

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls for increased budget allocation to address critical shortcomings in education, health, and social development in KwaZulu-Natal
DATE	29 July 2024
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) acknowledges the increase of the budget allocation in the KwaZulu-Natal Departments of Education, Health and Social Development but remains extremely concerned about inadequacies in the budget allocation, particularly for the Department of Education.

There is an urgent need to employ more educators, improve dilapidated school infrastructure, and address the lack of basic amenities such as water and electricity and the budget remains insufficient. The Department of Education needs to employ some 7 000 more educators. Delays in paying invoices owing to the financial crisis, along with electricity disconnections in some districts, further highlight the dire need for increased funding. It is also of concern that security guards at schools, employed by School Governing Bodies, earn only between R1 000 and R2 500 per month, which is well below the minimum wage.

The Department of Health, the second-largest department in KwaZulu-Natal, plays a critical role in the well-being of citizens. Despite a projected budget of more than R53 billion for 2024/25, significant challenges persist. Facilities such as Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital still contain hazardous asbestos, posing severe health risks. Additionally, more than 40 doctors, 2 000 nurses, pharmacists, cleaners, and clerks remain unemployed owing to budget constraints and a moratorium on advertising positions. The shortage of ambulances and increasing attacks on outreach staff and mobile clinics necessitate urgent security measures to protect healthcare workers and patients.

The Department of Social Development is also facing a severe crisis. Employees are overworked as the Department has not appointed any new social workers since 2013. More than 2 000 social workers are unemployed, which led to picketing by unemployed social workers and complaints by social workers about excessive workloads. The current budget fails to address this matter, which undermines service delivery.

Despite the pressing needs, the Finance MEC has not adequately considered these factors in the 2024/25 budget. The budget presented at the KZN Legislature allocates the bulk to social-sector departments but remains insufficient to meet the actual demands. Education received R62 billion per annum, Health R53 billion, and Transport R13 billion. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure received R1.8 billion, whilst Sports, Arts and Culture received R1.5 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

Whilst the conditional grant allocation increased by R501.3 million in 2024/25, it is set to decrease significantly in coming years. The Education Infrastructure Grant increased by R58.1 million and the National School Nutrition Programme grant by R19 million. These increases are, however, still inadequate given the critical roles of these Departments.



The Health Facility Revitalisation Grant increased by R31.1 million, reflecting the Department's compliance with planning documentation and capacity to spend. However, the sector continues to struggle with vacancies and inadequate resources.

The PSA urges the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal and the MEC of Finance to ensure that the more than 20 000 vacancies across the Province are advertised and filled without delay. This will assist in addressing critical staff shortages and improve service delivery in essential sectors.

The KwaZulu-Natal Departments of Education, Health, and Social Development have been allocated the lion's share of the provincial budget, yet funds remain insufficient to address the ongoing crises. Whilst the PSA acknowledges efforts to allocate resources, there is an urgent need for a substantial increase in the budget to address critical shortcomings in education, health, and social development. The Finance MEC must consider the essential needs of these departments to ensure that they can function effectively and meet the needs of citizens.

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