

FS Education's bloated salary bill to get bigger

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FS Education's bloated salary bill to get bigger OLEBOGENG MOTSE 16:27 Thu, 15 Aug 2019 Photo supplied. The Free State Education Department's already bloated salary bill is expected to only get bigger following the revelation that the department is compelled to rehire at least 167 former book packers by today (August 15). The Department's spokesperson, Howard Ndaba, is yet to comment on the arbitration award against the department. The book packers were represented by the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) in a dispute lodged with the General Public Service Sector Bargaining Council (GPSSBV) this year. PSA Provincial Manager in the Free State, Aubrey Nappie, told OFM News their members are not only ordered to return to work by Thursday, but they are also set to receive about R136 000 each. About 250 people were initially listed as applicants in the arbitration proceedings. This number was later reduced, but the PSA maintains it isn't the end for the other employees or the ones who fell under different unions. Meaning, this is only the beginning of the worst to come for the department in the matter. In March, the then Finance MEC in the province, Elzabe Rockman, announced the department had been allocated over R74 million to cope with its soaring wage bill over the 2019/20 financial year. In her budget speech on 5 March 2019, Gadija Brown's predecessor said the additional millions have been allocated to address what she described as the perpetual over-spending on the compensation of employees in this department. Media reports prior to the tabling of the budget alleged the Department, led by MEC Tate Makgoe, recorded a 2018 bank overdraft to the tune of hundreds of millions in order to cope with its financial constraints. The Department will continue to receive additional funding for the compensation of employees in the coming years. The provincial Treasury says it will allocate close to R150 million and over R280 million in the coming financial years for this very purpose. The move was lauded by some opposition party members, who believed the allocation would be used to hire more teachers. OFM News