In the midst of the national lockdown, the majority of learners are disadvantaged from benefiting from access to formal learning.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent national lockdown, the allocation to the National Department of Basic Education (DBE) was increased by 4%, in nominal terms, from the adjusted budget of R24.46 billion in 2019/20 to R25.32 billion in 2020/21.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) was allocated R37.76 billion (44%) of the provincial budget of R85.90 billion in the 2020/21 financial year, increasing the allocation by 4% compared to 2019/20.³ The Coronavirus and subsequent national lockdown has affected educational institutions across the world. As from the 23rd of March 2020, over 1.3 billion learners were out of school due to closures in attempt to limit the spread. School closures have shed light on prevalent levels of inequality that go beyond school infrastructure and access to basic services like water and sanitation, but touch on the unequal distribution of e-learning facilities and access to the internet. This has meant that disruptions have been felt inequitably across schools within provinces and across the country.

Most of the learners in rural areas do not have access to Information and communications technology (ICT) services that allow them to access online educational material. Governments in 119 countries around the world have closed education institutions in order to try contain this pandemic. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), “**107 countries** have implemented nationwide closures, impacting over **861.7 million children and youth**. A further **12 countries** have implemented localized school closures and, should these closures become nationwide, millions of additional learners will experience education disruption”.⁴

These widespread school closures have further provided the need to ensure that schools are equipped with e-learning facilities so that learners continue studying while at home. The schools and universities that already have these facilities are likely to perform better during this time than those without. What was further highlighted is the impact of slow delivery and government’s inability to meet targets at a sustained manner.

² Disaster Management Act, 2002. Accessed from:

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202003/regulations.pdf

³ Eastern Cape Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) 2020/21. Accessed from:

<https://www.ectreasury.gov.za/Files.aspx>

⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2020. COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. Accessed from: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures>

The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga tabled the Recovery Plan⁵ on 30 April 2020. As a result of the virus and the lockdown, the Minister mentioned that the department has been advised to follow a phased approach in the reopening of schools.⁶ Some of the central pillars of the recovery plan are as follows: physical distancing in classrooms (includes not more than 2 learners sharing a desk, cloth masks to be worn by learners and teachers at all times); on infrastructure and furniture (as central to this budget brief), the department plans to sanitise classrooms prior to the start of the school day, sanitise hands on entering classrooms, limit movement of learners between classes; and have no clustering of desks in classrooms. In addition, transportation of learners has been identified as one of the central pillars of the sector plan, therefore systems have been encouraged to enforce health measures that pertain to the mandatory wearing of masks, sanitising of buses prior to the start of trips and capacity to be monitored to ensure physical distancing.⁷

What needs to be highlighted is that these disruptions to schooling due to the Coronavirus and the subsequent national lockdown have worsened the pre-existing inequalities within the education system and society at large, bringing to light other inequalities beyond infrastructure and classroom sizes.

As a response, President Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in South Africa in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002, on 15 March 2020. This was followed by a series of economic and social restrictions. In order to offset the economic impact of the national lockdown, on the 21st of April 2020, the President announced a R500 billion relief package, which would be partly funded by R130 billion being reprioritised from the 2020/21 budget.

The Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni tabled the 2020 Special Adjustments Budget on the 24th of June 2020, to outline how the government would fund Coronavirus intervention programmes. This required that departments modify their February 2020 allocations to enable spending on COVID-19 response. This came at a cost to all departments as they were “required to identify programmes or activities that can be temporarily suspended without negatively impacting the longevity of such programmes”.⁸ In this report, the key budget decisions are outlined alongside key education delivery concerns. In addition to recommendations to enhance the management of public funds – access to information requirements are underscored. There is a clear need to ensure full transparency in relation to the utilisation of COVID-19 funds including the publication

⁵ “In the past weeks, we have worked with provinces to prepare for the reopening of schools. Each province, district, circuit and school, must have a practical and comprehensive catch-up plan to be implemented. The plans must talk to the risk profiles of the areas in which schools are located, and this must be based on the infection rate in the specific geographic areas.” – Accessed from: <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-basic-education-sector-recovery-plans-reopening-schools-following>

⁶<https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-basic-education-sector-recovery-plans-reopening-schools-following>

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ 2020 Special Adjustments Budget Guidelines. Accessed from: <http://www.treasury.gov.za/publications/guidelines/2020%20Special%20Adjustment%20Budget%20Guidelines%20May%202020.pdf>

of comprehensive contract information on the Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury and Education Department's websites.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below constitute a mix of specific findings aligned with tabled spending plans as well suggestions to the provincial departments of education, treasury and legislature on possible responses to address specific aspects of public resource management in the context of the pandemic.

Finding:

In general; there is a scarcity of information within the public domain pertaining to a range of provincial COVID-19 related interventions including school-level personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitation services and other resources. The Department of Education is amongst the public entities in which concerns about PPE graft and improper procurement practice of goods and services, contributing to the Presidential Proclamation of 23 July, instructing investigations by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU).

Recommendations:

1. The Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury and provincial Office of the Auditor General must engage community members, school governing bodies and the Provincial Legislature to provide detailed information pertaining to the disbursements of COVID-19 funds across districts and schools. This should include the publication of the up-to date plans as approved by the provincial Executive via key government websites and local media.⁹
2. All schools must be informed of what intervention they should expect from the Education Department and be provided with a timeline for delivery and quantities. Currently – the Eastern Cape Department of Education's website does not provide such information. The regular publication of related memoranda and circulars pertaining to this and school re-opening instructions on public platforms and critical.
3. In addition to the publication of information on the utilisation of COVID-19 funds listing comprehensive contract information on the Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury and Education Department's websites, the Provincial Treasury must publish manuals, guidelines, practice notes, circulars or instructions issued by both the National Treasury and Provincial Treasury.

⁹ Notable interventions, for instance, is the publication via the Provincial Treasury's website of COVID-19 supplier data to the Eastern Cape and other provinces.

Finding:

The 2019/20 third quarterly report of the ECDoE does not provide quarterly results for the provision of infrastructure facilities to schools. For example, on the number of public ordinary schools provided with water supply, the report only provides an annual target of 178 and nothing is reported on the actual delivery.

