



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

WCPP 11/4/10

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, 11 April 2024 (09h00), Virtual via MS Teams

(The National Minister Finance to brief the Committee on the budget (proposed costing and funding) of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill [B 2B-2024])

PRESENT

Members:

Democratic Alliance

Baartman, DM (Chairperson)

Fry, C

Poole, C

African Christian Democratic Party

Christians, FC

Alternates

Harris, P (ANC)

Apologies

Sayed, K (ANC)

(See attached list of departmental officials and members of the public who were in attendance)

1. Welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcome the members of the Committee, the Department of National Treasury's officials, the DBE's officials and the WCED's officials and the members of the public.

2. Briefing by the National Minister Finance on the budget (proposed costing and funding) of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill [B 2B-2024].

Ms Ogalaletseng Gaarekwe, Chief Director, presented.

During their presentation, National Treasury's representatives confirmed that no allocation to fund the implementation of BELA has been made within the next three financial years and that National Treasury has not committed to funding the Bill. This contradicts previous statements made by the Department of Basic Education to the committee, in which DBE

stated that National Treasury had committed to funding the Bill. When questioned on this, DBE representatives in the meeting admitted that the Bill was “not fully funded”, and that provinces would be left to find the estimated additional R2 billion per annum for costs related to BELA implementation – including the multi-billion Rand expense associated with mandatory Grade R implementation. While DBE claimed that Grade R is funded to 70% across South Africa, neither the DBE nor National Treasury were able to provide an answer as to where the additional 30% of funding might come from. Instead, DBE suggested that provinces would have to look towards their current provincial equitable share funding to fund this.

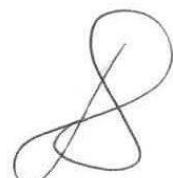
During previous committee briefings, the Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC) stated that BELA’s cost was likely to be much higher than the DBE’s claimed figure, with the Bill predicted to cost at least R17.7 billion when estimated conservatively. This does not include uncotted matters such as increases in nutrition and transport programmes.

When given an opportunity to comment, representatives of the Western Cape’s Provincial Treasury confirmed that the Western Cape will not be able to carry the additional financial burden. Representatives of the Western Cape Education Department also confirmed that their Department sees no way of implementing BELA without sacrificing other initiatives. The Western Cape is already in the process of an intergovernmental dispute with national government over a R1.7 billion funding shortfall related to the ANC government’s unilateral decision to unsustainably hike public wages.

Nevertheless, the DBE and National Treasury downplayed concerns from committee members regarding the financial implications of the Bill, and stated that “no bill is ever fully funded”.

The Committee deliberated on the presentations.

The Committee adjourned at 11h05.



MS DM BAARTMAN, MPP
CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT