**2. Report of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education on an oversight visit to Capricorn and Sekhukhune Education Districts, Limpopo Province, dated 25 February 2020**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, having undertaken an oversight visit to the Capricorn and Sekhukhune Education Districts, Limpopo Province, reports as follows:

**1. Introduction and Background**

* 1. The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education conducted an oversight visit to the Capricorn and Sekhukhune Education Districts, Limpopo Province from 3 to 5 February 2020.
  2. The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recently attended the 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Official Results Release at Vodacom World in Midrand on 7 January 2020. These results were able to give a broader picture of the performance of our schools per province and per district – clearly showing those districts where performance was low. With this information, the Portfolio Committee sought to send multi-party delegation to visit the Sekhukhune and Capricorn Districts in the Limpopo Province.
  3. The primary purpose of the oversight visit was to monitor and oversee the overall state-of-schooling in the Province. This includes ensuring that learners and educators are in school, in class, on time, learning and teaching seven hours a day, as pronounced by the President in previous State of the Nation Addresses. The Portfolio Committee further aimed to monitor the timeous delivery of all Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) to schools, the provisioning of educators and the progress made in the admission and registration of learners. The Portfolio Committee sought to have an understanding of any further challenges being faced; the contingency plans in place and possible assistance that could be forthcoming.
  4. As part of the oversight, the Portfolio Committee received briefings from officials of the Limpopo Department of Education, including District Officials, School Governing Body (SGB) Associations, the South African Principals Association (SAPA) and Organised Labour. The Portfolio Committee was also joined by the Portfolio Committee on Education in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature during engagements and visits to schools. The delegation held meetings with all relevant stakeholders in order to gain first-hand information on the state of schooling and to discuss various challenges faced in the Provincial Education Department (PED) and affected Districts.

1.5 This report provides a summary of the key issues that emerged from the interaction with stakeholders, officials of the national and provincial departments as well as the Portfolio Committee’s deliberations, observations and recommendations.

**2. Objectives of the Oversight Visit**

2.1The oversight visit focussed primarily on the following:

* The state of the school environment;
* The state of the admission and registration of learners;
* The provision of Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM);
* Staff establishments (Post-Provisioning Norms);
* School Improvement Plans and District support;
* The availability of learner transport and school nutrition to qualifying learners;
* The functionality of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and School Management Teams (SMTs);
* The state of the school infrastructure;
* The roll-out of ICT to improve effective curriculum delivery, quality learning and administration;
* Early Childhood Development (Grade R);
* Inclusive Education, including progress on the introduction of Sign Language in Grades 8 - 12;
* Progress on the merging and rationalisation of small and unviable schools; and
* The implementation of conditional grants.

2.1The above areas of focus formed part of the key deliverables finding expression in the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MSTF), 2014 – 2019 and the National Development Plan (NDP), 2030.

**3. Delegations**

**3.1** **Portfolio Committee on Basic Education**: Hon B P Mbinqo-Gigaba MP (ANC) (Chairperson), Hon N G Adoons MP (ANC), Hon N F Shabalala MP (ANC), Hon T Malatji MP (ANC), Hon P R Moroatshehla MP (ANC), Hon E K Siwela MP (ANC), Hon N Tarabella-Marchesi MP (DA), Hon D Van der Merwe MP (DA), Hon N R Mashabela MP (EFF), Hon S L Ngcobo MP (IFP) and Hon M E Sukers MP (ACDP). Parliamentary staff consisted of Mr L A Brown (Committee Secretary), Ms P Mbude-Mutshekwane (Content Advisor), Ms N Mahlanyana (Committee Assistant), Mr S Mthombeni (Parliamentary Researcher) and Ms R Azzakani (Parliamentary Communication).

**3.2** **Limpopo Provincial Legislature Portfolio Committee on Education:** Ms M L Nkosi.

**3.3** **National Department of Basic Education**: Mrs M Mahube, Mr M L Seloga, Mr S T Mlambo, Mr G A Macquela, Ms T Mohlala and Mr J Ndlebe.

**3.4** **Limpopo Department of Education**: Mrs K D Khathutsheloona, Mr M Mashaba, Ms M L Nkosi, Mr S D Letshedi, Mr S Makondo, Mr S Makhetha, Mr M Mhlongo, Dr N D Ndebele, Dr K M Mphahlele, Ms M Ratale, Ms T S Kganyago, Ms N S Shongwe, Mr M S Makgena, Ms M Maguga, Mr V N Phaladi, Mr M P Moseema, Mrs T J Nkuzana, Mrs M J Phooko, Ms T Madzebe, Mrs N M Mobayi, Mr M Kgarane, Ms F Nkozana, Ms C I Khanye, Mr T G Nkadimeng, Mr M Makola and Ms M P Lechelele.