Recommendations:

4. Underspending has been an issue in the province, we therefore recommend a strengthened system to monitor spending and infrastructure delivery on a monthly basis, which feeds into the quarterly reports. The Provincial legislature should require regular reports on progress.

Finding:

A total of 3710 schools across the country have pit latrines. According to the 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), the Eastern Cape alone has 1 587 schools with pit latrines as the only form of toilets. The ECDoE confirmed 929 schools require additional water tanks.

Recommendations:

5. Permanent water and sanitation solutions should be prioritised, with all backlogs being dealt with in the next 18 months.
6. We call on the Eastern Cape Legislature to oblige the MEC for Education and his Department to provide detailed and regular reporting on the expenditure and delivery of water tanks, PPE and other related COVID-19 relief.
7. The Legislature should implement oversight visits to all schools that required water and sanitation to ensure delivery, and monitor quality. They need to ensure permanent delivery solutions are installed over the next three months.

Finding:

Access to information communication technology resources is unequal, with millions of learners not having access to computers at school. Out of 19 822 schools in South Africa (excluding micro schools), 7 220 (36.42%) have computer centres; while out of 4 234 Eastern Cape schools only 528 (12.47%) have computer centres. This makes it almost impossible for learners in over 63.5% schools in the country to take up the e-learning opportunities as they may not be equipped to use online resources for education purposes.

Recommendations:

8. The delivery of ICT services and computer labs to schools should be fast-tracked with the setting up of quarterly delivery targets which should be reported against to the Provincial Legislature.

9. The department needs to prioritise the introduction of ICT services at all schools, with specialised teacher and learner training. This needs to be rolled out within the first quarter of 2021.

Finding:

R2.2 billion has been cut from the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) – R600 million of which was transferred to the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant (SIBG), with R4.4 billion shifted within the EIG. While R11 billion was allocated to the EIG for the current financial year in the February budget, the reprioritisation and reduction of these funds has left only R4.3 billion for planned projects.

Recommendation:

10. The schools to be constructed with the remaining R4.3 billion should not be delayed as slow implementation is the main cause of lack of basic services at schools. Therefore, we recommend the Provincial department prioritises the construction of schools over the medium term with clear targets set out in quarterly intervals. The department should produce progress reports which should be presented to the Provincial legislature.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the wake of COVID-19, countries had to implement lockdowns and regulations to prevent the spread of the virus. This Budget Brief focuses on the national and provincial budget allocations towards the provision of infrastructure facilities for public schools. The brief first looks at the national education budget, focusing on the infrastructure budget allocations as well the provisions of information communication technology resources to schools and finally the provision of water and sanitation to schools across South Africa.

We then specifically look at the Eastern Cape education budget. It should be noted that at the time of writing this brief, the Eastern Cape Department of Education had not tabled its 2020 special adjustments budget to specifically highlight how the provincial department was going to tackle the Coronavirus. The budget will show how funds allocated in February have been shifted within the department for Coronavirus intervention purposes.

When the Eastern Cape MEC for education, Mr Fundile Gade, tabled the 2020/21 budget and policy speech on the 26th of May 2020, infrastructure was highlighted as one of the main priorities of the department. As part of the infrastructure provision during the lockdown and Coronavirus crisis, the ECDoE committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of learners by sanitising classrooms prior to the start of the school day; sanitising hands when entering classrooms; and using alternative structures such as halls as classrooms ensure physical distancing.

South Africa's public school infrastructure is marred by unequal infrastructure provision – a total of 3710 schools across the country have pit latrines. According to the 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), the Eastern Cape alone has 1 587 schools with pit latrines as the only form of toilets.¹⁰

Lack of access to technology continues to be an obstacle to sustained learning for learners from rural areas and disadvantaged families. While some schools are able to provide learners with printed learning material, online resources and virtual learning, others are without any resources of support.¹¹

We are, however, concerned that the budget allocations to provide infrastructure facilities to public ordinary schools continues to decrease. While the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) was allocated R35 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), it is concerning that the Eastern Cape budget for this grant was reduced by 2% in real terms from a 2019/20 allocation of R 1.58 billion to R1.55 billion in 2020/21.

In our 2018 Budget Brief, we noted that the continued budget reductions will affect the realisation of the rights of learners to quality basic education, through the delayed delivery of infrastructure projects, as one example.¹² The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) was allocated R37.76 billion (44% of the provincial budget of R85.90 billion), in the 2020/21 financial year, increasing by 4% from 2019/20.¹³ However, while these increases are noted, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Infrastructure Development programme's budgets were reduced in nominal terms by 5% and 3% respectively.

It is of high concern that the 2019/20 third quarterly report of the ECDoE does not provide quarterly results for the provision of infrastructure facilities to schools. For example, on the number of public ordinary schools provided with water supply, the report only provides an annual target of 178 and nothing is reported on the actual delivery. It is not enough for the department to just mention that "this is an annual target; actual performance will be reported in quarter 4"¹⁴. There needs to be clarity on what has been done per quarter towards the achievement of the annual target. Similarly, on the number of public ordinary schools supplied with sanitation facilities, the quarterly report does not report on actual per quarter delivery, making it difficult to gauge the department's progress towards meeting the annual target of 178.

¹⁰ 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)

¹¹ Brodie, M., McFarlane, R and Ally, N. 2020. Learning in the time of Covid-19: Equitable support during school closures desperately needed. Accessed from: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-21-learning-in-the-time-of-covid-19-equitable-support-during-school-closures-desperately-needed/>

¹² Fobosi, SC. 2018. Education Budget Brief. Public Service Accountability Monitor, Rhodes University, Makhanda

¹³ Eastern Cape Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) 2020/21. Accessed from: <https://www.ectreasury.gov.za/Files.aspx>

¹⁴ *Ibid* at page 65.

1. NATIONAL SPECIAL ADJUSTMENTS BUDGET

Figure 1 below illustrates an overview of the key adjustment to national expenditure. A total of R21.5 billion is allocated to Health; an increase to the original budget tabled in February 2020. Transfers of R40.9 billion will be made to support vulnerable households over a period of 6 months. Reductions to other programmes equating to R12.5 billion will fund COVID-19-related spending and catch-up programmes in Basic and Higher Education and Training. Local government support will amount to R20 billion, including an increase of R11 billion in the local government equitable share.

