NAPTOSA NATIONAL NEWSFLASH 38



MTBPS 2026: RELIEF AND STABILITY WELCOMED, BUT EDUCATORS NEED MORE THAN PROMISES

NAPTOSA notes the 2026 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement delivered today by Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana. We welcome the Minister's commitment to preserve the jobs of teachers, doctors and nurses, and the relief measures for households. However, the statement says little about the pressures educators and schools face every day.

Fuel relief

NAPTOSA warned that petrol is heading for a record high. We therefore welcome the temporary relief. From 4 November to 1 December 2026, the fuel levy will be cut by R1.50 per litre on petrol and R3 per litre on diesel. A smaller cut of R1 on petrol and R1.50 on diesel will apply until 5 January 2027. This will help educators who commute long distances to rural and township schools. However, the relief is short-lived and will not undo the cumulative effect of higher fuel, electricity and interest costs.

Education and the social wage

- R20.5 billion is added to the provincial equitable share to help provinces meet higher health and education costs.
- Subsidised basic education reaches over 77% of learners, with the National School Nutrition Programme continuing.
- R1.6 billion is allocated over the medium term to the first 1,000 days of life, addressing stunting and malnutrition.

Gender-based violence and safety

Following the President's address, which we welcomed in Newsflash 30, the Budget allocates R3.8 billion to hire over 3,500 social workers and R186 million for forensic and investigative capacity. Sexual offences courts will expand from 55 to 101, and Thuthuzela Care Centres from 72 to 80 by 2028/29. NAPTOSA will monitor whether this translates into visible action.

Municipalities and electricity

Local government's share rises to 10% of non-interest spending, with an extra R21.8 billion for free basic services. Schools depend on reliable municipal services, so this matters. The statement, however, does not address the proposed 8.83% Eskom increase for 2027/28 that we reject.

Our concerns

- Growth: Growth is forecast at only 1.2% in 2026 and 1.6% in 2027. That is too low to create the jobs our learners will need.
- Public service posts and pay: The Budget makes provision for early retirement and voluntary exit packages in the public service. NAPTOSA will insist that this does not become a loss of experienced educators or larger classes. We also expect existing wage agreements to be honoured.
- Savings: R38.1 billion in further savings is to be found. We will watch closely to ensure that these cuts do not reach classrooms.
- Labour inspectors: The statement mentions more labour inspectors but gives no figures or timelines. NAPTOSA is calling for the inclusion of schools and government buildings to ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and protect the safety of staff, learners and the public.

Our position

NAPTOSA recognises that debt has stabilised at 78.4% of GDP and that the deficit is narrowing. However, stability must translate into well-resourced schools, secure posts, and a fair deal for educators. We will engage the Department of Basic Education and the provincial departments to make sure this Budget delivers for education.

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