**3.5** **Organised Labour**

**3.5.1** **South African Principals Association (SAPA)**: Mr M R Ramulumo and Mrs S A Seakamela.

**3.5.2** **Professional Educators Union (PEU)**: Mr P S Zwane and Ms M E Sekwadi.

**3.5.3** **South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)**: Mr M S Nevari and Mr M G Mashopho.

**3.5.4** **Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU):** Ms W G Henn.

**3.5.5** **National Teachers Union (NATU):** Mr G D Mboweni.

**3.5.6** **Federation of South African Schools (FEDSAS):** Mr S R Mellors and Ms A Dykema.

**3.5.7** **National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA)**: Mr A S Mudau and Ms L M Mogale.

**3.6** **South African Principals Association (SAPA):** Ms C S Ndebele

**3.7** **SA SGB:** Adv. K C Moshutla

**4. Oversight and Monitoring Visit in Capricorn and Sekhukhune Education Districts, Limpopo Province**

The oversight visit to the Capricorn and Sekhukhune Education Districts occurred from 3 – 5 February 2020 and concluded with a debriefing session/report back in the boardroom of the MEC for Education, Department of Education Head Office, 113 Biccard Street, Polokwane on 5 February 2020. The Committee had meetings and school visits as follows:

* 1. A briefing meeting with the Acting Head of Department, Limpopo Education Department, the National Department of Basic Education, Senior Officials in the Office of the Head of the Provincial Education Department and Senior Provincial and District officials, SGB Associations, South African Principals Association and Organised Labour.

* 1. Schools visited by the delegation included:
  + Eureka Full Service School:
  + Phafane Secondary School;
  + Diphala Primary School;
  + Sehlakhu Technical High School;
  + Bachabang Primary School;
  + Tom Naude Technical High School;
  + Grace and Hope Special School;
  + Sepheu Moleke Secondary School
  + Baitudi Mohlahledi Primary School; and
  + Mohlamme Secondary School and Morwa Thebe Primary School (Combined).
  1. The school’s visits were concluded with a wrap-up session with the Acting Head of Department, Limpopo Department of Education, the National Department of Basic Education and Senior officials in the Limpopo Department of Education on 5 February 2020.

**5. Meeting with the Limpopo Department of Education, National Department of Basic Education, Senior and District Officials, SGB Associations, SA Principals Association and Organised Labour.**

Due to the unavailability of the MEC and the Acting HOD - having to attend and participate in an Education Lekgotla - the meeting scheduled for Monday, 3 February 2020 was postponed to Wednesday, 5 February 2020 in the boardroom of the MEC for Education in Polokwane. On Wednesday, 5 February 2020, the MEC, yet again, submitted an apology as she was called to attend an Exco meeting at the same time. The Acting HOD was tasked with hosting the Portfolio Committee meeting.

**5.1 Opening Remarks – Hon B P Mbinqo-Gigaba, Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Basic Education**

The Chairperson submitted the apology of the MEC and indicated that the Acting HOD and her senior officials would brief the Portfolio Committee and present on the State-of-Schooling in the Limpopo Province.

* 1. **Presentation by the Acting Head of Department**
     1. **State of the School Environment -** The Limpopo Department of Education (LDOE) comprised of the Provincial Office, 10 Education Districts and 141 Circuit Offices. The increase in the number of circuits was as a result of the re-organisation of Education Districts process that took place in 2018/ 2019 Financial Year. All the 10 districts had full time District Directors and all of them functioned individually. There were 3 991 public and independent schools. In terms of the National Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts, LDOE qualified to have 13 districts. However, due to financial constraints, the Department could not phase in all the districts at the same time.
     2. **State of the admission and registration of learners –** The Department used both electronic and print media to advocate for admission and registration. SABC Combo Radio Talk Shows, Press Statements, Consultative meetings and circulars were used to inform the public on the whole process of learner admission. Learner admission commences in April and placement has to be finalised by September 2019. Despite these processes, the Department continued to experience challenges with placement of learners particularly in the city and towns. The challenges were as a result of late application for space, parents who want their children to access education in town (school of choice) or best performing and as a result some of them falsify documents. The Department also listed the hot-spot areas in respect of admissions and registration. Overall, the learner admission and placement process went well in all the districts including hot-spot areas. The Department was doing a feasibility study which would be used to determine the number of additional schools needed to cater for deserving learners residing in Polokwane.
     3. **Provision pf Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) –** A total of 1,687,731 learners were provided with scholastic stationery. The Department bought textbooks directly from the publishers and delivery was made to the central warehouse in Seshego. The Department recorded a 100 percent delivery of LTSM to schools. The department experienced challenges in four schools where delivered textbooks and stationery packs were stolen. Subsequent to that, meetings were held with community members/parents where LTSM was stolen. The Department had engaged the South African Post Office for management of the warehouse as well as delivery of textbooks to schools. The Department had started with the procurement process for LTSM earlier than the previous years in order to ensure the delivery was made before the closing of school in December 2020.
     4. **Staff Establishment (Post-Provisioning Norms (PPN)) –** The Department gave a detailed breakdown of the implementation of the 2019 post establishment. In respect of the excesses, the Department indicated that the numbers had declined from 864 in the previous quarter to 787. This was made up of seven Principals, 19 Deputy Principals, 70 Departmental Heads and 691 Educators. This would be cleared through a closed vacancy list.
     5. **School Improvement Plans and District Support –** Schools had been trained in compiling School Self Evaluation (SSE) documents which were used as the basis for the development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). The Department was institutionalising the development and implementation of SIPs as vehicles to improve learning outcomes. In addition to the development of SIPs, underperforming schools developed Academic Performance Improvement Plans which were evaluated by circuits and districts and samples verified at Head Office. The Department is in the process of repositioning Whole School Evaluation (WSE) as a measure to improving school functionality. Districts developed their District Development Plans based on School Improvement Plans, Provincial Plans and Strategies. Districts were implementing the District Support Strategy. Districts were supported in various ways e.g. tracking learner performance, intervention strategies, management of underperforming schools, accountability sessions, planning sessions and enrichment programmes.
     6. **Availability of Learner Transport and National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) –** The Province was providing learner transport to 402 school with a total number of 42 407 deserving learners. There were two contracts currently running concurrently, one appointed in July 2019 and the other appointed in January 2020. The Department had an MOU with the Department of Transport with clear roles and responsibilities of each Department. Management and monitoring was a concurrent function between the district and provincial head office. Principals and circuit officers were trained to manage and monitor learner transport contracts both in terms of operations and compliance. The budget for learner transport was decentralised to district offices, however, The Department monitored district performance. The main challenges experienced with learner transport was with regards to routes that were not tendered for and service providers who wanted to monopolise the process. Further to this, service providers also changed vehicles without the approval by the Department although this was spelt out in the service level agreement.

Regarding NSNP, a total of 3 759 schools in the Province offered the National School Nutrition Programme. The programme had also created jobs for 10 374 food handlers and learners receive their meals as per the nationally prescribed menu.

The two programmes (Learner Transport and the NSNP) improved access to learning programmes as well as the retention rate.

* + 1. **Functionality of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and School Management Teams (SMTs) –** The Department indicated that the lack of leadership and ineffective management, particularly curriculum management, continued to be a challenge in some schools (underperforming schools). The Department continued to train and support School Management Teams, particularly from both underperforming primary and secondary schools. Training of SGBs was continuous to enable them function effectively particularly on matters relating to finances.
    2. **State of School Infrastructure -** The Department implemented its infrastructure plans through the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI). Despite an attempt to provide good infrastructure in schools, there were still those without proper infrastructure, more especially, sanitation. In an attempt to enhance its capacity, the LDoE had contracted the following entities as implementing agents:
* The Independent Development Trust (IDT)
* The Mvula Trust, and
* DBSA

In respect of sanitation, the Department had prioritized the provisioning of proper sanitation in schools. There were 515 schools with pit latrines in the Province with 300 being implemented through the SAFE programme. The remaining 215 were implemented by LDoE during the 2019/20 Financial Year. These were additional/different projects from those that had been allocated to MVULA TRUST (the Implementing Agent). The Department gave a breakdown of the Sanitation SAFE and LDoE Intervention Projects for all the districts. The Department also detailed the current status of these sanitation projects and the way forward in this respect.

* + 1. **Roll-out of ICT –** The Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) Conditional Grant allocated yearly 25 percent for ICT provisioning in selected schools. Currently 75 secondary and 32 primary schools would be provided with one laptop each for the teacher, 50 Tablets for learners (sharing), one interactive whiteboard per school and a safe to secure the tablets and laptops. Tablets and laptops would be loaded with free digital content. The Province had been allocated 110 primary schools where Coding and Robotics Curriculum would be piloted in 2021. From 6 -17 January 2020 Curriculum/Subject Advisors and other stakeholders were trained to support the Coding and Robotics Curriculum. Currently 15 Secondary Schools were offering Information Technology at Grade 12 level – while 46 offered Computer Applications Technology. A total of 45 schools were able to access off-line content – and where provided with a server with preloaded content, Wi-Fi access, laptops and data projectors.
    2. **Early Childhood Development (Grade R)** – The challenge was that many learners entered the formal schooling system under-prepared and literacy and numeracy levels of learners in the ECD was low. The gap between Grades 3 and 4 was revealed by many national and international research reports and affect learning performance in the Intermediate and Senior phases. The Department detailed their strategy to deal with Reading, Writing and Enumerating Plan.
    3. **Inclusive Education and Introduction of SA Sign Language (SASL) -** All learners from the feeder primary schools to Grade 8 were thoroughly screened and all SIAS updated forms were requested from schools as part of the admission policy, before a learner was admitted. Those learners who had gaps were put through basic SASL lessons to ensure that they were ready to benefit from their interactions with educators in the classroom. A SASL laboratory was available to help support the teaching of SASL. Both formal and informal tasks were done in the form of recordings through a webcam and a laptop. The first group wrote their grade 12 examination on SASL and the two learners passed.

A total of 16 educators were capacitated on Basic SASL training through ETDPSETA - and 13 on SASL. The training had prepared educators to interact with learners effectively and efficiently. Support staff were capacitated via Basic SASL training to ensure that they were able to communicate with the learners and attend to their needs – this included training on Inclusive Education for them to understand how to teach and support learners

Inclusive Education was also for learners who were able-bodied but experienced difficulties or barriers with learning which were either systematic, pedagogical or social barriers, generally classified as extrinsic barriers (barriers outside the learner) rather than learners/children with immanent, intrinsic barriers which are either physical, sensory, learning impairments. The focus should be on removing the barriers, the difficulties, and meeting the needs of all learners, through differentiation, adaptation and support.

* + 1. **Progress on Merging and Rationalisation of Small and Unviable Schools –** The Department was targeting schools that practiced *multi-grade* teaching, small schools that were not economically viable to maintain for merging and rationalisation. These schools reflected the inadequate number of educators as per the schools’ post establishments to implement curriculum as per National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Also schools whose learner enrolment was below the norm (135 for primary and 200 for secondary) were rationalised in terms of section 12A and 33 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. A total of 165 closed schools was due for listing in the Provincial gazette and a total of 407 schools have been identified for merger.

The challenge in implementing the policy was that in some instances, communities refused to merge schools stating various reason which range from schools which have been named after the chief to parents refusing to let their children use scholar transport. The Department would continue to make parents understand that the rationalisation process was conducted to ensure that learners receive quality education. The nine zero percent schools in the 2019 Grade 12 National Senior Certificate results were all small and non-viable schools. The Department was going to enforce the policy to merge these schools.

* + 1. **Implementation of Conditional Grants –** The following programmes were funded through Conditional Grants:
* National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP);
* Education Infrastructure Grant;
* Maths, Science and Technology Grant;
* EPWP Incentive Grant;
* EPWP Grant - Social Sector Grant;
* HIV and Aids (Life Skills Education) Grant; and
* Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Grant.
  1. **Inputs by Stakeholders:**
     1. **SGB Association –** The SGB Association indicated their disapproval of the Department not replacing learner’s textbooks where these were stolen or destroyed in recent fire. The Association was of the view that the learners should not have to suffer the consequences for textbooks stolen of damaged.
     2. **South African Principals Association (SAPA) –** The Association welcomed the Laptop and ICT roll-out to selected schools and was interested in knowing what criteria was used to select these schools.
     3. **National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) –** The Association was in agreement with the sentiments that learners should not be punished unfairly, textbooks that were stolen or damaged in recent fire, should be replaced

**5.4 Portfolio Committee Observations**

* Members queried whether any school in Limpopo participated in the new Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) programme.
* In respect of scholar transport, Members queried the number of learners who currently did not enjoy the benefits of scholar transport.
* The Minister had recently answered a Parliamentary Question regarding pit-toilets in Limpopo – she indicated that there were no school with pit-toilets. However, the Acting HOD indicated that there were over 500 schools in the Province with pit-toilets. Members sought clarity on the matter.
* Members cautioned that oversight and monitoring in the Province was problematic, especially in respect of learner admissions and registration. It was reported that Grade 12 learners were turned away from schools. Members felt this was an injustice and that officials needed to be held accountable for these learners not able to start schooling on the first day. Members queried whether the Department had a catch-up plan in place for such learners.
* The Department was asked whether they had done the necessary application/submission for the utilisation of the ASIDI grant to assist schools with dilapidated infrastructure e.g. building refurbishment/new buildings, sanitation, water etc.
* Members noted a contradiction when the Department indicated 100 percent delivery of LTSM when schools were reporting shortages here and there.
* There was general concern and condemnation for overcrowded classrooms and Members could not accept that some classes had up to 83 learners – this defied the concept of quality teaching and learning.
* It was noted that at many schools, skilled and experienced educators were retiring and replacement teacher did not have the experience nor the necessary skills to teach certain subjects. Members queried whether the Department had devised some plan to continue utilising the skills of retired educators in some form or other.
* The Department needed to strengthen its oversight, evaluation and monitoring systems as it was clear that there were gaps between school, officials and senior management in respect of SMTs and the Department generally.
* Members noted reports of NSNP service providers not delivering foodstuffs on time or not at all. Members demanded that such service providers be held accountable and consequence management be applied.
* It was noted that many schools reported shortage of security and laboratories.
* Members queried whether the Department was considering the lifting of the moratorium on the appointment of Principles/Deputies and HODs.
* Shortages of infrastructure included classrooms / mobile classrooms / laboratories / school furniture / Hostels and hostel furniture / toilets and water reticulation
* The Portfolio Committee was adamant that the Department urgently visited the Bachabang Primary School to focus its attention on assisting the school with all the challenges faced. The school was close to complete collapse.

**6. Visits to Schools**

**6.1 Eureka Full Service Primary School**

**6.1.1 Background –** The primary school was established in 1899 and was situated in the village of Lebowakgomo in Polokwane, Limpopo. The learner numbers stood at 1 068 with a total of 21 classrooms. The staff establishment stood at 30 (including an Administrator). It is a Section 21 school classified under Quintile 3 as a no fee school. The 2019 performance of the school was 75.3 percent – and 4th out of 10 districts. The school introduced Grade R in 2020 but had no resources for the Grade. The school had not received any furniture from the Department for the last five years – with learner numbers growing. The school had a good working relationship with a functional SGB

**6.1.2 Challenges:**

* Infrastructure – The School was in need of at least three extra classrooms and an Administration Block;
* Promotional posts were not being filled (the school had two vacant posts to be filled);
* The school lacked support of special needs assessments and diagnosis of learners as required;
* Shortage of LTSM (especially for Grade R and Grade 1);
* Overcrowded classrooms
* The school lacked security;
* No play area facilities for Grade R learners
  + 1. **Portfolio Committee Observations**
* Members noted with concern that there seemed to be no proper planning for introducing the Grade R class at the school as there was no resources supplied.
* Members registered their displeasure that parents were requested to assist with LTSM supply.
* Members queried how the Department was assisting with the filling of vacant posts at the school.
* In respect of the delivery of procurement needs, Members requested that the Department gave timelines for assisting the school – including furniture.
* Infrastructure – when / timeline for the procurement of the needs for schools.
* There was clearly a lack of planning for the Grade R class. Members queried how the Department was supporting and assisting the school with the necessary resources for the Grade R classroom.

**6.1.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education should:

* Prioritise the filling of promotional posts at the school;
* Prioritise the support and assistance with all resources for the Grade R classroom;
* Deliver all necessary procurement needs of the school, including furniture – with timelines; and
* Ensure that all LTSM shortages be supplied to the school as a matter of urgency.

**6.2 Tom Naude Technical High School**

**6.2.1 Background:** The school is a Quintile 5 Technical High School situated in Pietersburg, Limpopo. The learner enrolment at the school for this current year stand at 590 with a staff complement 38 educators and 28 additional staff. The classroom ratios is 1:28. The school had phased out Maths Literacy due to the fact that Grade 12 learners who had Technical subjects and Maths Literacy could not become artisans. The school employed a PAT to assist learners with Technical Science to help them pass. With outdated equipment, the school had engaged stakeholders in the industry to assist. The School had an international subsidy from Lab-on-Line to check learners reading capabilities.