Loss of revenue as a result of lockdown regulations is expected to have an adverse impact on various entities such as the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA). To mitigate these impacts which include possible job losses - R 5.96 billion is allocated.

As with the allocations to municipalities and frontline services, there is a need to ensure close monitoring and transparent reporting on the use funds. For this – we advocate for the National Treasury and relevant Parliamentary committees to work closely with the Auditor-General and civic formations in addition to publishing performance and expenditure data in accessible formats online.¹⁵

Generally – at both national and provincial levels, there is a scarcity of information pertaining to the disbursement and use of COVID-19 relief funds and related contracts with suppliers. The disaggregation and open publication of this data is critical for effective oversight and public awareness. One of the impacts of this scarcity and poor transparency is the creation of opportunities for corruption for compromised officials and private contractors. Budget and contracting transparency continues to be a significant area of opacity at the provincial and district levels. Disaggregated programme, district and school-level data is difficult for members of the public and civic actors to find. This challenge is not unique to the education sector and has an adverse impact on the efficacy and timeliness of oversight by members of the provincial legislature.

It is, however, encouraging to note proactive disclosure of COVID-19 supplier contract data by the Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury in machine-readable formats; an important development.¹⁶ In addition to this, it is recommended that relevant provincial departments must engage community members, school governing bodies and the Provincial Legislature both to determine community needs as well as to provide detailed information pertaining to the disbursements and use of COVID-19 funds across districts and schools. This should include the publication of the up-to date plans as approved by the provincial Executive via key government websites and local media.

¹⁵ The National Treasury and [Imali Yethu](#)'s budget data portal [vulekamali](#) should be utilized for this purpose

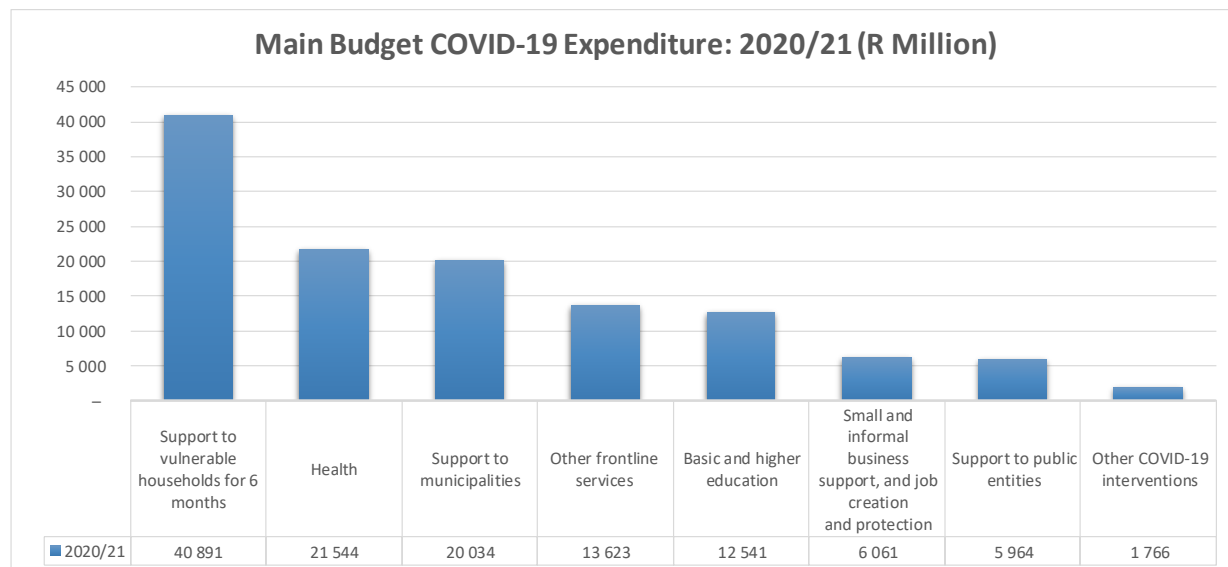
¹⁶ <https://www.ectreasury.gov.za/Files.aspx> (see under Announcements and COVID19 Suppliers categories).

Accessed 20 August 2020

There are also opportunities to enhance public participation during this period – particularly to increase the chances of early-detection of improper practice and misuse of resources. All schools must be informed of what intervention they should expect from the Education Department and be provided with a timeline for delivery and quantities. Currently – the Eastern Cape Department of Education’s website does not provide such information and is, in fact, difficult to navigate. The regular publication of related memoranda and circulars pertaining to this and school re-opening instructions on public platforms and critical.

There must be full transparency on the utilisation of COVID-19 funds. It is also important that contract information published is comprehensive; the Provincial Treasury must publish manuals, guidelines, practice notes, circulars or instructions issued by both the National Treasury and Provincial Treasury in order to increase awareness of the benchmarks pricing regulations for personal protective equipment (PPE) and related COVID-19 goods and services.

Figure 1: Overview of key adjustments to national expenditure



2. COVID-19 AND BASIC EDUCATION

South Africa - like the rest of the world - is currently dealing with the Coronavirus, a novel virus which has forced all nations to rethink how they plan and implement socio-economic programmes. On 26 March 2020, South Africa went on a full national lockdown to curb the spread of the virus as well as prepare the health sector for the imminent rise in infections and deaths. As of 24 August 2020 – South Africa has recorded over 611 450 positive cases and 12 200 deaths.¹⁷

¹⁷ COVID-19 Corona Virus South African Resource Portal. Accessed from: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/2020/08/18/update-on-covid-19-18th-august-2020/>

The impact on education has been severe. Millions of children the world over are at home, with South Africa reinstating school closures from 28 July 2020. These recent closures have been met with mixed responses, with the South African Human Rights Commission calling the move regrettable and unjust.

Unfortunately, the Special Adjustments Budget tabled on 24 June 2020 by Minister Mboweni did little to address the inequalities that are prevalent in the sector. Instead, further cuts were imposed on a budget that was already diminishing. South Africa has a school infrastructure issue and this pandemic has shown just how far the inequality goes.

