



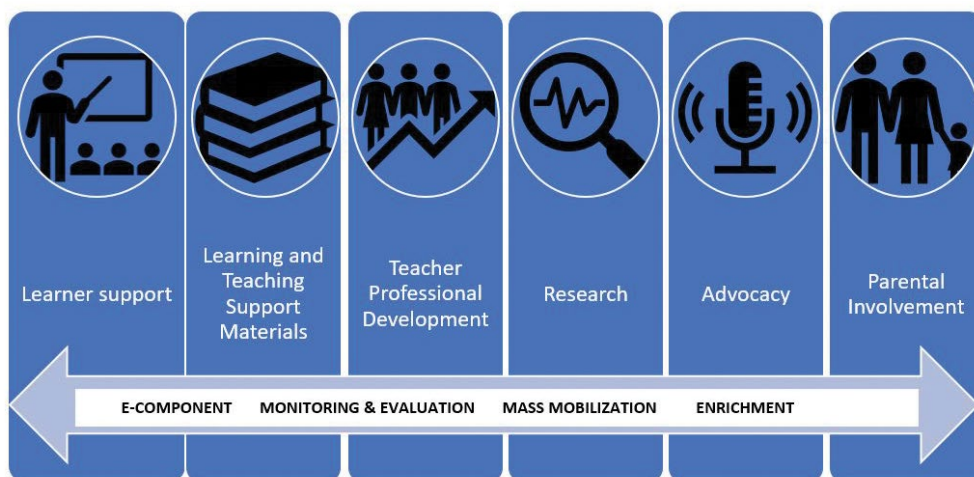
## Improving reading for meaning in the Western Cape

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### 1. Background

In March 2020, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) rolled out a reading strategy. This strategy is built on six pillars: learner support, teacher professional development, research, parental involvement, the provisioning of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), and advocacy. The strategy is available at <https://wcedportal.co.za/eresource/145371>.



In 2019, as part of the Foundation Phase five-year strategic plan for Languages, the WCED decided to follow a differentiated approach for each of the three Home Languages. For Afrikaans and English Home Language, a decision was taken to follow a synthetic phonics approach to reading. As the orthographies within the IsiXhosa Language differ from the other two Home Languages; the decision was taken to adopt the structured Literacy Home Language programme. These decisions were made after in-depth research on the Science of Reading.

The WCED systemic results (2021) indicated that only 42% of Grade 3 learners could read for meaning. Our current way of teaching is not bringing about the necessary change in the system.

In 2021 Foundation Phase was identified as a key priority of the department. All directorates across the departments were to ensure that Foundation Phase becomes the focus point. With this, a considerable budget was allocated to Foundation Phase to enable the department to provide the necessary resources to all schools.



## 2. WCED partnership with Funda Wandé

In 2020 the WCED partnered with Funda Wandé NGO to develop a programme for Afrikaans Home Language. At the time of the partnership, the isiXhosa Home Language programme was already developed. The synthetic phonics approach was included in the programme for Afrikaans Home Language. This programme was implemented to strengthen reading in the Foundation Phase (FP). This is also forming part of the Western Cape Reading strategy.

### The Funda Wandé pilot

The WCED, in collaboration with Funda Wandé piloted the Synthetic Phonics approach to teach children to read in forty Afrikaans LoLT schools in 2021. At the same time, the structured Literacy Home Language programme was piloted in ten isiXhosa LoLT schools. Due to Covid and rotational timetables followed by schools, the resources could not effectively be tested out. Therefore, in 2022 the WCED added another fifty Afrikaans LoLT schools in Grade 1 to the pilot, while the original forty pilot schools continued to implement the programme in Grade 2. In 2023 there will be a full rollout to all Grade 1 Afrikaans and IsiXhosa LoLT classes in the province. The original forty Afrikaans pilot schools and ten isiXhosa LoLT pilot schools will implement the programme in Grade 3, while the additional fifty pilot schools will continue to implement the programme in Grade 2 in 2023. Teacher training took place on a quarterly basis. This was done by Senior Curriculum Planners at Head Office as well as by subject advisers. Subject Advisers also underwent quarterly upskilling to ensure they are capacitated to train the teachers.