**6.2.2 Challenges:**

* + - * + Compulsory shift from Maths Literacy to pure Maths;
        + Technical Mathematics level of difficulty was a challenge;
        + Decline in school pass performance;
        + A shortage of a principal and 1 educator;
        + Outdated workshop;
        + Difficulty in recruiting educators with the necessary skills;
        + Inadequate time for practical sessions for learners; and
        + The school was not a school of choice and the perception needs to be changed.
        + Shortage of Technical skills educators pose a problem to learners achievement

**6.2.3 Portfolio Committee Observations**

* Members queried whether learners who applied for fees exemption were aided by the Department financially.
* In respect of additional staff, Members queried who paid their salaries.
* Members noted with concern the shortage of qualified and skilled educators – and the difficulty in recruiting such skilled personnel. Members queried the assistance from the Department (with timelines) for recruiting and employing these educators. Members further queried the strategies in place to retain skills and expertise of those who may have retired.
* Members queried whether there had been any incidents of bullying reported at the school – and how the school dealt with such cases.
* Members queried the twinning programme of the school with under-resourced schools in the area.

**6.2.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Offered the necessary support and assistance in recruitment/attracting qualified and skilled educators to replace retired educators.
* Ensured that the school be assisted with procuring new equipment and apparatus for the technical workshop
  1. **Grace and Hope School for Learner with Special Education Needs (LSEN)**
     1. **Background –** The LSEN school is located in Zone 1, Seshego, Limpopo and was established in 1990. The school was also accredited with the Agri-SETA co-currently runs a community poultry project and vegetable garden. All educators were qualified assessors and moderators. The school supported learners with different learning barriers through differentiated strategies responding to diversity in the classroom. Learners were also exposed to ICT and computer skills. The school also had an exit strategy for its learners who were certificated. The leaner numbers totalled 484 and the school had 29 educators and 37 support staff with 3 SGB.

**6.3.2 Challenges:**

* Lack/shortage of classrooms and a workshop;
* Day-to-day maintenance of buildings proving costly. School buildings need to be revamped and refurbished
* Current hall needs refurbishment or a new, larger hall constructed;
* Hostel buildings are dilapidated and need refurbishment and renovation;
* There was a shortage of support staff, class aiders, hostel staff, driver, general worker and kitchen staff. Skilled ICT staff was also required;
* There was a lack of sufficient specialist staff e.g. therapist, social workers and psychologists;
* There was a need for extra scholar transport for the school;
* The NSNP budget needed to be increased;
* There was a shortage of assistive devices;
* The school is in need of a swimming pool and better and conducive sporting grounds
* The clinic is too small and needs extension and properly resourced;
* Ablution facilities were dilapidated and too few;
* Furniture in hostels, bedlinen, and matrasses used by learners, is not conducive for improving health condition of the learners.

**6.3.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* Members queried the support from the Department in respect of electricity problems faced by the school.
* Members noted with concern that the school was in need of scholar transport and queried the plans of the Department to supply scholar transport to the school (with timelines)
* Members queried whether the educators at the school had relevant qualifications to teach learners with special education needs

**6.3.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured the fast tracking of recruitment of specialist staff and qualified educators.
* Assisted the school with motivation for CS1 post to be filled.
* Completed its assessment and costing of schools in respect of building maintenance and refurbishment – and implementation of the planned refurbishments.
* Ensure the strengthening of communication between the school, SGB, circuit and district
* Priorities the building of toilets for those classrooms identified to have them.

**6.4 Phafane Secondary School**

**6.4.1 Background -** Phafane Senior Secondary School is a public secondary school located at Maafahlane Village. It is one of the public secondary schools in rural Moroke suburb, Burgersfort in Limpopo Province, South Africa. It is a Section 21 school classified under Quintile 1 as a no fee institution. Of the 16 circuits, the school recorded the lowest in respect of the National Senior Certificate results. The school had 26 staff members including 1 temporary employed as a substitute. The school was experiencing overcrowding with 975 learners for 14 classrooms. The school had one HOD posts vacant that needed filling.

**6.4.2 Challenges:**

* The school was experiencing overcrowding due to a shortage of classrooms.
* The school also required more furniture due to shortages.
* There was a shortage of educators.
* Learners performed poorly in Mathematics as there were too few and underqualified Mathematics educators.
* Shortage of LTSM for new admissions.
* Many learners lived in child-headed homes.