As will be highlighted below, access to information communication technology resources is unequal, with millions of learners not having access to computers at school. This means millions of learners are unable to utilise e-learning facilities during this time, which has been reserved for the middle and upper classes. This translates to learners in Quintile 4 and 5 schools continuing with the curriculum and being set to progress to the next grade, while learners in government funded schools, mainly Quintile 1-3, remain behind. This goes to show that infrastructure is not the only point of unequal access in the education sector.

Despite the challenges this brief will outline, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the special budget, tabled by Finance Minister Tito Mboweni did not provide additional funding to the basic education sector, instead it rolled back key programmes to fund COVID-19 costs.¹⁸

Below are the major shifts to the Department of Basic Education's budget:

- R2.1 billion has now been cut from the budget.
- A net total of R1.7 billion has been cut from school infrastructure grants alone, and a further R4.4 billion has been reallocated from these grants to cover Covid-19 expenditure needs.
- No new funds have been allocated to the National School Nutrition Programme. R50 million has been reprioritised within the programme to fund emergency hygiene measures.

¹⁸ National Treasury. 2020. Supplementary Budget Review. Available at: <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2020S/review/FullSBR.pdf>

Table 1: Revised Allocations by programme

Programme (R'000)	2020/21 Main Appropriation	Suspension of funds (Covid- 19)	Allocation to Covid- 19	Total Net Change	New Appropriation
Administration	519 401	-24 360	10 000	-14 360	505 041
Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring	2 025 646	-231 157	50 000	-181 157	1 844 489
Teachers, Education Human Resources and Institutional Development	1 437 738	-20 390	-	-20 390	1 417 348
Planning, Information and Assessment	13 355 974	-6 812 009	5 000 000	1 812 009	11 543 965
Educational Enrichment Services	7 989 473	-157 282	90 000	-67 282	7 922 191
Total	25 328 232	-7 245 198	5 150 000	-2 095 198	23 233 034

According to the Adjustments Appropriations bill these were the cuts under each programme:¹⁹

- Programme One: administration R14.4 million was cut under goods and services, with R10 million of that reprioritised for COVID-19 purposes within the department.
- Programme Two: had R188.2 million moved: R113.2 million from goods and services and R68 million from the Maths, Science and Technology Grant.
- Programme Three: was cut by R20.4 million of which R15.7 million was from goods and services and R4.7 million from the South African Council for Educators operations budget.
- Programme Four: had the most cut of R 1.8 billion of which R131 million was from goods and services, R2.2 billion from the Education Infrastructure Grant, but R540 million was transfers back to the programme as a payment for capital assets to the School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant.
- Programme Five: was cut by R67.3 million. This was made up of R7.7 million from good and services and R59.6 million from the HIV and AIDS (Life Sills Education) Grant

¹⁹ National Treasury. 2020. Adjustments Appropriations Bill. Available at:
[http://www.treasury.gov.za/legislation/bills/2020/\[B10-2020\]%20\(Adjustments%20Appropriation\).pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.za/legislation/bills/2020/[B10-2020]%20(Adjustments%20Appropriation).pdf)

2.1 EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGET

For this Special budget, no new funding has been allocated to school infrastructure. Instead, existing budgets have been cut and money has been shifted around to cover Covid-19 emergency costs.

Table 2: Changes to education infrastructure grant funding

Grant (R'000)	Main Appropriation 2020/21	Additional funds	Funds cut	Net Change	New Appropriation
EIG	11 007 967	0	-2 221 000	-2 221 000	8 786 967
SIBG	1 736 413	600 000	-60 000	540 000	2 330 413
Total infrastructure funding	12 744 380	600 000	-2 281 000	-1 681 000	11 063 380

Education Infrastructure Grant

The Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) allocates school infrastructure funding to provinces.

- R2.2 billion has been cut from the grant – R600 million of which was transferred to the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant (SIBG).
- R4.4 billion has been shifted within the EIG. This is one of the largest reprioritisations in the budget and is aimed at funding the purchase of sanitisation materials and equipment, as well as funding salaries for temporary staff to screen learners and clean and sanitise school facilities²⁰.
- While R11 billion was allocated to the EIG for the current financial year in the February budget, the reprioritisation and reduction of these funds has left only R4.3 billion for planned projects.

School Infrastructure Backlog Grant (SIBG)

²⁰National Treasury. 2020. Division of Revenue Amendment Bill. Available at [http://www.treasury.gov.za/legislation/bills/2020/\[B09-2020\]20\(Division%20of%20Revenue%20Amendment%20Bill\).pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.za/legislation/bills/2020/[B09-2020]20(Division%20of%20Revenue%20Amendment%20Bill).pdf)

The nationally administered SIBG will receive an additional R600 million - from the EIG - to provide temporary access to water and sanitation in schools. A total of R60 million has been cut from this grant.

2.2 EASTERN CAPE COVID-19 RESPONSE

At the time of drafting this brief, the Eastern Cape Department of Education had not tabled its 2020 Special Adjustments Budget. However, from a number of communications from the Premier, Oscar Mabuyane and Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, we have a picture of how the Eastern Cape fairs in preparation.

After the initial school closures on 18 March 2020, in his report to President Ramaphosa on the 14th of May 2020, Premier of the Eastern Cape Oscar Mabuyane explained that the province currently has 3 358 (three thousand three hundred and fifty-eight) schools in need of water tanks.²¹

Due to the nature of the Coronavirus and the type of health protocols that need to be followed, it was important for government departments across the country to ensure that all facilities had access to water and sanitation services as well as personal protective equipment to not only ensure compliance, but adherence to health recommendations. Therefore the provision of such services became part of immediate service delivery measures for government, including the education department.

Regarding the 3 358 schools in need of water tanks, the ECDoE reported this as “the initial figure”.²² From this figure, the ECDoE confirmed 929²³ schools (shown in table 3 below) as requiring additional tanks and logically additional water.²⁴

²¹ Eastern Cape Province report on Covid-19 containment and mitigation plan. Report to His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, 14 May 2020.

²² *Ibid*

²³ While the ECDoE reported 931 schools as requiring additional tanks, our calculations (using the figures it provided during its presentation) show that are 929 schools requiring additional tanks. The department provided a total of 136 schools for the Alfred Nzo East and we got 135. It also reported a total of 118 for OR Tambo Inland district and we got 117. This shows that there was an error from their department’s side in calculating or reporting the number for the two districts.

