



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Office of the Minister

End of 2018 Academic Year Ministerial Statement

by HON. NICK KUMAN, MP - MINISTER FOR EDUCATION



It is my great pleasure to extend my gratitude to the students, teachers, parents, school boards, and Provincial Divisions of Education, church education agencies, Department of Education and everyone who have contributed towards ending the 2018 academic year, successfully.

I am also very grateful to all our important stakeholders and partners especially the churches, donor partners and the Non-Government Organizations (NGO) for their assistance and support in seeing education progress in Papua New Guinea. My special word of thank you to the Australian High Commission, the European Union, JICA, UNESCO, UNICEF and many others for their continuous help.

Education is an investment and foundation for national development for the future of our children. Our vision for quality education and high standards are setting the benchmark in all areas of education and efforts will still be focused in this trend to see better results.

Over the last six years, our aspirations and plans for education are espoused in the National Education Plan and Alotau Accord 1 & 2. These aspirations are consistent with Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 4, to 'Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning', and contribute toward the achievement of SDGs 5 & 6 to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', and to 'Ensure access to water and sanitation to all'.

There has been significant progress made towards universal education during the last six years through provision of access to the formal education system. Rising gross and net enrolment rates suggest that long term targets of achieving 100% access are achievable. Some of the projected enrolment rates were extremely ambitious but they have been reached in all sectors.

There are presently no institutional barriers until the child completes Grade 8 at 14 years of age. The new 1-6-6-structure of the system will mean that the institutional barriers, following Grades 8 and 10, will, eventually, be dismantled and implementation has started on a few sites in the NCD. It must be recognized that this should continue to progressive at the districts and the provinces, without the compromising of standards. We shall all work towards the minimum target to have 1 pre-school in every ward, sufficient primary schools in each LLG, 1x high school in every LLG, 1 x secondary school in all districts, 1 x vocational training centre in each district, 1 x provincial FODE centre, and every high school and vocational centre is a recognized FODE study centre.

An important aspect of quality is adequate school infrastructure. Most schools in the country do not have this and the next Education Plan from 2020 to 2030 requires significant commitment from all parties, including different levels of Government, schools themselves and local communities, to improve this situation. More than just classrooms, this also includes specialist buildings to reflect the importance of being afforded the STEM disciplines. A start has been made on encouraging sound WaSH practices but this is a little behind schedule.

The Tuition Fee Free (TFF) policy initiative has been the major catalyst for much of the increase in enrolment and is one that has proved popular, particularly in regions where people live largely outside of the cash economy. The TFF demonstrates the increasingly important role that the Government is playing but also the need for all partners, including parents, to take responsibility for the education of their children. Monitoring and a major study into all aspects of the TFF is needed to ascertain whether PNG is getting value for money in what has been an enormous investment. We will focus on this, next year. We commenced decentralization of functions to provinces in 2018.

Despite this progress there are still large numbers of children and youth outside of the formal education and training system. The Out of School Children study has been completed, but there is a need to action the strategies to address the situation.

In terms of equity, girls' participation has improved significantly in basic education and gender equity has been achieved at these levels. There is a long way to go in post primary education with GPIs of only about 0.7. There is little support provided for children with disabilities and the Inclusive Education Resource Centres have not been adequately funded. Callan Services, an NGO based in the East Sepik Province, have been the recipient of significant funds from DFAT but we need to ensure that these funds are expended in a way that will further national goals and objectives.

A desire to support remote schools continues to be a challenge and this has only been exacerbated by some of the funding issues being faced. Children in remote areas have been disadvantaged in many ways and this has been highlighted in the Out of School Children report. We have deliberately held back 15% of the 30% Teaching and Learning Resource component of the TFF to help rural schools' teachers and students so they receive the same quantity and quality of resources to support learning and ensuring equity in service delivery.

The teacher is the most critical component of a quality education system. There has been progress made with increasing the number of pre-service students with three colleges having been opened in the last 5 years. The relocation to Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) has started and several Catholic run colleges are now under the auspices of the Divine Word University.

Well-trained teachers need an appropriate curriculum and sufficient classroom materials and equipment to be able to effectively carry out their work and support Learning. Progress with the realignment of the school curriculum using a Standards Based approach will be completed in 2020. Teacher in-service training in SBC is part of the reform, but will be given more attention after 2020. The historical inclusion of the Citizenship and Christian Values Education as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum has been highly commended.