**6.4.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* Members noted with concern that there was a lck of adequate oversight and monitoring of LTSM supply and distribution as many schools seemed to indicate some shortages.
* With a class ratio of around 1:65 and souring temperatures, Members queried whether the Department had considered collaboration with business to supply air conditioners for the overcrowded classrooms.
* Members queried the plans of the Department to ensure that the school was assisted with qualified Mathematics educators.
* Members noted with concern that the school did not offer History as a subject.
* The Department was requested to indicate the measures in place to assist the school in improving on its Mathematics performance.
* Members noted the current shortage of school furniture

**6.4.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations:**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured that the school is supplied with the necessary mobile classroom units as a matter of urgency to alleviate overcrowding. Coupled with mobile classrooms, the Department also supplied extra mobile toilets.
* Ensured that the school is also supplied with the school furniture to supplement shortages
* Ensured that the school looked to offer History as a subject.

**6.5 Diphala Primary School**

**6.5.1 Background -** Diphala Primary School is a public primary school located at Madifahlane, Magakala, Madifahlane. It is one of the public primary schools in rural Ga Kgoshi Ntwampe L1 suburb, Burgersfort, Limpopo Province. It is a Section 21 school classified under Quintile 1 as a no fee institution. The principal indicated that, at times, they experienced non-delivery of foodstuff for the NSNP by the service providers.

**6.5.2 Challenges:**

* Overcrowding due to shortage of classrooms;
* Shortages of school furniture (desks and chairs);
* At times, the school did not receive their NSNP foodstuff at all or not on time;
* LTSM – Shortages of textbooks due to old and lost books as well as fluctuating enrolment figures;

**6.5.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* The Portfolio Committee sought further clarity on the infrastructure challenges at the school.
* Members sought clarity on reasons for non-delivery of NSNP foodstuff at times.
* Generally, Members noted that most schools were reporting overcrowding and queried whether school are implementing policy in respect of admissions and registration. It seemed that schools accepted more learners than they were allowed to.
* Members noted that the school had a high number of returning learners. Members queried whether the school had considered additional remedial educators to assist slower learners.

**6.5.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations:**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Investigated reasons for non-delivery of NSNP foodstuff by service providers at times. Service providers be held accountable and there also be consequence management for errand service providers.
* To avoid overcrowding, schools be instructed to comply with the admission policy to ensure they did not accept more learners than they were able to. Principals needed to be a held accountable for non-implementation of policy.
* Ensure that the school is provided with at least four extra classrooms (mobile or newly built)

**6.6 Sehlakhu Technical High School**

**6.6.1 Background –** Sehlakhu High School is a secondary school established in 1975 and located at Mooihoek, Ga Maroga, Driekop, Limpopo Province. The school is one of the first Government Technical Schools in Driekop Region. The school offered Science, General and Technical streams. The school enjoyed the support and assistance from the surrounding mining companies for the technical stream. Three satellite schools are also part of Sehlakhu Technical High School – but run independently. In respect of school infrastructure, the school building needed constant day-to-day maintenance which proved costly. The SGB had started its own refurbishment of 2/3 classrooms.

**6.6.2 Challenges:**

* School building were old and dilapidated with cracked walls and falling roofs. Maintenance of building was costly. Buildings require refurbishment or new buildings constructed.
* Educators not adequately qualified to teach Mathematics (content and methodology).
* The school was in need of a laboratory.
* School had slight overcrowding in certain classes.

**6.6.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* Members noted that the school had been underperforming and queried the strategies and plans in place to improve performance of the school.
* Regarding infrastructure, Members noted that building needed to be refurbished to ensure the safety of learners and educators. Members also queried the support from the Department in assisting with improvements of school infrastructure.
* Members also queried the training and development plans for educators to teach the relevant focus areas at the school.
* Members queried whether the Department intended to appoint more educators at the newly built school to alleviate overcrowding in the area.

**6.6.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured that the building of a new school be considered and speeded up. The Department to also consider a school laboratory.

**6.7 Bachabang Primary School**

**6.7.1 Background –** Bachabang Primary School is a public primary school located at Mohlophi Village, Driekop. It is one of the public primary schools in rural Burgersfort suburb, Driekop, in Limpopo Province. It is a Section 21 school classified under Quintile 1 as a no fee institution. The learner enrollment stood at 496 with 12 educators and one vacant post. The SGB and SMT had a good working relationship with regular meetings on issues affecting the school.

**6.7.2 Challenges:**

* School building were dilapidated with cracks in walls. Some building was unsafe to utilise.
* There were extra classrooms but due to educator shortage this could not be utilised. Classrooms were seriously overcrowded

**6.7.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* Members raised serious concern with the overcrowding at the school and reiterated that there would never be any improvement with the situation as it was.
* Members needed to understand why the school was over-subscribed and still allowed learners admission. Members queried whether the Department was monitoring the schools’ implementation of the policy on admissions.
* It was noted that the state of infrastructure at the school was not conducive to learning and teaching.
* Members were concerned with the report of building that posed a safety hazard to both learners and teachers.

