

**PARLIAMENT OF THE
PROVINCE OF THE
WESTERN CAPE**

**QUESTION PAPER
ORAL REPLY**

Note: * Indicates translated version.

THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2024

INTERPELLATIONS

1. Mr B N Herron to ask Ms D M Baartman, Minister of Finance:

With regard to the Education budget shortfall of R3,8 billion over the 2024 MTEF period:

- (1) How did the Education budget come to be underfunded by R3,8 billion over the MTEF period;

The national fiscal consolidation exercise in the 2021 and 2024 MTEFs reduced government budgets. This means that provinces are not able to financially respond to increases in service delivery demands. The 2024 Budgets only accommodated cost of living adjustments (COLA) for staff in the employment of the department as of 1 April 2024 and no increases for service delivery demands.

For Education, there is an increased service delivery demand every year as more learners enter schooling. This translates into a need for additional teacher posts required. The R3.8 billion budget shortfall accounts for growth in teacher posts needed to respond to these service delivery demands.

As we have noted in the PERO, between 2014 and 2023 the number of learners enrolled in our schools has grown by 19 per cent. And the number of learners is projected to continue to grow every year. We need to provide places for these learners. If budgets do not grow in line with the costs associated with this, that can be characterised as a budget shortfall.

As at 31 July 2024 the Western Cape Education Department reported a projected CoE shortfall for the 2024 MTEF of R3.8 billion which included provision for growth of teachers based on actual and projected learner numbers, spending trends and projected cost escalations for CoE across the 2024 MTEF.

CoE projections over the medium-term shift continuously as numbers or staff change and the CoE expenditure outcome at the end of the 2024/25 financial year could still change as the MTEF projections are based on the 2024/25 financial year's projections.

(2) whether she had proposed any measures to mitigate or eliminate the need to cut teacher posts?

The Western Cape Government is considering some measures in the 2024 Adjusted Estimates and in the finalisation of the 2025 Budget. However, the fiscal environment may not allow for the growth in teacher posts needed to fully cater for our growing number of learners.

Further details will be tabled during the 2024 Adjusted Estimates and the 2025 Budget.



Ms D M Baartman
Minister of Finance
Western Cape