This process has also included the development and provision of teacher guides and large procurements of textbooks for elementary Maths and junior primary Maths and Science with JICA's support. Science books and equipment have been distributed to secondary schools as part of a program to improve the delivery of the STEM curriculum. The programme has been extended to primary schools this year.

Financial constraints have inhibited great progress on E learning but the EQUITYV project has continued and some schools have embraced the concept of e libraries.

There has been little in the way of policy formulation which is required for further advances to be made.

The assessment of students leaving in Grades 8, 10 and 12 has continued and no move has been made towards abandoning the Grade 8 and 10 exams. This should be considered a long term objective and is dependent upon the successful implementation of the alternative structure. Our efforts have again paid off this year to have no formal report of cheating in the 3 national examinations. We have also for the first time given the opportunity to students in Grade 10 and 12 to access their examination results on line via: www.pngdoexamresults2018.com or via the **Android Play Store App: PNG Exam Results**.

The NEP has seen more young people going through the formal education system and this increase will mean that the current, largely academic curriculum will not be suitable for all. Hence we are giving more attention to Technical, Vocational Education and Training sector. The need for Technical High Schools has increased and we will give more attention to this so that students can complete school with a dual certificate.

An NEC decision has determined that the Technical Colleges, along with the Teachers Colleges, are higher education institutions and so will come under the auspices of the DHERST. We are working with DHERST to make this transition as smooth as possible.

In addition Certificate levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) 2 are offered at an increasing number of vocational centres. There is a major enhancement program in terms of infrastructure and materials being undertaken at a few Centres as a part of an EU funded program of support. A successful outcome of this will help portray a more positive face of vocational training.

The curriculum offered by Flexible Open and Distance Education (FODE) has now been fully aligned with that of the general education system. The examinations sat and the certificates awarded will be the same by 2020. These achievements should help raise public perception of distance education and let it be seen as a viable alternative. Numbers enrolling in Grade 11 and 12, and matriculation courses have been rising but not as much as was anticipated. The virtual classroom remains a long term dream but progress has been made with provision of tablets pre-loaded with all materials.

School governance is key to a successful school and to produce satisfactory outcomes for their students. There has been development of both a National Quality School Standards Framework and National School Leadership Competency Framework (NCSLF) that will help in providing the quality assurance that is required for all schools. The full implementation of both will start in 2019. We also have to give more attention to developing school leadership.

The TFF policy has meant that elementary and primary schools, particularly in the rural areas, have more money than had been the case in the past. A major program of training has taken place for school administrators and their governing bodies – school planning and management. This training has been conducted by the school inspectors and has concentrated on financial management. Whilst the Department has increased the number of inspectors, visits to schools on a regular basis is still a challenge, largely due to financial limitations. We are thankful for the support from the provinces, through the Education Function Grant, and in some cases from schools themselves to carry out inspector functions.

We have over the last six years connected every provincial education office with the DOEs ICT Network – EdNET. There has been some considerable success made in providing EdNet access to provinces, communication, connectivity and information systems. Much of the responsibility for maintaining and extending these systems now rests with the provinces and there has been mixed acceptance of this. Steps have been taken toward remote input of school data through development of the MySchool app. in NCD, Simbu and Morobe. We will complete the rollout in 2019.

Financial management processes to include accountability, monitoring and procurement have been enhanced with the introduction of the Integrated Financial Management System and progress has also been made in asset management processes. The Department's Internal Audit Committee has acknowledged huge improvements in the management of the Department. However, there are still areas that need immediate attention, especially in the management of teacher recruitment, and payroll processes and systems.

2019 EDUCATION BUDGET

Education, amongst others, has been experiencing significant real reductions in appropriations, but we are glad that we have an increase in the 2019 budget appropriation. The increase in the appropriation is as a result of increases in almost all critical expenditures except for a few minor cuts in General Goods and Services compared to the 2018 appropriation.

The huge increase is in the Public Investment Program (PIP) under the Medium Term Development Program. In 2018; the appropriation stood at K876,823 million. In 2019, we have an increase of K973,092.8 million. That is a variance of K96,269.8 million.

I am grateful to the Government for the increase for 2019 and call on the Department to make full use of these monies to ensure that quality education and training are provided.

CONCLUSION

Finally, on behalf of my family, the people of Gumine, the Ministry of Education and the National Government, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, 2019.

May the Lord be with you as you celebrate the Festive Season with your families and loved ones in your respective homes and villages.

Authorized by:

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Hon. Nick Kuman, MP
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION