



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Office of the Minister

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CONTINUES TO ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES DESPITE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES



HON. LUCAS DAWA DEKENA MP
Minister for Education

The Ministry of Education continues to achieve significant milestones since 2019 despite the economic and social challenges facing the country. These achievements are a testimony of the Marape Government's unwavering support and commitment to the Ministry.

Therefore, at the outset, I thank the Marape/Rosso Government for living up to its commitment in providing the financial support and the political stability needed for us to progress education reforms in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the country.

The challenges in resources appropriated by the Government each year and the rapid increase in the population against the current infrastructure and services available in the education sector remain as development challenges. However, my Ministry is managing and maximizing limited resources through prudent and strategic management approaches to progress and achieve tangible outcomes.

Some key achievements in the last five years include the Government's Tuition Fee Free Policy, Early Childhood Education, the change of the curriculum from Outcome-Based Curriculum (OBC) to Standard-Based Curriculum (SBC), National Schools of Excellence, reform and expansion of the FODE Sector, and the 1-6-6 School Restructure implementation to phase out elementary schools and move Prep, Grade 1 and 2 into the primary schools sector, and the phasing out of selections in Grades 8 and 10.

In this statement, I take the opportunity to highlight seven (7) key policies and reforms that have stood out for the Marape/Rosso Government. These are as follows:

1) Government's Fee free tuition and Project fees Policy.

Firstly, in 2019, the Marape/Rosso Government saw the need for parents to share the cost of their children's education; hence it called the policy Government Tuition Fee Subsidy Policy and funded the Government's component completely.

I am proud to say that our government is a very responsible government and for the people because when COVID 19 made life so hard for parents, our government saw your needs and has given 100% tuition and project fee free education.

In 2025, the name of the policy changed to Government Free Education Policy (GFEP) with the government paying the full tuition fees for all students in the general education sector. The Government has been committed to providing grants to all schools since 2012 to ensure every child receives 13 years of quality education.

The Marape Rosso government has since 2022, expanded the budget with the inclusion of a project fee grant component to further relieve families from the burden of economic hardships. This special intervention continues in 2025.

The Marape/Rosso Government has education as one of its top priorities, because education is foundational for economic prosperity, social justice,

and the overall well-being of a society. Hence, this policy translates the government's desire to share our collective resources with every citizen and without prejudice of tribal connections, religion, gender and geographical or political associations. Through the government's commitment every child in Early Childhood Centres, Primary Schools, High Schools, Secondary Schools, National Schools of Excellence, Vocational Training Centres, Inclusive Education Resource Centres, and Flexible Open and Distance Education centers will receive free education, meaning students enrolling in these schools will enroll and remain in school without parents struggling to pay any form of school fees.

In line with this commitment to inclusiveness and equity, a significant decision was made: Under the government's free education policy, tuition fees will now be allocated based on the location of each child. For instance, a child in Wardstrip Primary School in NCD may receive K100, while a child in a remote location such as on Rossel Island in Milne Bay may receive up to K400. This shift ensures that resources are distributed equitably, addressing the unique challenges faced by children in remote areas.

2) FODE Transformation

Secondly, the Ministry has aggressively taken the initiative to reform and expand the Flexible, Open and Distance (FODE) sector and provide free enrolment for students. This change has received high commendation from both local and global experts like the present and past presidents of the Commonwealth of Learning. This is again a result of the positive support from the current Marape/Rosso government.

As a result of the positive support from the government, the enrolment of students has increased from 33,000 in 2020 to 82,000 today and continues to grow. We are also improving on the quality of the curriculum and its learning assessment support system to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to get a relatively equal quality education to complete grade 12 achieve their aspirations and a better opportunity in life.

The recent announcement by the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) to include FODE students in the online selections for universities and tertiary institutions in 2024. This was a historical milestone when more than 2,000 FODE students applied online for the first time to secure spaces in universities and tertiary institutions and more than 1,000 were able to secure spaces in universities and other tertiary institutions.

This again demonstrates our policy to leave no one behind.

3) National Schools of Excellence and STEM Curriculum

Finally, Papua New Guinea's Vision 2050 was designed to create opportunities for personal and national advancement through smart and innovative ideas through well-coordinated systems in a safe and secure environment amongst others. Hence, the PNG Medium Term Development Plan IV, Strategic Priority Area (SPA) 4 calls for Quality Education and a skilled workforce to meet imminent 21st century human capital demands. My Ministry is responsible for this goal.

The implementation of the NSOE policy in 2020 and the introduction of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum is a significant milestone for the country. This intervention is the brainchild of our Prime Minister - Hon James Marape in 2009, to give an opportunity to the cream our students who perform exceptionally well at Grade 10 to get the best education and training both locally and globally so we have a cadre of top notch human capital to lead and drive our economy in research, science, technology and top tier industries.

The NSOE policy also identifies and gives a 100% scholarship to the top performing STEM students in Grade 12 to go to overseas STEM Universities for studies. Currently, more than 200 students are now studying in the United States, India, China and Fiji under the STEM Scholarship Program.

4) Early Childhood Education

We have introduced early childhood education as a new sector in education and policy priority in 2025. The curriculum has been developed, and 11 early childhood education centers have been approved. These centers will initially cater to children aged 4 and 5; while children aged 6 will move to the preparatory grade in primary schools.