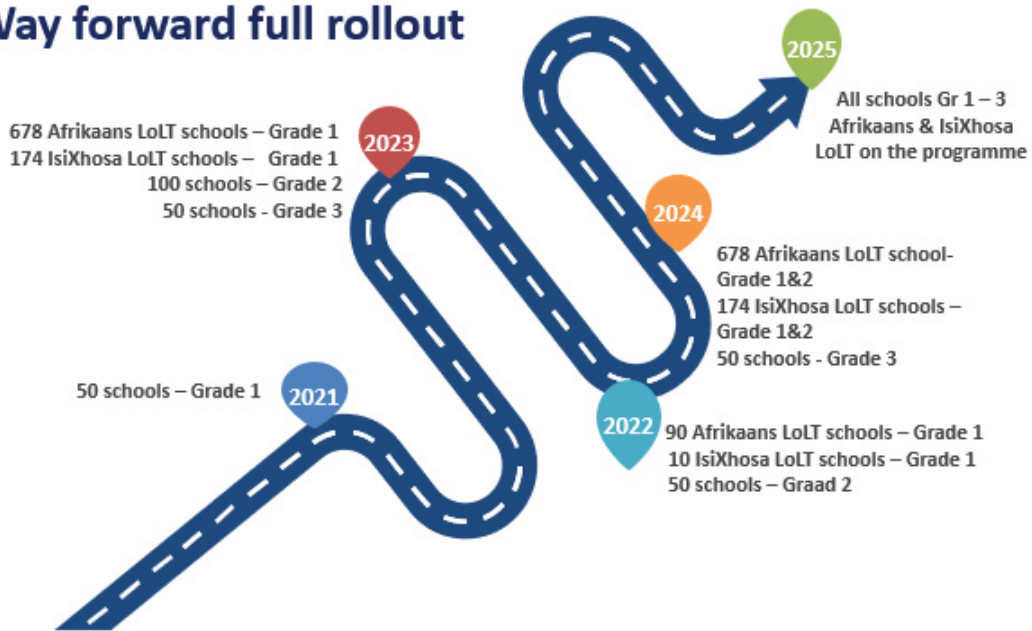
### Provisioning of Learning and Teaching Support Material

The Funda Wandé programme consists of Teacher guides and Learner books for each term and grade. Furthermore, Big Books are also provided to schools for each term. Additional to this, schools are provided with decodable graded readers for all Afrikaans Home Language classrooms while Vula Bula Anthologies and group-guided reading booklets are procured for all the isiXhosa Home Language classrooms. An eClassroom was also developed in each of these languages to support teachers with additional resources in the classroom. The Funda Wandé original pilot of forty Afrikaans LoLT and ten IsiXhosa LoLT schools is funded by Funda Wandé, while the additional pilot was budgeted for by the Western Cape Education Department to a cost of R2,500,000.

## Overview of the staggered rollout

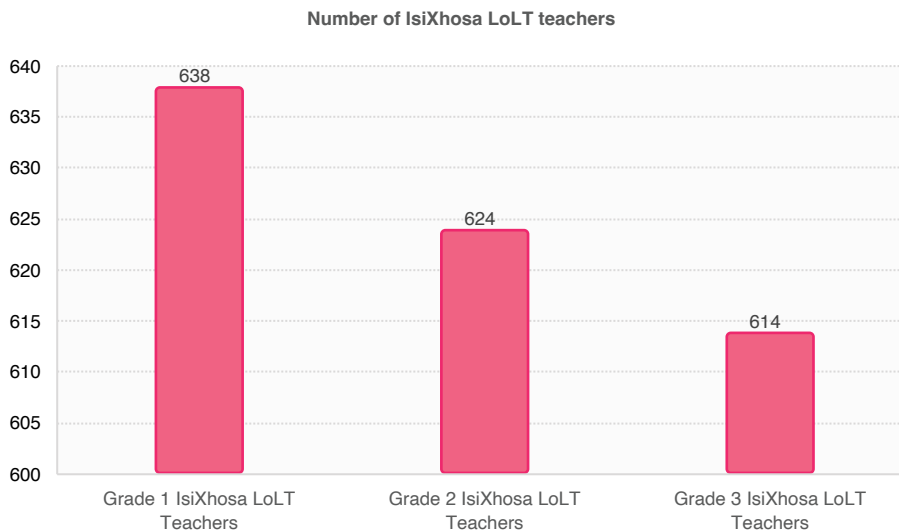
The WCED will continue in 2023 to support the hundred pilot schools through quarterly online training sessions. The upskilling of subject advisers will also be ongoing in 2023. From 2023 to 2025, the Funda Wande programme will be incrementally rolled out to all Afrikaans and IsiXhosa LoLT classes. A train-the-trainer model will be followed. Subject Advisers will be trained and be capacitated to support and monitor the program in February 2023. Lead teachers were identified in schools that were part of the original pilot. These Lead Teachers will also be trained in February 2023. These teachers will lead and coordinate Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in their various districts to share good practices and support each other – each one teach one. Dry-runs will be held with the lead teachers before they conduct a PLC. All grade 1 teachers will be trained during the April holidays in 2023 while grade 2 and 3 teachers will be trained in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