²⁴ The Department of Basic Education “is providing this infrastructure to this cohort of schools.

Table 3: Schools Requiring Additional Water Tanks by Districts²⁵

District	Primary schools with Grade 7	Combined schools with Grade 7	Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) schools with Grade 12	Secondary schools with Grade 12	Combined schools with Grade 12	Total
Alfred Nzo East	21	19	0	8	1	49
Alfred Nzo West	93	23	1	16	2	135
Amathole East	66	27	0	12	0	105
Amathole West	38	3	0	9	0	50
Buffalo City	34	0	0	13	0	47
Chris Hani East	46	20	0	10	0	76
Chris Hani West	25	20	0	22	3	70
Joe Gqabi	13	8	0	2	1	24
Nelson Mandela	26	2	0	9	0	37
OR Tambo Coastal	84	89	0	20	0	193
OR Tambo Inland	79	22	0	16	0	117
Sarah Baartman	15	3	0	6	2	26
Grand Total	540	236	1	143	9	929

Table 3 above shows that from the total number of 929 schools requiring additional water tanks, the following districts have high numbers (over hundred) of schools that need additional water: OR Tambo Coastal (193), Alfred Nzo East (135), OR Tambo Inland (117), and Amathole East (105). The high numbers in all districts are at primary schools with Grade 7. Given the history of poor performance by the DBE and ECDoE, it is unlikely that these schools will be provided with water tanks before 1st of June 2020 (when they were scheduled to first reopen). In addition to the number of 929 schools requiring additional water tanks, 2427 (two four hundred and twenty-seven) schools “need water to be replenished into the existing tanks”.²⁶

Under these conditions, the schools are not ready to open as learners need access to proper infrastructure and running water to prevent the spread of the virus.

We call on the Eastern Cape Legislature to oblige the MEC for Education and his Department to provide detailed and regular reporting on the expenditure and delivery of water tanks, PPE and other related COVID-19 relief.

²⁵ Eastern Cape Department of Education Progress Update Presentation, 21 May 2020. Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, Portfolio Committee on Education.

²⁶ Eastern Cape Department of Education Progress Update Presentation, 21 May 2020. Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, Portfolio Committee on Education.

3. NATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION BUDGET 2020/21

The February 2020 allocation to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) increased by 4%, in nominal terms, from the October 2019 adjusted budget of R24.46 billion in 2019/20 to R25.32 billion in 2020/21. This section will discuss the national basic education budget, focusing on the infrastructure grants; information communication technology and water, sanitation and electricity provisions.

It is worth noting that the focus of Budget 2020, across all spheres of government, has been to curb public spending to help contain the national debt and improve economic growth. While it is paramount for the government to cut public spending, the impact of the cuts has a negative effect in different departments and within different programmes across Departments.

While this 4% overall nominal increase between 2019 and 2020 is noted, it is concerning that the budget allocations to provide infrastructure facilities to public ordinary schools continues to decrease as discussed below on the section on infrastructure.

3.1 INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGET ALLOCATION

In line with the government priorities and the medium-strategic framework, the 2020 budget is prioritising spending on socio-economic infrastructure such as schools, water, sanitation, health facilities, energy, roads and transport.²⁷ In his 2020 budget speech, Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni announced the following: “in the education sector, investment goes to new schools, replacing schools constructed with inappropriate materials, and providing them with water, electricity and sanitation. In 2020/21 the maths, science and technology grant will introduce coding and robotics to learners in grades R to 3 as announced by the President.”²⁸ The Minister further announced that education infrastructure allocations are adjusted by R5.2 billion over the medium-term. According to the 2020 Estimates of National Expenditure, spending on the education infrastructure grant and the school infrastructure backlogs grants accounts for 51% (R41.4 billion) of the Department of Basic Education’s over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).²⁹

The Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) is allocated R35 billion over the MTEF to build schools and upgrade new and existing school infrastructure. The School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant (SIBG) is allocated R6.5 billion to provide sanitation, water, electricity to schools and to replace schools constructed of inappropriate materials. From this allocation to the SIBG, R1.7 billion will be used to build 31 new schools; to provide water and sanitation to 125 and 691 schools

²⁷ Public sector infrastructure updated. Accessed at:

<http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/National%20Budget/2020/review/Annexure%20D.pdf>

²⁸ 2020 Budget Speech, at page 13. Accessed at:

<http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/National%20Budget/2020/speech/speech.pdf>

²⁹ 2020 Estimates of National Expenditure. Accessed at:

<http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/National%20Budget/2020/ene/FullENE.pdf>

respectively.³⁰ However, while we welcome these announcements, it is difficult to reconcile these commitments with the reductions in the provincial infrastructure grants.³¹

3.2 INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

On the 17th of March 2020, the Portfolio Committee on Education was briefed by the DBE on the progress made with the roll-out of information communication technology (ICT) in the basic education sector.³² In its presentation, the DBE mentioned that the timeline for the implementation of the ICT rollout was between 2019 and 2024. The reality is that in 2020, most public schools across the country do not have access to e-education facilities. The implementation of ICT is far below the goal of the White Paper 7 on e-Education (2004) which requires that, 'every South African learner in the general and further education and training bands will be able to use ICTs confidently and creatively to help develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve personal goals and to be full participants in the global community by 2013'.³³ This is a seven-year-old commitment that is far from being reached, with full implementation being proposed by 2024 – 20 years after the initial introduction of the White Paper 7.

DBE has however finalised its plan for the deployment of digital Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) through ICTs at all levels of the basic education sector in 2019. This deployment will be implemented in the following levels³⁴:

Pre-Implementation Phase (2019/20):

- **Phase 1 (2021/22):** Multi-grade, Special, Farm Schools. Special Schools & Quintile 1 and 2 Schools.
- **Phase 2 (2022/23):** Quintile 1 – 3 and Special Schools.
- **Phase 3 (2024/24):** Quintile 4 – 5.

With the continued disruptions in contact learning, this type of intervention needs to be fast-tracked, to not only equip schools with connectivity, but skill teachers in delivery and learners in use.

Learners from public schools continue to be left behind in their learning. President Ramaphosa announced on the 23rd of July 2020, the public schools would go on a four-week break from Monday 27 July 2020, with phased re-joining for matriculants and grade 7 learners. What was stark about his announcement is the continued teaching and learning at private schools.

³⁰ Public sector infrastructure updated. Accessed from

<http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/National%20Budget/2020/review/Annexure%20D.pdf>

³¹ Equal Education. 2020. Mboweni tables a shrinking basic education budget – EE. Accessed from

<https://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/mboweni-tables-a-shrinking-basic-education-budget->

<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/30052/>

³² *Ibid* PowerPoint presentation, slide 4.

³⁴ Portfolio Committee Presentation. 17 March 2020. ICT Roll-out. Accessed from: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/30052/>

According to the 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), out of 19 822 schools in South Africa (excluding micro schools), 7 220 (36.42%) have computer centres; while out of 4 234 Eastern Cape schools only 528 (12.47%) have computer centres. This makes it almost impossible for learners in over 63.5% schools in the country to take up the e-learning opportunities as they may not be equipped to use online resources for education purposes.

3.3 SANITATION AND WATER SUPPLY

The 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) also outlines the levels of water and sanitation provision in South Africa. As of August 2019, 3 710 schools across the country (except the Northern and Western Cape) had only pit latrines as a form of sanitation.

While there are no schools without water, far too many have an unreliable and temporary source: 1 148 depend on mobile tankers; 7 449 harvest rainwater.

In her statement on 30 April 2020, the Minister of Basic Education – Angie Motshekga – mentioned that since 26 March 2020 the basic education sector has held just less than fifty (50) meetings with different stakeholders. Following the tabled budget and the uncertainty to reopen schools under the current circumstances, it is recommended that the national and provincial departments of education should adjust the tabled budget to be responsive to the lockdown context. All schools should be provided with sanitation as a matter of urgency. Schools cannot reopen when they still do not have access to water.

4. EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUDGET

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) has been allocated R37.77 billion (44%) of the provincial budget of R85.90 billion), in the 2020/21 financial year, this was a 4% increase from 2019/20 budget.³⁵ While these increases are noted, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Infrastructure Development programmes budgets were reduced in nominal terms by 5% and 3% respectively, as shown in Table 4 below.

³⁵ Eastern Cape Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) 2020/21

Table 4: Budget Allocations by Programme

Programmes	Adjusted Appropriation	Nominal Medium-term estimates			Nominal Change over MTEF (%)	Nominal change between 2019 and 2020 (%)
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Administration	3 062 988	3 209 871	3 496 773	3 664 619	5%	5%
Public Ordinary Schools Education	29 709 536	30 794 351	31 631 174	32 890 427	2%	4%
Independent Schools Subsidies	135 534	141 789	153 982	161 219	4%	5%
Public Special Schools Subsidies	740 011	956 651	1 138 460	1 192 973	8%	29%
Early Childhood Development	602 070	572 702	745 670	783 238	11%	-5%
Infrastructure Development	1 585 532	1 544 114	1 564 562	1 637 343	2%	-3%
Examination and Education Related Services	501 214	549 231	562 309	587 449	2%	10%
TOTAL BUDGET	36 336 885	37 768 709	39 292 930	40 917 268	3%	4%

The allocation to the ECD programme decreased by 5% in nominal terms from the adjusted budget of R602 million in 2019/20 to R572 million in 2020/21. Such reductions will affect the access of children to quality education at the foundation phase.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown, children attending ECD centres continue being deprived to accessing education. This is made worse by the fact that ECD operators are not included in the R500 billion Covid-19 relief plan. A report titled, *The Plight of the ECD Workforce*, discovered that “68% of ECD operators (inclusive of ECD centres, playgroups, day mothers and other early learning programmes) are worried that they will not be able to reopen after the lockdown because 99% reported that caregivers have stopped paying fees after the nationwide closures on 18th March”.³⁶ The closures of ECD centres due to the Covid-19 meant that children missed out on early learning and stimulation and nutritious meals.³⁷

³⁶ Nelson Mandela Foundation. 2020. Media Statement: An urgent call to support the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector. Accessed from <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/an-urgent-call-to-support-the-early-childhood-development-ecd-sector>

³⁷ The Plight of the Workforce: An urgent call for relief in the wake of Covid-19. April 2020. Accessed from <http://www.bridge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Final-report-The-plight-of-the-ECD-workforce-1.pdf>

4.1 EASTERN CAPE INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGET

Table 4 above shows that the budget allocations to the Infrastructure Development programme of the ECDoE decreased by 3%, in nominal terms, from the adjusted budget of R1.59 billion in 2019/20 to R1.55 billion in 2020/21. The programme experienced reductions in its sub-programme of Public Ordinary Schools. This sub-programme has the purpose of providing and maintaining infrastructure facilities for the Public Ordinary Schools programme, as shown in Table 2 below.

When the Eastern Cape MEC for education, Mr Fundile Gade, tabled the 2020/21 budget and policy speech on the 26th of May 2020, he noted that “for this financial year, resources earmarked for infrastructure delivery will be diverted towards securing Covid-19 essentials and supporting schools in meeting all minimum requirements for a safe learning environment”.³⁸ We welcome the move by the ECDoE to earmark the funds as follows: reprioritise resources towards the purchasing of water tanks to all identified schools; liaise with the municipalities to ensure safe and reliable water supply; provide sanitation packages to identified schools; and providing additional mobile classrooms so as to meet the requirements for social distancing in schools.³⁹ However, temporary solutions should never trump long term plans and commitments. As it stands, public schools across the province have been closed for the majority of the first quarter of 2020/21.

Permanent water and sanitation supply should have been prioritised over this period versus the temporary provision of water and sanitation services. The ECDoE has continued to fail to meet annual delivery targets for a number of years as will be discussed below, and this pandemic has once again remaindered everyone the cost of these unmet target.

Table 5: Programme 6 - Sub-programme Budget Allocations

Sub-programmes	Adjusted Appropriation	Nominal Medium-term estimates			Nominal Change over MTEF (%)	Nominal change between 2019 and 2020 (%)
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Administration	220 455	244 132	275 848	332 118	11%	11%
Public Ordinary Schools	1 200 356	1 032 936	1 034 730	1 177 540	4%	-14%
Public Special Schools	52 047	127 603	76 197	53 438	-25%	145%
Early Childhood Development	112 674	139 443	177 787	74 247	-19%	24%
Total	1 585 532	1 544 114	1 564 562	1 637 343	2%	-3%

³⁸ Eastern Cape Department of Education 2020/21 Budget and Policy Speech at page 20.

