



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

BUDGET SPEECH, VOTE 3, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DELIVERED BY
LIMPOPO MEC FOR EDUCATION, MS. MAVHUNGU LERULE-RAMAKHANYA,
ON 05 MAY 2025, AT THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, LIMPOPO
LEGISLATURE.

Honourable Speaker, Hon Dr Makoma Makhurupetja

Deputy Speaker, Hon Tebogo Mamorobela

Honourable Premier, Dr Phophi Ramathuba

Honourable colleagues in the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Hon Nkakareng Rakgoale

Chair of Chairs and the Whip of the Legislature

Leadership of the African National Congress

Leaders of the Opposition Parties

Royal Leaders

Religious Leaders

Stakeholders in Education (SGB Associations and Unions)

Limpopo Department of Education, Head of Department, Mr Maropene Seshibe and
the Executive Management

Heads of Departments Present from other Departments

Partners from the Education Sector

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning, Ndi Matsheloni

Honourable Speaker,

Ernesto 'Che' Guevara said, 'The first duty of a revolutionary is to be educated.' Today, the revolutionary government of Limpopo carries out that sacred duty, anchored by our theme for the year: Transformation and Development.

Education draws its mandate from Section 29 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which prescribes that "Everyone has a right to basic education, including adult basic education and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible."

Transformation and development are not just slogans. They are the twin engines of our collective vision for a Limpopo where every child, regardless of circumstance, has the key to unlock their potential. The 2025-2030 strategic outcomes:

- Improved access to Early childhood development programs
- Improved levels of literacy and Numeracy
- Improved learning outcomes across all grades
- The elimination of the digital divide
- Enhanced administrative capacity, governance and financial management to support Curriculum delivery
- Quality school infrastructure and environment that inspires teaching and learning

I am proud to announce that we have an 8-year-old Chess Champion from Capricorn South, Flora Park Primary, who is destined for greater heights. Ntokoto Mashaba, a Grade 3 learner, will be flying the South African flag in Sri Lanka in the next 10 days, where he will compete with the best in chess. We stand proud that young, brilliant minds are taking the lead and putting Limpopo on the Map.

It is therefore with profound responsibility and hope that I present the 2026/27 Budget of the Department of Education in Limpopo. This budget is a testament to our unwavering commitment to building a resilient, responsive, and high-performing education system. One that is unapologetically focused on transformation and unrelenting in its pursuit of development.

For the 2026/27 financial year, the Department has been allocated a total budget of **R45.821 billion**. This total allocation reflects an increase of **R2.397 billion**, or 5.5%, from the **R43.423 billion** Amended Adjusted Appropriation for the 2025/26 financial year.

This total is composed as follows:

R40.351 billion (88.1%) from the Equitable Share, which is our foundational funding to meet our constitutional and statutory obligations.

R4.675 billion (10.2%) through Conditional Grants, which are targeted resources for priority programmes such as infrastructure and school nutrition.

R794.721 million (1.7%) from Own Revenue, reflecting our growing capacity for efficiency and local resource mobilisation.

I now invite you to walk with me through the pillars of this budget. Major allocations within the total budget, by economic classification, are as follows:

Compensation of Employees (CoE) amounts to **R34.456 billion**, representing 75.2% of the total budget. Of this, **R30.855 billion** (89.5%) is allocated to educators, the Department's primary resource. In terms of personnel number, the educator post establishment is projected to increase by 350 posts, from 51 752 to 52 102 (excluding 643 ad hoc and 1 541 substitute posts). This budget addresses and reduces the provincial unemployment rate.

Goods and Services: **R4.866 billion** (10.6%)

Transfers and Subsidies: **R4.711 billion** (10.3%)

Payments for Capital Assets: **R1.788 billion** (3.9%)

To support specialised education programmes, Conditional Grants have been allocated to strengthen key interventions as follows:

- National School Nutrition Programme Grant - **R1.918 billion**
- Education Infrastructure Grant - **R1.873 billion**
- Early Childhood Development Grant - **R743.503 million**
- Maths, Science and Technology Grant - **R53.753 million**
- Learners with Severe Profound Intellectual Disability Grant - **R39.744 million**
- HIV/AIDS (Life Skills Education) Grant – **R30.688 million**
- EPWP Integrated Grant – **R16.211 million**

The Equitable Share allocation also includes funding to support the implementation of the Limpopo Development Plan by delivering key national and provincial education priorities. These include:

Norms and standards for Public Ordinary Schools (Transfers to schools and LTSM), **R3.150 billion**. This allocation includes **R2.195 billion** for running costs, **R21.857 million** for compensation for fee exemptions, and **R933.538 million** for the procurement of LTSM (Learner and Teacher Support Material) across all quintiles.

Independent Schools Subsidies: **R183.573 million**

Public Special School Education: **R110.334 million**

e-Education: **R100.0 million**

Grade 12 Improvement Strategy (Printing of Examination Common Papers - Grades 3,6,9,10,11): **R80.0 million**

Focus School expansion: **R45.0 million**

Strengthen Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: **R45.0 million**

In-School Sport: **R30.0 million**

Scholar transport: **R624.662 million**

School Furniture: **R56.194 million**

Learner Attainment Strategy: **R168.960 million**

Teacher Development: **R17.595 million**

Matric Results Intervention Strategy: **R15.690 million**

Learning recovery: **R10.941 million**

Sanitary Dignity Project: **R42.095 million**

Full-service schools' Assistive devices: **R32.248 million**

Inclusive Education: **R18.289 million**

ECD indoor/outdoor equipment: **R42.319 million**

ECD LTSM: **R11.473 million**

Education Management Information System (EMIS): **R16.909 million**

Library Services: **R13.029 million**

Districts' accountability sessions: **R5.471 million**

Quality, Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme (QIDS-UP): **R5.283 million**

Systemic Evaluation: **R1.406 million**

Whole school evaluation: **R1.286 million**

Monitoring of standards: **R0.918 million**

HRD System: **R1.546 million**

School Safety: **R5.000 million**

Honourable Speaker, the National School Nutrition Programme remains a pillar of dignity and performance. In the 2025/26 financial year, 3 472 primary and secondary schools and 35 special schools benefited. In 2026/27, we will employ 10 594 food handlers, and the programme will continue to serve meals to the same number of schools, with 1 677 016 learners enrolled in Public Ordinary schools and 8 999 learners enrolled in Public Special Schools. I am pleased to announce that the school breakfast programme will now serve all secondary schools in the province. Although there is no separate funding for Sustainable Food Production, the department will continue to support and raise awareness to revive school food gardens in all NSNP-benefiting schools. **R1.918 billion** is allocated for this very important intervention.

Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG)

Honourable Speaker, we continue to make strides in ensuring the safety of our learners by providing adequate school infrastructure. It has been proven that a new environment brings hope and change. For that reason, even in this financial year, we will continue to provide a decent learning environment. Our implementing agents are hard at work to help us deliver the much-needed school infrastructure without delay.

2026/27 Schools Priorities

The Department will continue working with the following implementing agents to accelerate infrastructure development: IDT, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, the Mvula Trust, and the Development Bank of Southern Africa. This includes storm-damaged schools that are being attended to and the construction of ECDs. We are also addressing the 2025/26 Disaster challenges, including the recent occurrence at the start of the 2026/27 financial year.

Honourable Members, an allocation of **R1.873 billion** from EIG will help us complete the projects.

Early Childhood Development Grant

As part of the vibrant Bana Pele recruitment drive, we will continue to support centres through the three-step registration process to move from bronze to silver and from silver to gold to be fully compliant. We are planning to build two low-cost, state-owned ECD centres, locate centres within school premises, and strengthen district capacity. For the current financial year, a budget **of R1.033 billion** (conditional grant plus equitable share) has been allocated to pursue our goal of ensuring that all children are in the system. We envisage funding just over 163 202 children.

Maths, Science and Technology Grant (MST)

We remain steadfast in our commitment to being champions in Maths, Science and Technology. We will set aside **R16.974 million** to support aspiring focus schools and feeder primary schools with lab equipment, machinery, consumables, and minor renovations. Honourable Premier, your learners continue to excel in Coding and robotics through this intervention. Mashupye Tladi Primary and Bokamoso Secondary will represent South Africa in Switzerland in July 2026. For that reason, we will continue our Support for Olympiads, science expos, coding clubs, and teacher development in practical methodologies. The overall Allocation for MST and the intervention I just alluded to is **R53.753 million**.

Learners With Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability

The Limpopo Department of Education will continue to provide adequate, publicly funded education, support, and training for learners with severe-to-profound intellectual disabilities. The allocation of **R39.744 million** is designed to support specialised schools and care centres by providing equipment, staffing, and capacity building to improve access to education for these learners. Of this amount, R6.756 million is for Learner Teacher Support Materials. We still affirm that no learner must be left behind.