## Way forward full rollout

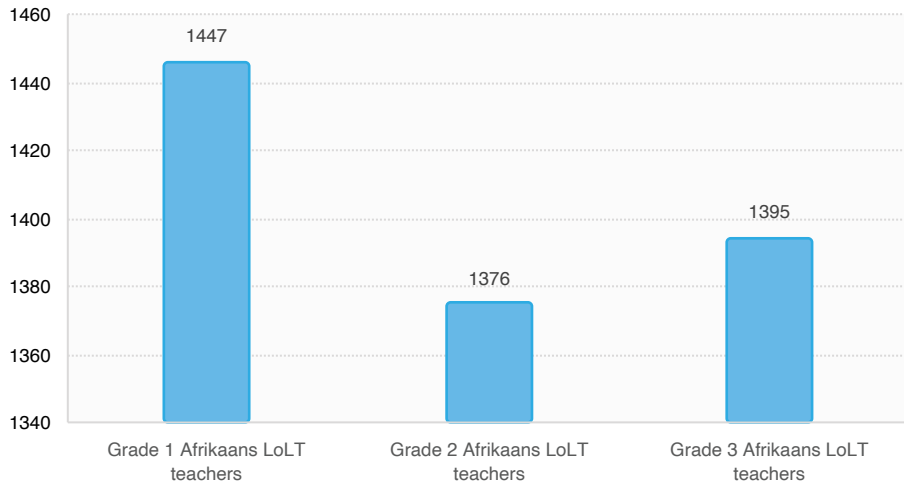


### 2.1. Scale of full rollout:

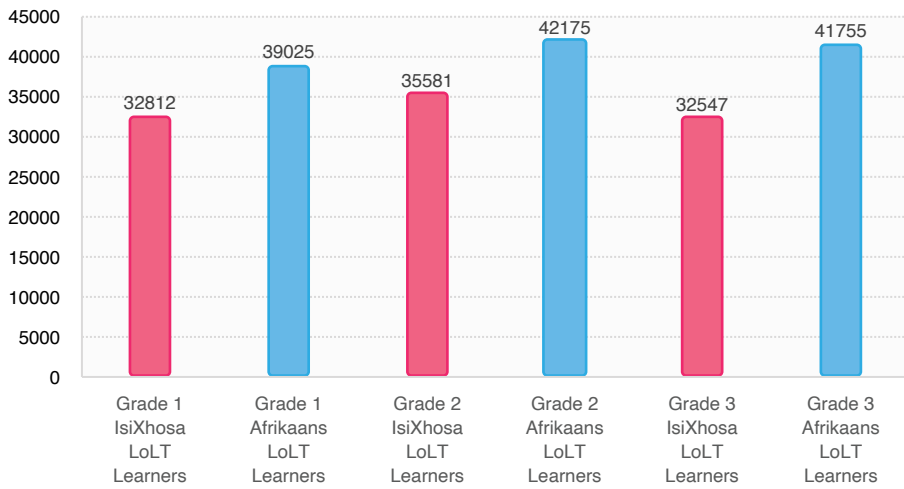
Below graphs gives an indication of the scale of the rollout:



