

4 Budget Speech announcements the Education sector wants to hear

On Wednesday 26 February, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni will present the 2020 National Budget to South Africa. There are many pressing issues that the minister will need to address, but these should not drown out the ongoing public schooling challenges our country is currently facing.



Leana de Beer, chief executive officer of Feenix

This is the view of Leana de Beer, chief executive officer of Feenix - a crowdfunding platform for university students that is at the forefront of the drive to ensure equitable access to education. The work that they do and the stories they hear in connecting students to funders has meant that they know only too well the challenges that students face when it comes to education.

Given this, de Beer has four big hopes for the Budget this year...

1. Improving the quality of education and institutions

It is important that government focuses on increasing the quality of public schooling in South Africa, with a focus on improving maths, science and technology learning outcomes. Along with a low performance in terms of math and science subjects, drop-out rates in the schooling system have become unacceptable. Of the pupils who started Grade 1 in 2008, 58% did not write their matric exams 12 years later in 2019. Our country cannot succeed without strong building blocks and these building blocks are our people - we need to ensure that all South Africans receive a better education.

In his State of the Nation Address (Sona) earlier this month, President Ramaphosa announced that 200 schools will be introducing coding and robotics in Grades R to 3 this year. While we commend government for acknowledging the importance technology can play in driving impactful social solutions, the need for proper implementation and management of these solutions by teachers are crucial. We require investment in well-trained teachers, better salaries for teachers and effective basic infrastructure.



Sona 2020's impact on the learning year ahead

Devan Mbonsamy 18 Feb 2020



2. Introducing entrepreneurship in schools

Critical to our current economic conditions, young people should be taught how to create opportunities for themselves. During Sona, the president mentioned that government is in the process of developing new and innovative ways to support youth entrepreneurship and self-employment. We expect further elaboration on these initiatives to be addressed during the Budget and how these will support the introduction of entrepreneurship in the schooling system. Incubating self-starter mindsets should begin at an early age, and this can be achieved through teaching entrepreneurial fundamentals and improving financial literacy at school level.



10 ways to create a young entrepreneurial mindset

24 Jul 2019



3. More graduate programmes needed to ensure work-readiness among SA youth

Graduates who are entering the workplace are not ready for it and a clear skills gap exists between what employers are looking for, and what graduates are capable of offering. Tertiary institutions do not have the capacity to do enough to help their graduates become work-ready. Public sector needs to focus on developing and implementing more work and skills programmes, aimed at improving the future employment prospects of participants, to develop workplace readiness skills and to provide appropriate skills transfer which aims to translate to sustainable employment.



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Kobus Maree 10 Feb 2020



4. Increasing support for public-private partnerships (PPPs)

Even though the private sector has welcomed the implementation of edu-tech projects, solutions and ideas, it is necessary for the public sector to do the same. An increase in support of PPPs will improve collaborations between the private sector and government. The only way forward is through collaboration. Feenix remains optimistic and open to work with like-minded partners to ensure we tackle youth unemployment and financial barriers to education.

“South Africa is currently facing many challenges in the form of the economy, state-owned enterprises failures, power generation and political uncertainty. While Minister Mboweni will no doubt present a Budget that will seek to address all of these issues, the ongoing challenge of education cannot be ignored. We believe it is possible to solve these challenges and

to advance our country, together,” says de Beer.

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