HIV/AIDS (Life Skills Education) Grant

The 2026/27 grant allocation of **R30.688 million** will cover:

- Salaries of 10 provincial and district employees
- Stipends for 230 Learner Support Agents
- Capacity building on HIV, STI, TB policy, CSTL, Keeping Girls in Schools, Peer Education
- Advocacy campaigns, radio talk shows, and IEC materials
- Monitoring and evaluation in 100 selected schools

EPWP Integrated Grant

In 2026/27, the Integrated Grant will contribute over **R15.0 million** towards 382 job opportunities: ECD practitioners, NSNP school-based monitors, and casual labourers. 5% will be used for training EPWP participants.

Honourable Speaker, I now turn to the detailed equitable share allocations that support our key programmes.

National Schools Funding Norms and Standards

The 2026/27 allocations for Public Ordinary Schools are projected at an estimated annual budget of **R3.150 billion** (i.e., **R2.195 billion** for running costs and **R933.538 million for LTSM**), with a learner enrolment of 1 733 819 across 3 586 registered schools. Public Special Schools receive **R110.334 million** for 9 042 learners in 35 registered schools. Independent Schools receive **R183.573 million** for 45 003 learners in 107 registered subsidised schools. Public Ordinary and Special Schools will be paid biannually at 50 per cent in the 1st and 2nd tranches. Independent Schools will be paid quarterly.

Learner and Teacher Support Material (LTSM)

The department will continue to provide every learner and educator with Learner Teacher Support Material. There is a total provision of **R933.538 million** in the budget estimate for the 2026/27 financial year, broken down as follows: **R909.038 million** for textbooks and scholastic stationery, **R22.000 million** for transport contractors (distribution of LTSM), and **R2.500 million** for warehouse leases. The department has already achieved universal coverage and is committed to maintaining it. In terms of retrieval status, the department is at 90.8 per cent.

Every learner will have a Textbook for every subject offered. Textbooks to be procured in the 2026/27 financial year are top-ups of up to 10.0 per cent, since retrieval has improved and no new curriculum has been introduced. After procuring 100 per cent stationery and 10 per cent textbooks, the budget balance will be used to procure digital LTSM as part of implementing the e-Education strategy. We are making a call to SGBs and parents regarding the retrieval of textbooks. Your participation and assistance will help the department in the implementation of the e-Education strategy.

E-Education

E-Education remains a cornerstone of the programme, helping address the digital divide as we continue to prioritise funding for schools. E-Education, **R100 million** priority funding has been allocated. To address the affected areas, an additional **R51 million** has been allocated from the LTSM budget to procure 17 600 tablets for Grade 12 learners, providing access to digital content, revision resources, and past papers.

Scholar Transport

Honourable members, we are one of the provinces with vast districts in need of Scholar Transport. We have many active routes across the 10 Education Districts, and over 76 000 learners need to be ferried to schools. The safety of our learners as they commute to and from school is our top priority. We will continue to hold regular meetings with the Department of Transport and Community Safety to ensure vehicle

roadworthiness and learner safety. **R624.662 million** has been allocated to service all routes in the current financial year.

Expansion of Focus Schools

To advance the implementation of the Three Streams Model and strengthen skills-oriented education, the Department has allocated **R45.0 million** in priority funding to support 61 Focus and Aspiring Schools across the province. This investment benefits 18 designated Focus Schools, comprising 10 Technical and 8 Agricultural schools, as well as 43 Aspiring Focus Schools, including 3 Aspiring Agricultural, 8 Aspiring Mathematics and Science, 24 Technical, 1 Services, 3 Commercial, and 6 Schools of Skills.

Importantly, 10 of the aspiring schools have formally applied for designation as Focus Schools in the Agricultural and Technical streams, demonstrating growing demand and readiness to expand specialised pathways. This targeted allocation strengthens infrastructure, equipment, and curriculum delivery in priority skills areas. It affirms our commitment to preparing learners for post-school education, training, and employment, in line with provincial economic demands and national development priorities.

Learner Attainment Strategy

Honourable Speaker, you know by now that our 2025 National Senior Certificate results reached 86.1%, a new record for the province. All 10 districts performed above 80%. We remain a province with more Bachelor's passes, and girls' participation has increased. To sustain this trajectory, this budget provides **R168.960 million** for targeted intervention programmes, including focus schools, especially in maths and science. This is an investment in human capital.

Teacher Development

The year of Transformation and Development is in full swing. Just last week, we celebrated the first cohort of educators, comprising school principals, deputies, and

curriculum heads, as they graduated from UNISA. We have allocated **R17.595 million** for various targeted training programmes. Amongst them:

- 14 000 teachers (Grades 1-11) in content and methodology (Maths, Languages), which is SACE-endorsed.
- 10 000 in digital skills and ICT integration.
- 2 000 Intermediate Phase teachers in Coding and Robotics.
- 2 000 in inclusive education.
- 500 technical subject teachers in practical skills (with TVET colleges).
- 1 500 Grade R practitioners in CAPS implementation.

Sanitary Dignity Project

A programme that has restored the dignity of a black child and ensures that they stay and participate in all the school activities. The participation of the girl child and the excellence recorded in various schools are a result of this intervention. Research and review show that, for the current financial year, we are targeting the distribution of sanitary pads to 450 414 girl learners, with a budget of just over **R42 million**.

Inclusive Education & Full-Service Schools

Inclusive Education and Full-Service Schools have been allocated **R18.289 million** to ensure that all learners, especially those with barriers to learning, can participate fully. Key priorities include advocacy and awareness campaigns across all 10 districts, stakeholder training, media outreach, and partnerships to promote inclusion, including autism awareness initiatives. **R32.248 million** has been allocated for Full-Service Schools Assistive Devices, including LTSM, assistive technologies, the South African Sign Language programme, and the resourcing of the Braille production centre at Bosele School for the Blind and the high-level stimulation centre at Yingisani Special School. In addition, the department has procured 50 buses for special schools,

ensuring safe transport for learners with disabilities and relieving parents of the burden of scholar transport costs.

ECD Resources

To support young and developing minds, **R42.319 million** has been allocated for the 2026/27 financial year. This funding will support the provision of both outdoor and indoor play equipment, such as jungle gyms, to enhance learning through play. The Department has further received **R45.0 million** in priority funding to provide Early Childhood Development (ECD) Learner and Teacher Support Materials (LTSM), aimed at strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy. Of this amount, **R21.128 million** has been set aside for reading and Grade R-3 Mathematics. This will support the procurement of storybooks, posters, big books for emergent reading, and mathematics kits for public primary schools.

In addition, **R22.701 million** has been earmarked for the procurement and printing of reading materials, including handwriting resources, phonics reading manuals, Primary School Reading Improvement Programme (PSRIP) English First Additional Language (EFAL) strategy materials, mathematics problem-solving booklets, and teacher guides for Pre-Grade R and Grade R-3 learners in public primary schools and ECD sites. The remaining balance will be used to support the training of educators and subject advisors on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).

Grade 12 Improvement Strategy (Printing of Examination Common Papers - Grades 3,6,9,10,11)

Common assessments are a key tool for improving learner performance across the education system. The Department has introduced a learner attainment strategy that uses standardised assessments to provide a consistent benchmark for measuring both learner and educator performance. This approach has already led to steady improvement in Grades 10 and 11 and will now be extended to the GET phase. By using collaboratively developed and uniformly administered assessments, educators gain reliable data to identify strengths and weaknesses, improve curriculum delivery, and share effective teaching strategies. To sustain and expand these gains, **R80.0**

million has been allocated to continue the printing of common assessments as part of the learner attainment strategy.

School Furniture Provision

For the 2026/27 financial year, **R56.194 million** has been allocated. This allocation addresses the furniture requirements of approximately 360 schools. The procurement will prioritise Grade R tables and chairs, double and single-combination desks, and teachers' tables and chairs, reflecting a focus on Early Childhood Development, learner seating infrastructure, and teacher workspace support.

Library Services

The programme prioritises educators' training on the National Guidelines for School Library and Information Services to strengthen the effective use and management of school libraries. This programme received **R13.029 million** in the 2026/27 financial year. Home-language dictionaries (Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sepedi, Zulu, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, Setswana) are being distributed to primary schools. E-book content in mother tongue (Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga) for Mathematics, Home Language, and Life Skills is also being distributed to some schools. The MEC's reading club initiatives continue, with books donated to all districts, especially disaster-affected schools in Mopani.

School Safety

Honourable speaker, we have a collective obligation to ensure that schools remain safe havens for our learners. Provincial School Safety Lekgotla addressing bullying, drugs, gangsterism, sexual harassment, violence, burglary, vandalism, is planned for the financial year 2026/27. Training for newly appointed principals and school safety coordinators is also underway. We will continue to strengthen partnerships with SAPS, Social Development, Health, Justice, and NGOs. We have allocated **R5.0 million** to support these initiatives. The safety of learners is not negotiable.