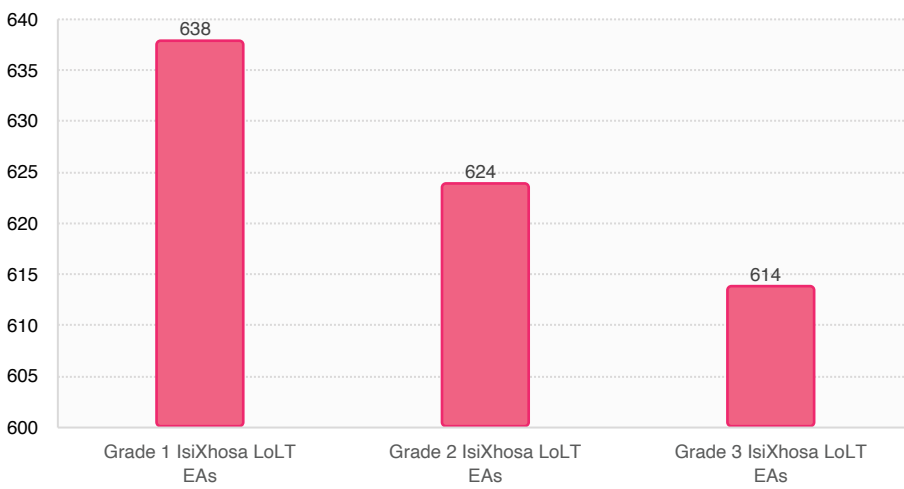
**Number of Afrikaans LoLT teachers**

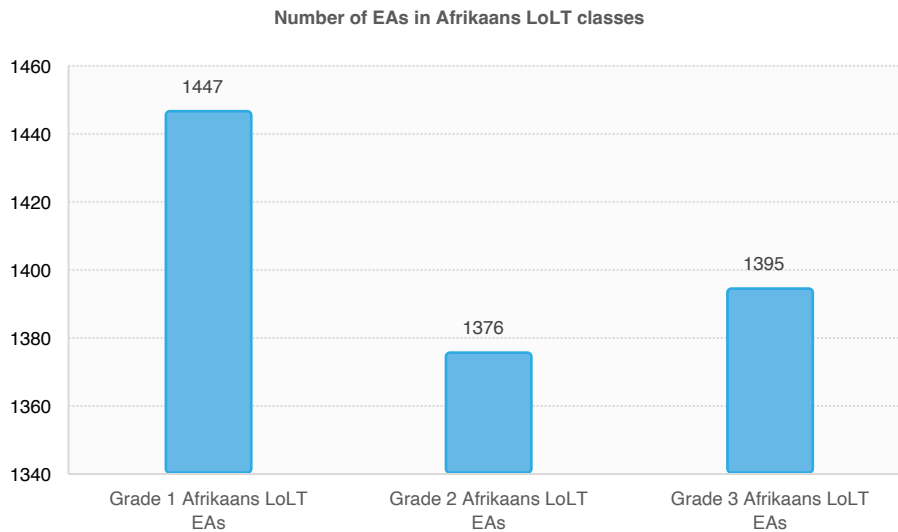


**Learner Numbers**



**Number of IsiXhosa LoLT EAs**





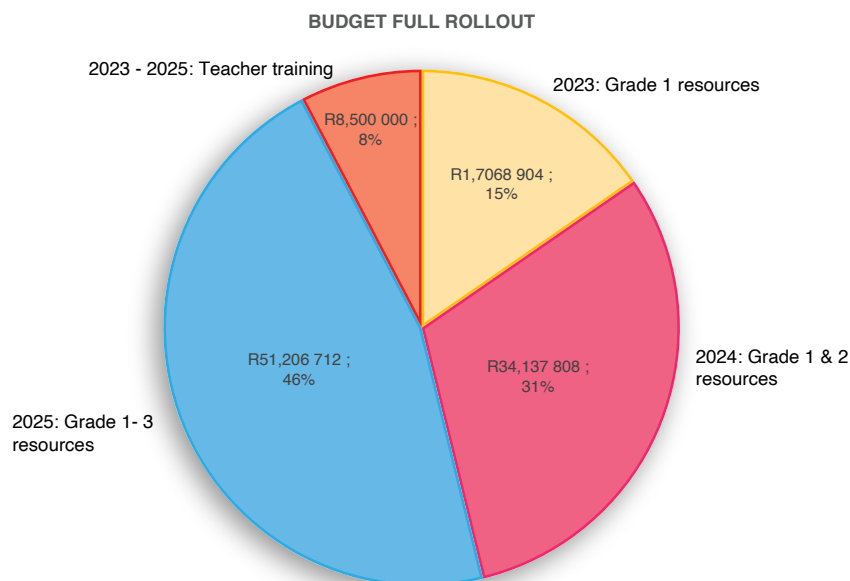
## 2.2. Monitoring and support

The WCED currently has sixty-seven Foundation Phase subject advisers of which twenty are IsiXhosa LoLT. These advisers will, apart from the training also be responsible for monitoring and support. This they will do during school visits. There will be specific focuses of support for each of the different grades.

Furthermore, as part of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI), teacher assistants will be placed in every Foundation Phase classroom that opted to be part of the programme. These teacher assistants will be trained on how to do basic monitoring. It will also be expected from each teacher assistant to complete a mandatory forty-hour course on Reading for Meaning. This will be done through the Funda Wande Moodle platform. Thereafter, teacher assistants will also assist in basic monitoring. Monitoring will also be done by senior curriculum planners of Head Office.

## 2.3. Costing of the full rollout

The estimated costing of the full rollout comes to a total of R110 913 424,00 over the three-year period. See breakdown in diagram below:



### **3. Conclusion**

To enter in a rollout of this magnitude requires careful planning, ample budget provisioning as well as the buy in from the whole of the department. Classrooms are to be sourced with the necessary resources inclusive of readers, big books, teacher guides and learner books. Implementation after training is crucial and the monitoring thereof imperative. The WCED is committed to ensure that every learner can read for meaning by the age of ten.