



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Feedback on Oversight Visit by the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, having conducted the oversight visit to the KwaZulu-Natal Province, and having considered the issues that were highlighted, requests that the Minister of Basic Education ensure that the Department consider the following overall recommendations:

1. The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Education Department (KZNPED) investigates allegations of religious discrimination of learners at certain schools and ensures that this be addressed.

The Department conducted an investigation following reports of various forms of discriminations in schools. Mainly was the fact that learners who belong to the Nazareth Church were forced to cut their hair and those that are of Muslim origin were forced to cut moustache by certain principals. Having confirmed these findings, the Department issued Circular 20 of 2017 and KZN Circular No. 73 of 2016 informing schools to comply with the Bill of Rights in respecting human rights as entrenched in the Constitution. In this regards, all SGBs were advised to re-visit their individual school policies to ensure that they do not contradict with the South African Schools Act and the same should not discriminate in any form either religious, sexual, colour, race etc.



KZN Circular No 20
of 2017



KZN Circular 73 of
2016

2. The KZNPED ensures that vacancies at every level in the system be identified and filled as a matter of urgency – and the processes of filling of vacancies be accelerated.

The Department prioritizes the filling of school based posts which includes Level one, Principals and Deputy Principals. School Management posts are advertised and filled as and when they become vacant. There are exceptions where schools may be without principals and deputy principals because the incumbents are on long sick leave, displacement and suspension. Some of the posts are disputed and are handled by the ELRC and by the Labour Court which takes time to resolve and their processes are beyond the control of the department of Education. The Department however, appoints acting managers in such positions to ensure that schools are effectively and efficiently managed.

Level one vacancies are filled immediately when they become vacant by deployment of excess Educators or Bursary Holders to ensure that teaching and learning is not compromised.

Office Based Educator and Public Service posts are frozen immediately upon becoming vacant, its effect on service delivery has been minimised through the redistribution of work. This situation cannot be sustained as it leads to frustration and low morale of the employees. Any post to be advertised and filled, the recommendation and approval of the Premier is mandatory.

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3. The KZNPED ensures that schools who reported shortages of textbooks and workbooks be supplied with these as a matter of urgency.

A total seven schools were spontaneously queried by DBE on behalf of the Committee. Queries raised were in respect of Bizimali HS, Mnyakanya HS, Mpotholo PS, Sigananda PS, Velangaye HS, Zinqobele SS and Amazondi JS

Proofs of delivery were transmitted for the committee's attention in "real time" to assist the committee in establishing the supply of textbooks.

In addition, the committee found insufficient textbooks at Matamzana-Dube High School despite confirming that funds had been transferred to the school in 2016. The Department resolved to procure the shortages centrally and debit the school's 2017/2018 allocation. The school was visited on 25 January 2017 by the Provincial and District LTSM offices to ascertain the veracity of the school's claims regarding shortage of Grade 10 textbooks.

From records extracted from school files and BAS, it was ascertained that:-

1. The Department transferred LTSM funds in the amount of R 184 851.00 to the school on 31 October 2011.
2. No textbooks were purchased with these funds.
3. Also there is evidence that the school started a process of procuring textbooks through their own supplier.
4. Enquiries into these documents, yielded and inadequate and flawed response from the then Principal.

It was resolved that the District conduct a full-scale investigation into the use of the funds by the school. It is noteworthy to mention that the gap was not brought to attention of the Department at its inspection of LTSM at the school in February 2016.

Specifically for access of textbooks by learners, the following measures were implemented.

- The Principal was requested to undertake central procurement in future to ensure that coverage was accelerated.
- An exercise of central procurement costing versus the school's quotation in 2016 revealed that the principal would have saved R 33 309.50 through central procurement and effectively would have bought additional textbooks for learners in need.
- The Principal was requested for a letter for the Department to purchase his shortages for immediate delivery so that learners can benefit immediately. It was explained that the supply would be immediate and funded from the 2017/2018 allocation as the Department would make arrangements with publishers regarding delayed payment.
- The Principal was reluctant to produce such a letter and stated that he would need to consult with his SMT and SGB first. The Principal was reminded of Sections 5A; 58A and 22 of the SASSA and informed that these were in place to protect the rights of learners. The Principal was requested to make speedy consultations, as he wished, and to furnish the request for supply urgently.
- With the intervention of the District Director on 27 January 2017, a list of shortages were solicited and orders totaling R 52 788.90 were placed on 30 January 2017. Deliveries were made to the school on 08 February 2017 [R24 047.30]; 28 February 2017 [R28 493.80] and on 01 June 2017 [R 247.80]. Proofs of deliveries are available on request.

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Textbooks have been distributed to learners.

4. The KZNPED in collaboration with the National Department of Basic Education, consider and review the subject streaming/combinations for affected schools in an effort to streamline the process.

The KZNPED will review the guidelines (in collaboration with DBE) for the streams/packages that can be offered by schools taking into account the enrolment in the schools and the availability of resources (physical, human and financial).

