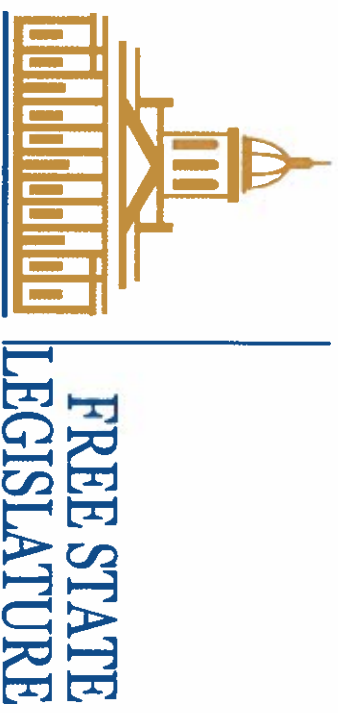




PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

FOREWORD

(foreword by the Chairperson)

The Portfolio Committee on Education, Health and Social Services is strategically geared towards its mandate of ensuring that essential services are rendered to the poorest of the poor i.e. the needy and the vulnerable.

The committee is committed to see a concerted collaboration among the respective social partners, viz. Education, Health and Social Development, this will augers well for the future of the social cluster. These departments must complement each other than opposing forces in their endeavours to fulfil their constitutional mandate and most imperatively adding value to the cluster.

Strengthening and implementation of policy including legislation will assist in creating viable, sustainable and successful families. Services to the older persons must be rendered in a humane and caring manner, these members of society need care because they are needed to pass morals, values and wisdom to the younger generation. It then becomes important and desirable for the older person to be kept in the family to keep the family tree together.

We need the youth to stay away from harmful practices such as drug abuse or consumption of alcohol and establish committee programme aimed at the young people for thorough reflection. The committee must therefore be champion of Batho Pele principle and ensure that availability of resources for the improvement to the services rendered as well as the manner in these are rendered.

The Committee must ensure reprioritisation of the programmes and invest its effort in poverty alleviation programmes. The committee must and shall ensure that there is value for money and commensurable/measurable by the outcomes of the invested resources. The committee wants to ensure that respective departments conduct feasibility studies first prior to ploughing the limited financial resources.

The committee believes that regular infrastructure maintenance is non-negotiable for the delivery of quality education. Early Childhood Development Programme as one of the vehicles to sustain long-term improvement in the quality of education, we need to realize that the National Development Plan has set universal access to ECD's. We have experienced significant improvements in learner attainment over the past years; we therefore want the department to sustain ongoing improvement on NSC results through the departmental commitment in ensuring that access to ECD's is improved in line with national agenda.

Intensify teacher development programmes with a focus on language, numeracy, mathematics, physical science, integration ICT into teaching and learning as well as coding and robotics and implementation of Funza Lushaka bursary scheme in collaboration with DBE.

The department of Health in the Free State must provide comprehensive quality health care services to the people of Free State as per its mandate. In line with the set priorities, the emphasis therefore must be placed on the crucial outcomes which includes improving quality of health care services, reduction of morbidity and mortalities related to maternal, neonatal and childhood conditions. The committee shall continue to engage communities through committee programme to check the quality of health care services and review hospital boards and clinic committees.

We will ensure that the provision of patient centred health care services, promotion and disease prevention, the management of communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental illnesses and improving access to renal dialysis services remain our priority. The committee will advocate for the reprioritization of resources towards the high-risk clinical areas and engender operational efficiency through alignment of the operations and budget.

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PART A: STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

1. Vision

Empowering a Modern, Inclusive and Responsive Free State Legislature that effectively serves the needs of a rapidly changing Society, Leveraging Technology, Innovation and Collaboration.

2. Mission

To ensure good governance through law making, public participation and oversight

3. Values

The Free State Legislature has embraced set of values to guide its interaction with stakeholders. The values below are espoused by the institution:

- Integrity
- Loyalty
- Fairness
- Empowerment
- Innovation
- Commitment
- Productivity
- Batho Pele
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Respect
- Diversity
- Leadership
- Ethics
- Empathy
- Love

4. Mandate

Section 114(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa asserts that provincial legislature must provide for mechanisms to ensure that all provincial executive organs of state in the province are accountable to it and maintain oversight of the exercise of provincial authority in the province, including the implementation of legislation and any provincial organ of state thus hold the executive accountable.

Section 116 of the Constitution makes provision for a legislature to make rules and orders that must provide for the establishment, composition, powers, functions, procedures and duration of its committees.

The Legislature, through its Standing Rules and Orders, established Portfolio Committees and assigned powers and functions to them to regulate its operations and procedures. The Legislature Portfolio Committees are also enjoined by section 118 of the Constitution to facilitate public involvement in their processes and conduct their businesses in an open manner and hold their meetings in public. The following compliance reports are tabled for referral to the Oversight

Mechanism:

- Strategic Plan (S 14),
- Annual performance Plan (S 16),
- Monthly financial statements (S 51)
- Quarterly performance report (S 52)
- Annual Report (S 55)

The Portfolio Committee on Education, Health and Social Services is responsible for the following votes: Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Social Development. The Committee therefore performs the following broad functions:

- To interrogate the reports referred to it by the house,
- To manage stakeholder involvement,
- To scrutinise the executive actions
- To make recommendations,
- To monitor implementation of executive programme

5. Legislative Priorities

- Climate Action and Sustainability
- Economic Growth and Social Welfare/ Development
- Healthcare Access and Affordability
- Education and Skills Development
- Community Safety

6. Strategic Goals

The tabled Strategic Plan for the 7th Legislature is aimed at implementing the 5-years oversight priorities. The strategic outcome goals seek to:

- strengthen oversight and accountability,
- enhance public involvement,
- Strengthen legislative capacity.

7. Situational Analysis

7.1 Education

Education rights are expressed in Section 29 of the South African Constitution. In terms of section 29, everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and up to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

Early Childhood Education

- Access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) improves children's readiness for formal learning. The NDP recognises ECD as critical for children to reach their full potential. Interventions early in children's lives can have benefits, including better school enrolment rates, retention and academic performance, higher rates of high school completion, and lower levels of antisocial behaviour.
- As of October 2024, the province had 1496 (1517) registered ECD centres and 90,0039 children accessing registered ECD programmes. These are the numbers of children funded from Equitable Share and Conditional grants. Non-funded ECD sites are in the process of registering on EMIS.

Overall successes and challenges

- The previous five-year plan saw the successful shift of ECDs from Social Development to Education. All 30 schools built of inappropriate materials were completed by 2021, and there are continuous improvements made in the eradication of pit latrines.
- The province continues to experience challenges in the three foundations for learning: reading, writing, and counting (arithmetic). This translates into learners failing to read for meaning, poor performance, and struggles in mathematical attainment. This further translates into grade repetitions, dropouts, learners exiting the system without being able to read or write, and poor employment outcomes.
- The Free State Province has succeeded in achieving first place in the National Senior Certificate examinations for the seventh time since CAPS in 2014. Interventions at FET and meaningful partnerships have ensured success.

7.2 Health

In terms of the Constitutional provisions, the Department is guided by the following sections and schedules, among others:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act no. 108 of 1996, places obligations on the state to progressively realise socio-economic rights, including access to (*affordable and quality*) health care.

Challenges faced by the Department of Health

PHC Utilisation

The province is experiencing a decline in the PHC utilization rate for both clients below 5 years and above. However, in 2022/23, there is a slight incline in PHC utilization <5 years rate provincially between 1.4 to 2.5. Mangaung Metro performed lowest on both indicators at 1.4 and 2.5. Xhariep and Thabo Mofutsanyana districts performed best in both indicators during the same period. Mangaung Metro performed at a lower than provincial average on both indicators.

PHC Expenditure per Headcount

Expenditure per capita has also increased over the years, which indicates a reduction in the budget allocations and expenditure compared to the total population of the province.

Hospital Care

Treating patients at the hospital level of care is much costlier per patient than at the PHC level. Considering the referral system and the National Health Insurance policy, the PHC level should be the first point of contact within the health system and therefore key to ensuring its financial sustainability.

Patient Experience of Care (PEC) and Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP)

The PEC survey results for 2023/24 show that patients were generally not satisfied with the values and attitudes across most levels of care. This harms the average provincial score to just 74% as well. Overall results show that most patients were not satisfied with health services in Lejweleputswa district, followed by Mangaung Metro, below the provincial average.

In the 2021/22 financial year, the SDIP performance has shown that patient waiting times are longer than the set targets for the outpatient departments. Preliminary PEC results of 2023/24 show patient satisfaction with waiting times at 58.8% average provincial score, and the lowest performance of 52.66% is recorded at the tertiary hospital.

