

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

FRIDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2024

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

10. Ms R Windvogel to ask Mr D J Maynier, Minister of Education:

Whether his Department plans to freeze or reduce any staff posts due to the financial implications of the cost-of-living wage agreement; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the relevant details and (b) what (i) is the detailed breakdown of the specific positions affected, (ii) is the rationale behind these decisions, (iii) are the names of facilities to be affected, (iv) is the number of staff to be reduced and (v) is the anticipated impact on service delivery?

Answer

10. My department has informed me of the following:

The impact of the decision to not fully fund the 2023 wage agreement on the Basket of Educator Posts has been outlined in the replies to questions 5 and 6 of 6 September 2024.

The details below refer to the impact on office-based posts at the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Head Office and Education District Offices:

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) did freeze posts at Head Office and District Offices. We currently have a vacancy rate of 22.08% in these offices.

- (a) In October 2023, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) issued a directive on the implementation of control measures aimed at assisting executive authorities in managing fiscal sustainability during the process of creating and filling vacant posts in departments. (Circular 49 of 2023). This was issued as a result of the financial pressures government departments were facing as a result of the public sector wage agreement.
- (b) (i) Please see Annexure A and B, which is the directive circular issued by the DPSA. In the case of the WCED, only office-based public service posts are affected by the directive. It does not affect public service support staff posts at schools.

- (ii) The rationale for the DPSA's directive is articulated in Circular 49 of 2023.

The rationale for the WCED was that it needed to address the budget shortfall caused by the national government's decision to not fully fund the 2023 multi-year public sector wage agreement.

The WCED had to impose budget cuts across the board, including on administration, curriculum and infrastructure, as a result of this shortfall.

Despite implementing a drastic R2.5 billion budget cut, including freezing the recruitment of most public service staff, the WCED still faced a R3.8 billion budget shortfall over the next three years.

- (iii) The WCED Head Office and Education District Offices.
- (iv) The current vacancy rate for office-based public service Staff is as follows:

	Posts	People	Vacancies	Vacancy Rate
Cape Winelands	110	87	23	20.91
Metro Central	101	84	17	16.83
Metro East	97	81	16	16.49
Eden and Central Karoo	102	87	15	14.71
Head Office	1212	909	303	25.00
Metro North	102	83	19	18.63
Overberg	67	58	9	13.43
Metro South	97	79	18	18.56
West Coast	82	67	15	18.29
Total	1970	1535	435	22.08

- (v) In short, the staff of the WCED are doing more, with less.

For example, at Head Office, a quarter of posts are vacant, however business operations and required outputs remain the same with staff stepping in to cover tasks outside of their role to ensure business continuity.

This has, understandably, put strain on the staff who are all putting in an extra effort to get the job done. There is nonetheless a commitment to continue to serve our learners and our schools despite the strain.