Rationalisation and Re-alignment of Schools

The rationalisation of non-viable and small schools is one of the challenging programmes in the sector. We have noted that most schools that performed dismally in the past were affected by low numbers. In the current financial year, a new list of 307 schools with enrolments below the thresholds (135 for primary, 200 for secondary) will be announced. A final list of 165 closed schools will be gazetted. A budget of **R90,000** has been set aside to support this rationalisation process.

In-School Sport

Honourable speaker, in appreciation of the MOU that exists between the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture and the Department of Education, in 2026/27, the Department will focus on increasing learner participation and improving performance by expanding school sport and cultural programmes, strengthening talent identification, supporting LSEN learners, and investing in equipment, coach training, and structured competitions. Learner safety, compliance, and quality delivery will be prioritised across all districts. **The R30.0 million allocated** is for national participation, inclusive programmes, and resource provision. Key allocations include funding for track and field, LSEN games, winter sports, cross country, and the Schools Choral Eisteddfod, along with additional support for aquatics, netball, heritage, and social cohesion initiatives, reaching thousands of learners. These efforts will also create 508 job opportunities, with a focus on youth and women, contributing to broader socio-economic development.

Learning Recovery Programme and Learner Intervention Strategy

The Learning Recovery Programme, guided by the National Development Plan 2030, aims to improve the quality of education and learner outcomes by addressing gaps. It focuses on developing educators through structured professional support, particularly for Grades 7-9. In 2026/27, **R10.941 million** has been allocated to key initiatives, including training 1 000 principals and deputy principals in instructional leadership, equipping departmental heads with ICT and data skills to support learner interventions, and training 700 teachers in assessment for learning.

The Department's Intervention Strategy focuses on strengthening Grades 8-10 as the foundation for improved outcomes in Grade 12. With an **R15.690 million** allocation for 2026/27, the strategy includes training 2 000 Mathematics teachers and 3 000 Natural and Physical Sciences teachers. The aim is to build strong foundational knowledge, support teachers, and prevent learning gaps that affect matric performance.

Additional Systemic Programmes

The Department continues to implement a range of systemic improvement programmes. QIDS-UP (**R5.283 million**) focuses on providing reading resources to schools in quintiles 1-3 and establishing reading corners. Systemic Evaluation (**R1.406 million**) measures learning outcomes at Grades 3, 6, and 9 to inform interventions. Whole School Evaluation (**R1.286 million**) supports school self-evaluation and external validation. Monitoring of Standards (**R0.918 million**) ensures compliance with curriculum and assessment norms. The HRD System (**R1.546 million**) strengthens human resource development, including teacher recruitment and leadership pipelines. These programmes work together to drive continuous improvement across the system.

Security Services

While not separately listed in the equitable share table, the Department continues to prioritise security services. Contracts for security service providers have been extended to 31 July 2028. In 2026/27, we will focus on guarding high-risk sites (Head Office, districts, circuits, special schools, and selected ordinary schools), securing the full examination value chain (storage, distribution, marking centres), and strengthening contract management. Funding is drawn from the Goods and Services allocation.

Online Admissions System

To modernise learner admissions, the Department has developed an online admissions system to be rolled out over three years. A total of **R134.8 million** has been budgeted: Year 1: R9.7 million, Year 2: R51.8 million, Year 3: R73.3 million. In

2026/27, 511 public ordinary schools and 12 public special schools will conduct online admissions for Grades R, 1, and 8.

Honourable Speaker, every allocation I have laid before this House today, from the **R45.821 billion**, carries the weight of a promise. Transformation means tearing down the walls that still separate our children from opportunity. Development means building, in their communities, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and a system that works for all. This budget confirms equitable access to quality basic education that equips learners with the skills and foundation they need for further studies and the world of work. Our values remain Excellence, Professionalism, Innovation, and Integrity.

I take this time to thank the Premier, Hon Dr Phophi Ramathuba, for the support and guidance, and for taking me along in leading the province to a better tomorrow. MEC treasury for guidance on aligning the priorities and providing the budget. Team Education, led by the HOD, DDGs, CFO, and the team, with support from the SGB associations and all the Unions, we cannot trade your support for anything.

Hon Speaker, May is my Birthday month, which I share with Dr H Ramakhanya. In his memory, I thank all of u and my family for the support. I therefore submit the 2026/27 budget for the Limpopo Department of Education.

I thank you.

Ndo Livhuwa