

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT



REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ON THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

21 OCTOBER 2025

COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2024/25 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 2025, 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 21 October 2025 as part of its oversight function.

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament's Annual Report Programme for the 2024/25 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 2024/25 financial year. The Minister and HOD highlighted both challenges and innovative changes in the 2024/25 Annual Report of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

Minister D Maynier's foreword to the 2024/2025 Annual Report reflects a year of significant achievement and resilience for the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The WCED celebrated its highest matric pass rate to date, with notable improvements in Quintile 1–3 schools. He highlighted the WCED's commitment to learning recovery through the Back-on-Track programme and the rapid school infrastructure build initiative, all while navigating severe fiscal constraints. The Minister emphasised the department's continued support for vulnerable learners through sustained investment in school nutrition, learner transport, and no-fee school subsidies, underscoring a values-driven approach to inclusive education.

The Head of Department, Mr B Walters, in his Accounting Officer's report, reinforced the department's operational and strategic successes during the year under review. He noted that the WCED achieved a 99.8% budget expenditure rate, demonstrating sound financial management despite economic pressures. Mr Walters outlined key interventions, including the 1+9 teacher development model and systemic improvements in literacy and numeracy, particularly in Grades 3 and 6. He also highlighted the department's expanded infrastructure footprint, with 457 new classrooms added, and the successful integration of Grade R and Early Childhood Development into the public education system.

Together, Minister Maynier and Mr Walters presented a cohesive vision of a growing, adaptive, and performance-driven education system. Their leadership emphasised innovation, accountability, and learner-centered outcomes, even in the face of budgetary and systemic challenges.

3. Key points of discussion of the Annual Report

- 3.1. The Committee noted the implementation of key interventions by the WCED, including the Back-on-Track programme, which provided targeted tutoring and holiday classes to support learning recovery across school phases.
- 3.2. The 1+9 intervention model was welcomed, which allows Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers to receive structured professional development every tenth day, and acknowledged its positive reception among educators.
- 3.3. The Committee commended the WCED's progress in early grade literacy and numeracy, as reflected in the 2024 systemic test results. It was noted that Grade 3 Language and Grade 9 Mathematics pass rates now exceed pre-COVID-19 levels.
- 3.4. The Committee acknowledged the WCED's continued efforts to strengthen learner support across all phases to sustain and build on these academic gains.
- 3.5. The Safe Schools Programme was recognised as a critical initiative in promoting safe and conducive learning environments. The Committee noted the three-pronged approach comprising environmental upgrades, developmental interventions, and systems-focused strategies.
- 3.6. Specific safety enhancements were highlighted, including fencing repairs, electronic access gates, alarm systems, and intercom installations. The Committee also noted the deployment of 64 School Resource Officers (SROs) to 32 schools, supported through Area-Based Teams and LEAP.
- 3.7. The Committee took note of the 7,894 calls responded to and 5,765 cases logged under the Safe Schools Programme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- 3.8. The expansion of Early Childhood Development (ECD) was highlighted, including the addition of 457 classrooms and the integration of Grade R and Pre-Grade R into the public system.
- 3.9. The Committee acknowledged the WCED's strategic focus on access, enabling systems, workforce capability, and programme quality in the delivery of ECD services.
- 3.10. The universalisation of Grade R from January 2023 was noted, with 2,424 practitioners formally incorporated under the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998) and PAM regulations.
- 3.11. With regard to the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, 2024 (Act 32 of 2024), the Committee noted the WCED's strategy to increase learner access by requesting registered ECD independent sites to accommodate more learners and adjusting learner-to-teacher ratios in public schools to 1:33 where feasible.
- 3.12. The Committee reviewed the current quintile ranking system and noted the presence of no-fee schools across all quintiles, including 30 in Quintile 4 and 16 in Quintile 5 in the Western Cape. Members expressed concern that over 40 no-fee schools are now located within Quintiles 4 and 5, indicating a potential misalignment in the current classification.

- 3.13. The Committee welcomed the WCED's use of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) to support both youth employment and education system functionality.
- 3.14. While acknowledging the WCED's achievements, the Committee indicated its intention to pose further questions on budget efficiency, educational outcomes, and comparative benchmarking across provinces.
- 3.15. Concerns were raised regarding learner transport provision, affordability of examination fees, revenue from reprographic services, and infrastructure challenges in rural schools. The department responded with details on transport route criteria, budget allocations, and rollover justifications.
- 3.16. There had been a call for more human-centred data on learner throughput and performance to better understand the impact of departmental interventions.

4. Public comments

The Committee allowed members of the public to give input on the Annual Report of the WCED. Ms Z Jacobs: a member of the Fadak Foundation, Ms L Fondun: a member of the L&C Community Programmes, Mr L Phiko: a member of the public, Mr M Gierdien: a member of the public, Ms M Ziyambi: a member of Equal Education, Ms T Makupula: a member of the public, Ms D Erosi: a member of Equal Education, Ms F Fatyele: a members of the public, Mr S Mtsa: a member of the public, Ms P Mqodeli: a member of the public, Ms A Joyq: a member of Equal Education and Mr P Mabotshwa: a member of the public gave their inputs. The Minister and the Head of the Department duly responded to the issues raised by all members of the public.

5. Request for Information

The Committee REQUESTED the WCED to provide:

- 5.1. A report on the Mass Participation; Opportunity and Access; Development and growth (MOD) Programme feeding programme's rollover and budget shifts exceeding R100 million, as well as further explanation on public-private partnerships and asset register entries.
- 5.2. A breakdown of admission appeals received, resolved, and still pending.

6. 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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WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT