

## FREE STATE SPENDS BIG ON EDUCATION

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By SAPA

Education in the Free State will get the biggest slice of the province's R24.8 billion budget, MEC for Finance Seiso Mohai said on Tuesday.

It would make up 40 percent of the planned provincial spending for the coming year, he said.

Mohai said priorities in the department would be the funding of the schools No-Fee programme, the supply of pupil and teacher support material and the employment of more teachers.

Health would get the second biggest cut at R7.3bn, and the department of economic development, tourism and environmental affairs R430 million to stimulate economic growth and job creation.

Provincial road maintenance was expected to obtain most of the R1.7bn budget allocation for the department of police, roads and transport.

Mohai said the provincial government had taken note of the recent provincial and local government audit results.

"We are not pleased and certainly we are not resting."

Mohai said the 2012/13 provincial budget would make funding available for, among others, capacity building in provincial departments and municipalities, and improving the effectiveness of the monitoring and oversight of government spending.

Free State leader of the Congress of the People Casca Mokitlane said not enough money had been made available for economic development in the Free State. There was only enough to pay salaries in state entities such as the Free State Development Corporation, which focused on economic development.

"That entity cannot contribute to its core mission, which is SMME development in the province."

Mokitlane said the Free State should start spending more on getting economic investment.

Free State Democratic Alliance leader Roy Jankielsohn said this year's budget was a 'business as usual budget' with few changes from 2011.

He said Mohai had mentioned various aspects of economic growth, but that the key to this would be a sound road infrastructure.

"We are very concerned that the budget for the department of police, roads and transport was down by almost five percent and at the same time we see an increase of over 13 percent in the office of the premier."

Jankielsohn said Mohai had made welcome remarks about effective and efficient spending in the departments responsible for service delivery.

He said the DA supported these efforts because these departments and how they would spend their money would determine whether the budget benefitted all the citizens of the province. - Sapa

[Source: [www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za)]