

Billions allocated for improved education

Government expenditure on learning will in three years reach R434.2 billion, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni has revealed.



Image source: Getty Images

This comes as the state aims to develop the capabilities of citizens from early on in childhood.

Government continues to provide access to education, training and skills development, as well as strengthen social cohesion.

In its 2020 Budget Review Report, the National Treasury said this function will continue to receive the largest share of government spending over the MTEF period. Spending in the category stood at R385.6 billion in 2019/20 financial year.

The Department of Basic Education, said the report, will during the next three years focus on improving early literacy and numeracy of learners.

The department will also introduce subjects like coding, data analytics and robotics, and improving school sanitation and the quality of teaching.

Regarding early childhood development, the Department of Basic Education will work with the Department of Social Development and other partners to shift responsibility for early childhood development from the social development sector to the basic education sector.

“They will also introduce two years of compulsory pre-schooling before all children enter Grade 1,” reads the report.

Provincial expenditure on personnel dominates spending in the sector and function at 76.5% and 51.4%, respectively.

Over the medium term, said the report, the education infrastructure grant is allocated R35 billion to construct, maintain and upgrade schooling infrastructure.

The school infrastructure backlogs grant is allocated R5.6 billion to provide water, sanitation facilities and electricity to schools, and replace schools constructed with inappropriate materials.

“Of this allocation, R2.8 billion is set aside to provide appropriate sanitation facilities, which accounts for the 15.3% annual average growth rate over the spending period.”

The national school nutrition programme grant is allocated R24.3 billion over the next three years to provide meals to nine million learners in almost 20,000 poor schools (quintiles 1 to 3) and identified special schools.

Post-school education and training

The medium-term focus in this sector will see government expand access to universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, improve their performance, develop artisans, and support work-based learning.

Focus will zoom in on strengthening management and governance of community education and training colleges.

“Expenditure for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme increases at an average annual rate of 7.3% from R33 billion in 2019/20 to R40.8 billion in 2022/23,” reads the report.

The institution expects to fund more than one million students at universities and more than 870,000 students at TVET colleges over the period.

Meanwhile, the Minister said work will commence on the Pan African University for Space Sciences Institute at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Funding, he said, can come from the Africa Renaissance Fund.

Also, the Department of Higher Education and Training will re-allocate existing funds to undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a new university of science and innovation in Ekurhuleni.