

# WCED, Wesgro launch new initiative to spark educational innovation and investment in the region

By Imran Saiee

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The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and Wesgro, the official tourism, trade, and investment promotion agency for the Western Cape and Cape Town, have together launched an initiative called Edu Invest. This project aims to drive investment and innovation into the education sector in the region. Edu Invest's launch was announced at a gathering of important Western Cape education stakeholders.



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With Edu Invest the two parties are aiming to attract investment in new private schools, which they say include those that serve learners in poorer communities.

“Currently, the Western Cape has a total of 1,754 schools out of which 1,449 are public schools. We have a much lower proportion of independent schools than provinces like Gauteng.

“Despite an additional 18,000 learners joining our province’s education system each year, we do not have enough independent schools, and particularly low-fee independent schools, complementing our public school offering.



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“It's becoming increasingly urgent to establish new schools in the Western Cape, which is known for its dedication to

retaining students and delivering high-quality education,” says WCED.

*Bizcommunity* attended the launch event of Edu Invest. David Maynier, Western Cape Minister of Education, delivered a speech at the launch.

“This the first time a province has taken such a step to drawing and mobilising the support of our private sector towards our educational priorities and expanding access and improving learning outcomes here in the Western Cape. This is certainly a first-of-its-kind project in South Africa,” said Maynier.

## **Reshaping the region's current education landscape**

He noted that Edu Invest will be a game changer for the region’s educational woes, which include the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on schools and access to quality education.

Then there’s the worrying high ratio of learner-to-teacher. “This essentially means that teachers paid by the government are dealing with an overwhelming number of students in their classrooms. The availability of new school places in independent schools would help to address overcrowding in public schools,” the WCED notes.

Maynier said the initiative demonstrates the commitment of both public and private sectors to reshape this educational landscape.

## **Wesgro CEO**

Wesgro CEO Wrenelle Stander said at the event: “If we don't actively change our approach to education, that impact will be generational. The education crisis cannot be fixed by government alone.”

“Edu Invest reflects Wesgro's commitment to advancing the business of education. Education is the cornerstone of a thriving economy, essential for both economic prosperity and social well-being,” she emphasised.

According to Stander, the augmentation of academic accomplishments and overall competitiveness can be achieved through private-sector investments.

Standar emphasised the necessity for innovative approaches, cutting-edge technology, contemporary curricula, essential teacher training, and a fundamental transformation of our perspective on education.

She remarked, “We are amidst global competition, racing to secure new markets, investments, skills, and technology. To not only survive but flourish on the global stage, we must craft a fresh growth narrative with education as its linchpin. For businesses, it's not just a strategic move; it's an investment in the young talents who will shape our economic future.”

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