5. The KZNPED applies the necessary consequence management over staff who are found to be in breach of departmental codes and policies, duties and responsibilities and bringing the Department into disrepute.

The department has policies in place that are applied to all its employees in cases of breach of codes. These are applicable to all personnel whether Educators or Public Service. Compulsory Induction Programme is conducted for all new appointees to ensure that policies of the department are well understood and adhered to.

6. The KZNPED reviews its budget allocation, policy and criteria for learner transport and ensures that all qualifying learners benefitted from the learner transport programme. Further to this, that the Department conducts a feasibility study of, and considers alternatives to the planned acquisition of ferry-boats to ferry learners across rivers during winter.

Through the Transformation of the Schooling System, some small schools are unable to have sufficient Educators to teach all subjects. This requires that the Grade 12 learners be relocated to a nearby reasonably bigger and better performing school which in turn has implications of Learner Transport. It is significant to mention that this is a special arrangement which requires a separate allocation of transport to those affected learners should the distance between the schools demand that they travel. The other learners in other Grades are assisted by deploying excess educators to be placed over the PNN just until a permanent relocation/merging has been finalised.

The Department allocated a budget of R10 million to this cause.

A study conducted by the Department gave evidence that 181 schools have learners that cross rivers or dams on their way to school. The Department purchased eight (8) ferry boats of which four (4) have been delivered. There is already a challenge pointing to the fact that the project cannot be sustainable and the Department is considering a few options including outsourcing the project or alternatively building a pedestrian bridge to be led by the Department of Transport.

7. The KZNPED investigates ways and means of attracting qualified and experienced Mathematics and Science educators in the Province. Further to this, that the KZNPED conducts training and development programmes to capacitate serving Maths and Science educators in schools.

Maths and Science educators are very few not just in the province but the whole country. The Department offers bursaries through Fundza Lushaka and other programmes to recruit potential graduates in these subjects. After graduation, the educators are deployed to mostly rural districts where it would have been impossible to find a fully qualified educator.

8. The KZNPED engages with local municipalities to discuss ways and means of ensuring that schools have running water and electrification. There should also be engagement on possible lowering of the municipal tariffs for schools to lessen the burden of municipal debt of schools.

COGTA is negotiating on behalf of the Department of Education on possible lowering of the municipal tariffs for schools to lessen the burden of municipal debt of schools. This is still in progress

9. The KZNPED ensures that challenges faced regarding the SA-SAMS system are adequately addressed and educators are adequately versed in the use of the system.

The KZNPED has made a contribution to DBE of R4 million towards the development of the WEB-based SAMS, a project which is driven by National referred to as SA-SAMS Modernisation (Nationally for all provinces). Ongoing training on the use of SA-SAMS is conducted to Districts by EMIS officials at district level

10. The KZNPED should investigate allegations that certain schools had not resulted learners for examinations written.

Some schools had their results withheld due to various reasons. These were mostly instances of allegation for mass copying which then necessitated further investigations to be conducted. Below is the latest report on the status of schools where results were not released.

Double click here:   Report on Schools Not-Resulted



11. The KZNPED should broaden and heighten its advocacy in respect of the processes, procedures and advantages of the progression policy as well as the Second Chance Programme for learners.

The province only started implementing the Second Chance programme in 2017 it has not been without teething problems. The districts did however appoint district coordinators who will manage the programme at district level.

The first level of advocacy was through a circular that was sent to all schools in January to be given to all learners as they came to collect the 2016 statements of results in their schools.

Attendance has been a challenge in King Cetshwayo district and the province will work closely with the district to strengthen the advocacy at district level.

The Department has finalized the advocacy processes with regards to progressed learners and issued guidelines to schools on how to utilize modularization for learners that are unable to write all subjects.

Advocacy Document on modularisation: Double Click here   Advocacy Document

12. The KZNPED should ensure urgent and immediate intervention, prioritisation and focussed attention of the challenges faced by the following schools:

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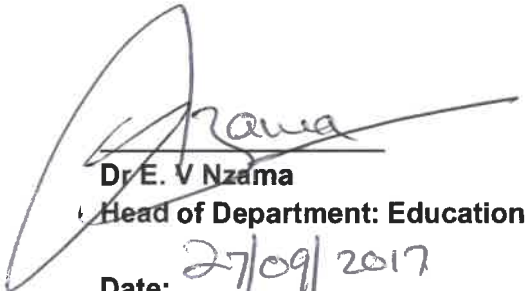
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Zinqobebe Secondary School; Mnyakanya High School; Hlonono Secondary School; Amazondi Secondary School; and Siganda Primary School.

The Department has identified a number of schools which continue to show some instabilities with the ones above included. Preliminary investigations point to an array of causes like faction fights, crime in the neighbourhood and sometimes poverty levels in communities.

SAPS in these areas has been activated to conduct random searches to ensure that drugs and weapons are not brought into school premises.

The Department, through SGBs and Local Leadership continue to engage communities and the MEC has been personally involved in District Engagements with the support of His Majesty, the King and meeting with Chairpersons of SGB across the province.



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