We believe that the foundation must be well developed to have a better education system. The ECE curriculum will deliberately have a learning area to be called God and the Bible. We will also have students to be literate and numerate before they are allowed to go to Grade 1.

5) Accelerated Christian Education (ACE)

Another significant initiative is the introduction of the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) system.

ACE will be piloted in selected schools within the National Capital District. This individualized system of learning incorporates principles of discipline and moral values, aligning with our vision to instill Christian values in our children. Our goal is to nurture a God-fearing, law-abiding, and educated population. This system also aligns with our Vision for 2075, emphasizing holistic development and divine influences to shape the future of our nation's children.

6) Teaching standards and making it prestigious

The Ministry plans to make teaching a noble and prestigious profession. The teacher will receive appropriate training and remuneration. In order for teachers to give our children a top-notch education, the government is dedicated to making sure they have access to improved housing, educational materials, and other essentials.

7) Standards-Based Curriculum

We have made significant strides in enhancing the curriculum and now focusing on needs basis, with the ICT curriculum now complete. Building on this success, we will begin developing the Financial Literacy curriculum imminently. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum is currently in progress.

8) Construction of Science Labs in high/secondary schools

The Ministry is also constructing three specialized laboratories with store rooms to cater for Physics, Biology and Chemistry in secondary schools throughout the country. Meanwhile, new High Schools built recently to have proper laboratories to cater for Grade 7- 10 Science and that the current list of science equipment supplied is reviewed to allow for increase in quantity of equipment and chemicals used regularly.

Since 2020, we have constructed a total of 30 science labs in both high and secondary schools in Madang (Brahmin, Kama and Sausi), New Ireland (Mongop), Eastern Highlands (Daulo, Tarabo and Kabiufa), Jiwaka (Jimi and Kami), Simbu (Baramigal, Boromil and Gumine), Western Highlands (Kui Wapnga, Mt. Giluwe, and Togoba), Southern Highlands (Kaupena and Nipa), Hela (Tari), Enga (St. Paul's Lutheran), Morobe (Lae and Wantoat), East Sepik (St. Marcellin), Oro (Popondetta), Central (Kwikila), NCD (Waigani Christian Academy) and Manus (Manus). Many are still under construction.

9) Minimum Service Standards and Funding Responsibilities Framework

The 2023 Governor's Conference resolved to implement specific legislative and functional reforms aimed at enhancing provincial service delivery capacity. In October 2024, the Department of Education submitted the Minimum Service Standards to the National Executive Council (NEC). The NEC, via Decision 271/2024 (Meeting 20/2024), approved the Minimum Service Standards and Funding Responsibilities Framework for implementation by the Department and all relevant agencies.

The Minimum Service Standards (MSS) are integrated within the Service Delivery Framework

(SDF), providing guidelines for service provision across all levels of government, from local wards to the national level.

The framework sets clear benchmarks for service delivery, promotes equity and consistency in service provision, improves accountability and transparency in government spending, and ensures that adequate resources are available to meet the basic needs of students in each sector of education and training.

10) Improved PILNA Reports

We are pleased with the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) 2021 benchmarking results which showed improvements made in reducing the gap between the performance of boys and girls in numeracy, reading and writing in grade 3 and grade 5 levels.

The PILNA indicated that since 2015 PNG has made significant progress in both literacy and numeracy. In 2015, only 23 percent (2 out of 10) Grade 5 students performed at the expected or above proficiency levels in Literacy, while 52 percent (5 out of 10) performed at or above the expected proficiency levels in Numeracy.

Furthermore in 2018, Grade 3 students also participated: In Literacy, 38 percent performed at or above the expected proficiency levels, whilst in Numeracy 86 percent performed at or above the expected proficiency levels. Meanwhile, the Grade 5 students, in Literacy, 52 percent performed at or above the expected levels, and in Numeracy 84 percent performed at or above the expected proficiency levels.

In 2021, Grade 3 students: In Literacy, 45 percent performed at or above the proficiency level, whilst in Numeracy 73 percent performed at or above the expected levels.

For grade 5 students; 66 percent performed at or above the expected proficiency levels in Literacy, whereas in Numeracy, 77 percent performed at or above the expected proficiency levels.

PILNA administration was developed in 2015 and is intended to provide a one-time snapshot of literacy and numeracy achievement in the Pacific region. PILNA as a long-term Pacific-wide regional assessment is to generate cognitive and contextual data that can facilitate ongoing collaborative efforts to monitor and improve learning outcomes for children in Pacific Island countries.

Our PILNA results are improving, and with the deliberate policy changes, the future looks promising.

Conclusion

In whole, the introduction and implementation of reforms in the education sector is progressing well and we are seeing tangible results.

Our education system must equip young people with the tools to build strong futures and contribute meaningfully to the nation. As part of this effort, we are phasing out Grade 8 and Grade 10 selection processes. This initiative begins with Grade 8 this year in five provinces and will expand based on preparedness, with Grade 10 phasing out by 2027.

The Ministry of Education is producing results in significant milestone policies. Only history will tell the story of the reforms we are introducing and progressing.

Of course, there are education development challenges such as many young people not in schools due to some issues, overcrowded classrooms in urban areas need for more learning resources, but be assured that our government is commitment to education, and the education sector will remain at the top in resource allocation and our commitment to achieving quality education for all.

Approved for Release by:

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