The district hospitals have recorded the highest at 63.1%

7.3 Social Development

The department as an organisation:

- This section describes the structure of the Department and how this, and any other internal institutional factors, affects its ability to achieve its outcomes. Focus will be on Human Resources, Financial Resources and ICT capacity.

Human resources (HR)

- The Departmental Organisational Structure was last approved on 30 September 2013. The Department is currently reviewing its organizational structure to address the latest policy mandates. (APP, pp, 57).
- As of 30th June 2024, the Department of Social Development employs 1979 employees. Of this total workforce, social workforce constitutes 572 employees, comprising of 495 Social Workers and 77 Social Auxiliary Workers.
- It is worth noting that for 2024/25 Financial Year, eighty-three (83) new Social Workers were employed. These new appointments assisted the department to bridge the gap towards complying with the approved norms for Social Services professionals.
- The norms for Social Workers are 1: 10 000 (Urban Area), and 1: 5000 (Rural Area). Since this province is

predominantly a rural province, a 1:5000 ratio is adopted, and the province therefore requires 586 Social Workers. Based on 1:5000 ratio, the shortage is 91 Social Workers is required to comply with the norms.

Financial resources:

- The Department is funded through voted funds to execute its responsibilities and was allocated **R1 373 855 000 for financial year 2025/26**. However, due to high demand of services, inadequate access to funds often pose challenge to ensure that the needs of the poor and vulnerable communities are met.

Control mechanisms to ensure proper spending includes budgeting, management, monitoring and auditing to ensure that vulnerable communities receive value of money.

ICT capacity and other factors:

- ICT infrastructure such as Computer hardware and software as well as online connection is provided to the human resources to execute their duties.
- This will in turn have a negative impact on the Department's capacity to implement policies, reduce poverty and create employment opportunities in our country at the desired rate.
- The Department needs to use a social policy approach that facilitates and promotes the development and implementation of evidence-based policies that take social challenges into consideration.
- Many of the Department's NPO partners have had to cut back on services or ceased operations. This has put additional service delivery pressure on the Department, the knock-on effect of which is an increase in the ratio of clients to social worker – a situation that is currently happening.

CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

- In striving to address child development challenges alluded to, especially the foster care backlog, the Department have procured and issued 65 laptops for social workers, and 81 contract social workers have been placed to assist. The Department still struggles with the procurement of vehicles to overcome the challenge.

Shortage of skilled social workers

Shortage of skilled social workers, particularly those working with child protection, is a serious challenge. The challenge of a shortage of social workers persists despite efforts by the government to priorities skilling and absorbing qualified social workers. This poses a challenge for the Department to effectively perform its social welfare responsibilities to the vulnerable societies because social workers play a pivotal role in this regard.

PART B: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

8. Purpose

The purpose of this section is to provide the Strategic Objectives of the Committee. These Strategic objectives of the Committee are derived by taking into consideration the Strategic objectives of the Free State Legislature and the strategic priorities of the Committees. Strategic Priorities of the Committee are meant to be compatible with Strategic objectives of the institution since they intend to achieve them. Furthermore, the Committee Strategic objectives should be in line with those of institution since Committees are the extension of house.

9. Strategic objectives for the Free State Legislature

- To Provide Executive Leadership in the Free State Legislature. Facilitate legislative processes, foresight and oversight over the Executive council, law making, public participation and oversight.

10. Committee priorities

- To ensure that the department enhances Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- Strengthening literacy and numeracy
- Expanding access to quality inclusive education,
- Improving teacher training and professional development

- Ensuring safer learning environment
- To ensure that the priorities of the department of basic education are aligned with National Development Plan (NDP)
- To ensure that the national health priorities are centred around strengthening the health system
- To improve the quality of primary health care
- To address the quadruple burden of diseases
- To improve infrastructure and focusing on human resources for health.
- Poverty reduction and inequality: to ensure poverty reduction and inequality and tackling the high cost of living
- Social protection: to expand and strengthening social security, social grants and public empowerment programme through EPWP programme
- Empowered and resilient communities: supporting community-centred approaches, strategic partnerships and improved organisational capacity to build resilient.
- Combating substance abuse: working towards a society free of substance abuse through strengthening implementation of related plans
- Child Protection: protecting children from abuse and neglect and ensuring minimum standards for childcare are maintained.

