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

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Education on the Annual Report of the Western  
Cape Education Department for the 2023/24 financial year**

## COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2023/24 strategic objectives of the WCPP linked to the Speaker's priorities, which have an impact on committees, are as follows:

Priority 1: Building a credible WCPP; and  
Priority 3: Strengthening the core business.

The Standing Committee on Education having deliberated on the Annual Report of the Western Cape Education Department for the year ended 31 March 2024, reports as follows:

### **1. Introduction**

Annual reports are key instruments for departments to report on performance measured against performance targets and budgets as outlined in the strategic plans and annual performance plans of departments. The Standing Committee on Education deliberated on the Annual Report of the Western Cape Education Department (hereinafter the WCED or the Department) on 16 October 2024 as part of its oversight function.

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament's Annual Report Programme for the 2023/24 financial year was publicised in newspapers. Stakeholders and members of the public were invited to attend and participate in the discussions. Before proceeding to the deliberations on the Annual Report, the Minister and the Head of Department were given the opportunity to make opening remarks.

The Department was examined on:

Part A: General Information;  
Part B: Performance Information; and  
Part D: Human Resources Management.

Members of the public were also allowed to pose questions and to give input during the discussions.

### **2. Overview**

The Minister of Education, Hon D Maynier, together with the Head of the Department, Mr B Walters, provided an overview of the successes and challenges faced by the WCED during the 2023/24 financial year. The Minister and HOD highlighted both challenges and innovative changes in the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

Minister Maynier reflected on his main budget speech of 29 March 2023, highlighting the initial optimism and ambitious plans for education in the province. He mentioned that the WCED is the largest budget allocation for any department in the province, aimed at reversing learning losses, expanding access to education, and improving support for learners with special needs. However, he noted that these plans were significantly impacted by unprecedented mid-year budget cuts, which constrained the department's ability to deliver on its vision of providing quality education for every child in the Western Cape.

Mr Walters emphasised the unprecedented nature of the mid-year budget cuts, which he had never experienced in his long tenure. Despite these challenges, he highlighted the department's achievements, including the highest budget allocation of 30.3 billion Rand across seven programmes and a 99.9% budget expenditure. He also mentioned the ambitious infrastructure programmes and the positive learning outcomes post-COVID. Mr Walters concluded by noting the department's unqualified audit with findings and expressed confidence in their efforts to manage the growing education system under significant pressure.

### **3. Key points of discussion of the Annual Report**

- 3.1. The WCED emphasised the importance of the Safe Schools Programme, which focuses on the safety of learners, teachers, and school property. The department relies on many stakeholders to ensure school safety and has established strong partnerships with both local and provincial governments.
- 3.2. The WCED reported that the over-collection of departmental receipts for 2023/24, amounting to R35.746 million is mainly due to a refund collected from the Early Childhood Development Employment Stimulus relief funds. These funds were initially paid by the Department of Social Development (DSD) to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for unemployment risk support to Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) and were transferred to the WCED following the transfer of the ECD function.
- 3.3. The matter concerning the Blue Network Consortium, which was considered irregular by SITA, was discussed by the National Assembly's Portfolio Committee on Communication.
- 3.4. The inclusion of homeschooling and other alternative education models as part of the broader strategy to meet educational demands was also discussed.
- 3.5. The Committee highlighted policy enablers with an emphasis on "doing more with less" and prioritising sectors and intervention.
- 3.6. The proposed strategy for expedited employment generation in the Western Cape includes a comprehensive approach that facilitates entrepreneurship and investment through proactive policies, capitalises on the province's inherent advantages, and positions it favourably for forthcoming industries. The Committee raised the importance of this strategy and how this could benefit learners.
- 3.7. The Committee discussed the BackOnTrack programme which is the largest learning recovery programme in the country. This programme targets learners in Grades 1-3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 12 in schools most in need of support based on their Systemic Testing Programme results.
- 3.8. Details of infrastructure development projects, including renovations and maintenance, were discussed, with an emphasis on the importance of BEE (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment) rankings of service providers.
- 3.9. The WCED was encouraged to publicise its strategic planning and initiatives to attract public and investor awareness.

- 3.10. The importance of municipalities identifying and preparing land for new school developments was discussed, including the potential for shared use with other departments and community organizations.
- 3.11. The Committee raised its concerns about the safety and roadworthiness of vehicles used for learner transport and the impact of transport cancellations on rural communities, especially related to the Morrisdale Primary School matter. This prompted further discussion on the Learner Transport Scheme and the policy framework.
- 3.12. The WCED reported the impact of budget cuts on various programmes, including the Rapid School Build programme and the Schools of Choice project. Specific expenditures on professional services, external examinations, and special projects were scrutinised.

#### **4. Public comments**

The Committee allowed members of the public to give input on the Annual Report of the WCED. Ms N Ely, a member of the public, Mr T Smith, a member of the Special Action Committee Education, Mr F Hunter, a member of the Athletics for Community Transformation, and civil society gave their input. The Minister and the Head of the Department duly responded to the issues raised by all members of the public.

#### **5. Resolutions**

The Committee RESOLVED that:

- 5.1. The World Bank be invited to brief the Committee on its Strategy in South Africa.
- 5.2. The WCED be invited to brief the Committee on its entire education funding model, including how resources are allocated and budgeted.
- 5.3. The WCED and the Department of Basic Education be invited to brief the Committee on the quintile system, which needs to be evaluated and maybe reformed to guarantee a more equitable distribution of resources, especially for schools in underprivileged areas.
- 5.4. The WCED to brief on the underperforming of schools, including an analysis of the plans for school improvement plans and the approach the WCED has taken to raise the performance of those schools.
- 5.5. The WCED to brief on the Safety Ambassadors programme. The Committee recommended that the WCED should enhance safety measure in schools by including better coordination with local law enforcement and community safety programmes with other provincial departments.
- 5.6. Based on input from the WCED and other agencies, the Committee should investigate other transversal educational models that incorporate Community Safety, DSD, and Health.
- 5.7. The committee should conduct an oversight visit to Witzenberg to assess the Learner Transport Scheme, with a focus on Morrisdale Primary School. Additionally, the Committee should be briefed by the WCED on the roadworthiness and safety of the vehicles used for learner transportation, as well as the effects of transportation cancellations on rural communities.
- 5.8. Regarding the quintile system, the Committee resolved to consult with the National Assembly's Portfolio Committee on Education. Considering the matter has been brought up numerous times, the Committee would also discuss the quintile matter with the chairpersons of the Portfolio Committees of Education in other provinces. Then possibly raise this matter as a collective.

- 5.9. The Committee would engage with the WCED and municipalities around identifying and preparing land for new school developments, placement of schools, zoning and ensuring land use rights are in place to facilitate investment.

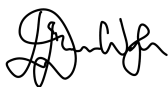
## **6. Request for Information**

The Committee REQUESTED the WCED to provide the following information:

- 6.1. A report on Blue Network Consortium's R1.2 billion tender, which the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) deemed to be irregular in terms of supply chain management.
- 6.2. The technical report on each district's pass rate.
- 6.3. The examination's diagnostic report focused on the areas in which schools had performed poorly. The examination expenses, which comprise a thorough analysis of the costs of external exams, including those related to professional services, grading, and security precautions, should also be included in the report.
- 6.4. The strategies for school improvement of the underperforming schools, or an example of one.
- 6.5. A report on the issues raised regarding the learner transport at Morrisdale Primary School.
- 6.6. The results of the 20 independent schools (illegal schools) that were investigated for non-compliance. These results should include a full report of the areas, schools' names and number of learners at those schools.
- 6.7. A report on the infrastructure matter at the Sir Lowry's Pass High School.
- 6.8. A report on the contractor tender matter relating to the Manenberg School of Skills School.
- 6.9. A list and the status of court cases that the WCED is involved with, including Mr Neumann's case.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Committee expressed its appreciation for the information provided by the Minister, the Head of Department, and the officials of the Western Cape Education Department. The Committee appreciated the oral submission made by members of the public. The Committee thanked everyone who participated in the deliberations.



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**MR L VAN WYK, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
**WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**  
**DATE: 24 November 2024**