³⁹ *Ibid*

Table 5 above shows that the infrastructure development allocation to the Public Ordinary Schools sub-programme decreased by 14%, in nominal terms, from the adjusted budget of R1.20 billion in 2019/20 to R1.03 billion in 2020/21.⁴⁰ According to the 2020/21 Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE), such decreases in this programme were due to the reductions in the overall Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG). This decrease is for capital assets (buildings and other fixed structures), as shown in Table 3 below, due to the reductions on the EIG.

In our 2018 Budget Brief we explained that the allocation to the infrastructure development programme decreased by 10% in nominal terms from R1.7 billion in 2017/18 to R1.5 billion in 2018/19. The reason for this decline was due to the reduction in the funding for two conditional grants: The Education Infrastructure Grant and Maths Science and Technology Grant. There seems to be a continued decreasing of the budget.

Table 6 below shows budget allocation by economic classification to the Infrastructure Development programme. Looking at this table, it is clear that budget allocations towards the compensation of employees grew by 13% in nominal terms from the adjusted appropriation of R16 million in 2019/20 to R18 million in 2020/21 due to the effect of current underspending which resulted from delays in the filling of posts for technical personnel in infrastructure posts.⁴¹

Public sector infrastructure spending over the MTEF is estimated at R815 billion; of this amount, the government plans to spend R59.1 billion over the MTEF on infrastructure for the education sector.⁴²

⁴⁰ Eastern Cape Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) 2020/21

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² Public sector infrastructure updated. Accessed from <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/National%20Budget/2020/review/Annexure%20D.pdf>

Table 6: Infrastructure Development - Allocation by Economic Classification

R'000	Adjusted Appropriation	Nominal Medium-term estimates			Nominal Change over MTEF (%)	Nominal change between 2019 and 2020 (%)	Real Medium-term estimates			Real Change over MTEF (%)	Real change between 2019 and 2020 (%)
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Current payments	227 066	298 126	281 764	349 583	5%	31%	293 162	258 020	331 997	4%	29%
Compensation of employees	16 000	18 000	20 000	20 960	5%	13%	17 700	18 315	19 906	4%	11%
Salaries and wages	12 089	13 874	15 647	16 398	6%	15%	13 643	14 328	15 573	5%	13%
Social contributions	3 911	4 126	4 353	4 562	3%	5%					
Goods and services	211 066	280 126	261 764	328 623	5%	33%	275 461	239 705	312 092	4%	31%
Minor assets	450	-43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure and planning	110 361	150 072	194 274	280 706	23%	36%	147 573	177 903	266 585	22%	34%
Contractors	1 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inventory: other supplies	14 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property payments	83 445	127 354	64 628	44 918	-29%	53%	125 233	59 182	42 658	-30%	50%
Travel and subsistence	1 810	2 700	2 862	2 999	4%	49%	2 655	2 621	2 848	2%	47%
Payments of capital assets	1 358 466	1 245 988	1 282 798	1 287 760	1%	-8%	1 225 240	1 174 697	1 222 979	0%	-10%
Buildings and other fixed structures	1 358 466	1 245 988	1 282 798	1 287 760	1%	-8%	1 225 240	1 174 697	1 222 979	0%	-10%
Machinery and equipment	1 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other machinery and equipment	1 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1 585 532	1 544 114	1 564 562	1 637 343	2%	-3%	1 518 401	1 432 717	1 554 977	1%	-4%

⁴³ Figures not available in the Estimates of the Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) 2020/21

It is concerning that the payments of capital assets (buildings and other fixed structures) decreased by 8% in nominal terms and 10% in real terms. These budget reductions will delay the completion of the targeted additional classrooms or existing public ordinary schools (including replacement schools) to be built.

For example, of the 285 targets, the department managed to build 42 classrooms by the end of the third quarter in 2019/20 at the following four schools: *Mfiki Primary School*; *Vusukhanyo Junior Public School*; *Cove Ridge Primary Schools*; *Sizamulwazi Public School*; and *Sitoza Senior Secondary School*.⁴⁴⁴⁵

4.2 INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING AND PERFORMANCE: A FOCUS ON THE 2019/20 THIRD QUARTER

According to the 2019/20 third quarterly report of the Eastern Cape Department of Education, the department only spent 79% which was R28.81 billion of the allocated total budget of R33.33 billion. Table 7 below shows that the department underspent by 26% which was R7.52 billion by the end of the third quarter.

⁴⁴ Eastern Cape Department of Education 2019/20 Third Quarterly Report, at page 66.

⁴⁵ More project information regarding budget allocation, spending and project status for all these projects was not accessible at the time of the writing of this analysis. The information was not available on the third quarterly report of the ECDoE. It was also not available on Vulekamali at the time of the writing of this analysis. We had to lodge a PAIA request with the hope of providing detailed project information.

Table 7: Programme Expenditure: 2019/20

Programmes	Adjusted Appropriation	Expenditure Quarter 3	Expenditure as % of adjusted appropriation	Over/Under expenditure	Over/Under-Expenditure as %
	2019/20 R'000	R'000		R'000	
Administration	3 062 988	2 262 265	74%	-800 723	-35%
Public Ordinary Schools Education	29 709 536	23 714 636	80%	-5 994 900	-25%
Independent Schools Subsidies	135 534	134 820	99%	-714	-1%
Public Special Schools Subsidies	740 011	642 837	87%	-97 174	-15%
Early Childhood Development	602 070	377 076	63%	-224 994	-60%
Infrastructure Development	1 585 532	1 210 023	76%	-375 509	-31%
Examination and Education Related Services	501 214	474 738	95%	-26 476	-6%
TOTAL BUDGET	36 336 885	28 816 395	79%	-7 520 490	-26%

The department only spent 76% (which was R1.21 billion) of the allocated R1.58 billion for the Infrastructure Development programme, underspending by 31% (R375 million) by the end of the third quarter in 2019/20. Underspending was mainly attributed to the payments of capital assets (buildings).⁴⁶

It is worrisome that the department continues to underspend in all its programmes, with the Early Childhood Development having incurred the highest underspending by 60% (which is R224 million) of the allocated budget of R602 million. This underspending will continue to result in the National Treasury shifting funds from the priority areas to other programmes.

The Eastern Cape MEC for Education, Mr Fundile Gade, when he tabled the 2020/21 policy and budget speech reported that “in the 2019/20 financial year, 307 school infrastructure projects were completed”.⁴⁷ These projects include: Sive Special School and Healdtdown Senior Secondary School (one of the historical projects in the province) with a capacity of 78 beds.

SANITATION AND WATER SUPPLY

The ECDoE is failing to provide proper sanitation to public schools and continues to experience delays in the completion of infrastructure projects due to budget reductions and poor performance.

⁴⁶ Eastern Cape Department of Education 2019/20 Third Quarterly Report.

⁴⁷ Eastern Cape Department of Education 2020/21 Policy and Budget Speech.

We explained the context of poor performance in our 2019 Expenditure Tracking Report and noted that the department only supplied water to 94 of the targeted 169 public ordinary schools. The tabled 2019/20 Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure explained that 5 of the targeted 178 public ordinary schools were supplied with sanitation facilities by the end of December 2019. This poor performance is likely to continue in the current financial year of 2020/21 where the ECDoE targets to provide sanitation facilities to 185 public ordinary schools.

In its progress update presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Education during a virtual meeting on 21 May 2020, the ECDoE noted that “from 2018 there were 3157 schools with no form of or insufficient sanitation”.⁴⁸

According to the 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), the Eastern Cape alone has 1 587 schools with pit latrines as the only form of toilets.⁴⁹ In addition, there are 2768 (two thousand seven-hundred and sixty-eight) schools in need of sanitation. In its progress update presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Education during a virtual meeting on 21 May 2020, the ECDoE reported that “in 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years, 121 and 79 schools respectively were provided with adequate sanitation through ASIDI and the EIG”.⁵⁰

It is concerning that the 2019/20 third quarterly report of the ECDoE does not provide quarterly reports for the provision of infrastructure facilities to schools. For example, on the number of public ordinary schools provided with water supply, the report only provides an annual target of 178 and nothing is reported on the actuals. This is a result of poor planning, a lack of transparency and accountability. It is not enough for the department to just mention that “this is an annual target; actual performance will be reported in quarter 4”⁵¹, it needs to be clear what has been done per quarter towards the achievement of the annual target. Similarly, on the number of public ordinary schools supplied with sanitation facilities, the quarterly report does not have actuals on the quarters, with this making it difficult to gauge the performance of the department towards meeting the annual target of 178.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury and provincial Office of the Auditor General must engage community members, school governing bodies and the Provincial Legislature to provide detailed information pertaining to the disbursements of COVID-19 funds across districts and schools. This should include the publication of the up-to date plans as approved by the provincial Executive via key government websites and local media.⁵²

⁴⁸ Eastern Cape Department of Education Progress Update Presentation, 21 May 2020. Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, Portfolio Committee on Education.

⁴⁹ 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)

⁵⁰ Eastern Cape Department of Education Progress Update Presentation, 21 May 2020. Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, Portfolio Committee on Education.

⁵¹ 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS).

⁵² Notable interventions, for instance, is the publication via the Provincial Treasury’s website of COVID-19 supplier data to the Eastern Cape and other provinces.

2. All schools must be informed of what intervention they should expect from the Education Department and be provided with a timeline for delivery and quantities. Currently – the Eastern Cape Department of Education’s website does not provide such information. The regular publication of related memoranda and circulars pertaining to this and school re-opening instructions on public platforms and critical.
3. In addition to the publication of information on the utilisation of COVID-19 funds listing comprehensive contract information on the Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury and Education Department’s websites, the Provincial Treasury must publish manuals, guidelines, practice notes, circulars or instructions issued by both the National Treasury and Provincial Treasury.
4. Underspensing has been an issue in the province, we therefore recommend a strengthened system to monitor spending and infrastructure delivery on a monthly basis, which feeds into the quarterly reports. The Provincial legislature should require regular reports on progress.
5. Permanent water and sanitation solutions should be prioritised, with all backlogs being dealt with in the next 18 months.
6. We call on the Eastern Cape Legislature to oblige the MEC for Education and his Department to provide detailed and regular reporting on the expenditure and delivery of water tanks, PPE and other related COVID-19 relief.
7. The Legislature should implement oversight visits to all schools that required water and sanitation to ensure delivery, and monitor quality. They need to ensure permanent delivery solutions are installed over the next three months.
8. The delivery of ICT services and computer labs to schools should be fast-tracked with the setting up of quarterly delivery targets which should be reported against to the Provincial Legislature.
9. The department needs to prioritise the introduction of ICT services at all schools, with specialised teacher and learner training. This needs to be rolled out within the first quarter of 2021.
10. The schools to be constructed with the remaining R4.3 billion should not be delayed as slow implementation is the main cause of lack of basic services as schools. Therefore, we recommend the Provincial department prioritises the construction of schools over the medium term with clear targets set out in quarterly intervals. The department should produce progress reports which should be presented to the Provincial legislature.

OUR ORGANISATION

The PSAM was founded in 1999 as a research project in the Rhodes University Department of Sociology. Its initial aim was to monitor incidents of corruption within the Eastern Cape government. From 2005, recognising the systemic nature of poor governance and corruption in the province, the PSAM began a concerted advocacy effort to systematically strengthen public resource management by key Eastern Cape government departments.

In 2007, PSAM introduced a training and academic component. The training component has developed to be what is known as the Regional Learning Programme and the academic component has changed to become what is known as the Advocacy Impact Programme. The various activities and interventions by PSAM over the years have emphasised the on-going need for greater and improved accountability interventions by civil society organisations across the region. Through our work we seek to achieve improved networking and advocacy to leverage impact and enhanced learning so that achievements are shared, evaluated and used to bolster social accountability interventions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Visit psam.org.za or follow us on [@PSAM_AFRICA](https://twitter.com/PSAM_AFRICA)

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