1.1. Strategic Objectives of the committee

The constitutional mandate of the Free State Legislature is threefold in terms of sections 114, and they are:

- Law-making
- Public education and participation
- Oversight

The below strategic objectives of the Committee are aligned to the strategic goals of the legislature, and they are based on the strategic priorities of the Free State Legislature and the situational analysis:

Table 1: Outline of Strategic Objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Effective oversight and accountability	• To ensure that Portfolio Committees exercise oversight over the Executive on the implementation of Government Programmes and Projects • Ensure that the recommendations contained in the tabled reports i.e. oversight reports, are implemented once considered and/or accepted by the Department • Ensure the Department uses Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act to strengthen service delivery
Strengthen Law Making Capacity	• Ensure that bills affecting the social cluster are finalised
Strengthen Public Involvement and accessibility of the legislature	• Strengthen mechanism for collaboration with Civil Society and Educational Institutions • Ensure that coordination in organising and arranging oversight visits is strengthened among National, Provincial and Local legislative authorities

12. Five-year Strategic Objectives of the Committee

Table 2: Strategic objectives of the Committee

STRATEGIC GOAL: Effective oversight and accountability						
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	BASELINE (2024/29)	TARGETS			
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
- To ensure that Portfolio Committees exercise oversight over the Executive on the implementation of Government Programmes and Projects - Ensure that the recommendations contained in the tabled reports i.e. oversight reports, are implemented once considered and/or accepted	Adoption of Oversight reports with House resolutions	50	10 Reports that are aligned to SOM plus one based on the priority of the Committee (Strategic Plan,APP,4 quarterly Reports,AR,2 FIS, litigation reports and projects.	10 Reports that are aligned to SOM plus one based on the priority of the Committee	10 Reports that are aligned to SOM plus one based on the priority of the Committee	10 Reports that are aligned to SOM plus one based on the priority of the Committee
	Consideration of responses to oversight (House) resolutions by committees	20	- Four reports on Tracking of resolutions tabled in the house - Four follow up meeting on	- Four reports on Tracking of resolutions tabled in the house - Four follow up meeting on	- Four reports on Tracking of resolutions tabled in the house - Four follow up meeting on	- Four reports on Tracking of resolutions tabled in the house - Four follow up meet on
		4				

by the Department			substantive response to the resolutions	substantive response to the resolutions	substantive response to the resolutions	substan respons the resolutic
Ensure the Department uses Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act to strengthen service delivery	Consideration of five service delivery reports from the Office of the Premier	5	Table one service delivery report with recommendations in the house	Table one service delivery report with recommendations in the house	Table one service delivery report with recommendations in the house	Table one serv delivery report with recommendati in the house

STRATEGIC GOAL: Strengthen Law Making Capacity

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	BASELINE (2024/29)	TARGETS			
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Ensure that bills affecting the governance cluster are finalised	Meeting with relevant Departments	0	0	0	0	0

STRATEGIC GOAL: Strengthen Public Involvement and accessibility of the Committee

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	BASELINE (2024/29)	TARGETS			
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
• Strengthen mechanism for collaboration with Chapter 9 & 10, Civil Society and Educational Institutions	Convene stakeholder engagement meeting	20	4	4	4	4

13. Risk identification and mitigation

This section identifies possible risks that can hamper the implementation of the Committee strategic plan and suggests mitigation measures

Table 4: Risks mitigation

Risk	Mitigation measures
Lack of Financial and Human Capital Resources	Engagement with Office of the Speaker and the Budget and Oversight Committee to address funding challenges the Committee
Lack of effective resolution tracking mechanism	Development of resolution tracking mechanism and standard operating procedure on the implementation of resolutions of the Committee
Lack of Committee Slots.	Convene after hours meetings to address pressing matters facing Committees

Lack of site visits	Conduct site visits to assess progress made and verify the reports presented before the committee
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PART D: RESOURCE ALLOCATION**14. Budget****Table 4: Projected expenditure**

Expenditure item	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Flights	155 000	167 000	168 000	172 000	174 000
Accommodation	341 000	347 000	349 000	351 000	353 000
Car Hire	170 000	176 000	178 000	179 000	182 000
Catering	840 000	844 000	845 000	847 000	848 000
Registration fees	60 000	67 000	68 000	69 500	71 000
S&T Claims	450 000	451 000	453 000	455 000	457 000
Total expenditure	2,016,000	2,052,000	2,061,000	2,073,500	2,085,000
Grand Total	10287500				

Signed by


HONOURABLE M. LIPHOKO**CHAIRPERSON OF SOCIAL CLUSTER**