**6.7.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations:**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured that there was an urgent and focussed intervention from the Department to mitigate all challenges faced by the school in respect of infrastructure, post-provisioning, furniture and resources. It was clear that the school infrastructure and environment was not conducive to learning and teaching. If nothing was done to assist the school, it was a matter of time before there was a total collapse.

**­­­6.8 Sepheu Moleke Secondary School**

**6.8.1 Background –** Sepheu Moleke Secondary School is a public secondary school located in Gamampana suburb, Marblehall, Limpopo Province. Learner enrollment stood at 530 with 19 educators. The school was performing fairly well but had dropped in results in 2019. The Principal had requested that the school be placed on the priority list for new classroom build due to overcrowding. Although the Mvula Trust had built some ablution facilities, the school was still in need of more toilets. The school also received mobile classroom units in 2008 – but only had a lifespan of five years and needed to be replaced.

**6.8.2 Challenges:**

* Classrooms are overcrowded due to a shortage of classrooms. The school had old mobile classes that had reached its lifespan and required to be replaced.
* The school had a shortage of ablution facilities as well as water reticulation problems (no running water)
* Currently there are vacant posts that need to be filled.
* Bullying is a serious problem with little or no assistance from SAPS
* NSNP foodstuffs not delivered on time
* The school recorded shortages of textbooks and the book-retrieval system is not functional.
* The school had no laboratory, library or ICT computer laboratory.

**6.8.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* Members queried the policy on Funza Lushaka Bursars who received first option for placement as this seemed unfair and discriminatory. Members needed clarity on the matter from the Department.
* Members noted the textbook retrieval not having the desired effect – and queried the role of the SGB in requesting assistance from parents.
* Members needed clarity as to the school being a Science school but did not have the necessary laboratories.
* Once again, Members queried how the school was able to accept leaners when they were clearly oversubscribed and full.
* Members reiterated the call for consequence management over NSNP service providers who did not deliver as required.
* Members sought clarity on the issue of scholar transport that would seemingly be discontinued.
* In respect of vacant posts, Members urged the Department to ensure that all vacancies be filled to strengthen school management.

**6.8.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations:**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured that the school be prioritised for building of classrooms, laboratory, library and ICT computer laboratory. Added to this, the school be given the necessary security to safeguard equipment and apparatus.
* Clarified the position on the recruitment of Funza Lushaka Bursars ahead of other potential educators
* Fast-tracked the appointments in vacant positions
  1. **­­­Baitudi Mohlahledi Primary School**

**6.9.1 Background –** The learner enrollment figures stood at 306 with nine educators. The school was one of the best performing schools in the district. There was a healthy relationship between the functioning SGB and the SMT. The school ablution facilities needed refurbishment – as well as extra toilets to be erected. The Principal indicated that they had engaged with the Department in respect of school furniture shortages. The Department had indicated that the MEC was prioritising ablution facilities for all schools.

**6.9.2 Challenges:**

* The school reported a shortage of furniture (desks and chairs).
* For meal preparations, the school had no kitchen, they erected shack structure as a kitchen, NSNP foodstuff sometime did not arrive on time, especially during rainy periods.
* There was a shortage of ablution facilities for learners and staff

**6.9.3 Portfolio Committee Observations:**

* Members noted the challenges with furniture shortages and queried the response from the Department. Members queried whether there was any surplus furniture from surrounding schools that can be utilised for the school.
* In respect of NSNP late delivery, Members queried whether the Department was able to rectify the situation as learners needed to be fed every day without fail.

**6.9.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations:**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured that the school received all the necessary furniture as soon as possible.
* Prioritised the procurement/construction of ablution facilities at the school.
* Ensured that NSNP service providers delivered foodstuff on time, failing which, they are held to account and the be consequence management against errand service providers.

**6.10 Mohlamme Secondary School + Morwa Thebe Primary School (Combined Meeting)**

Due to time constraints, the delegation held a joint meeting with the two schools.

**6.10.1 Background: Morwa Thebe Combined School –** The school had a learner population of 795 with 21 staff and 14 classrooms. The school had suffered a decline in pass performance. Although the NSNP programme at the school was functional, the school did not have a kitchen to prepare meals. The school had recorded minor shortages of textbooks – but the Department was informed of this. Although the school had an administrative clerk, the principal queried whether an extra administrative clerk could be appointed. The school had concluded with learner admissions the year before – but was still doing admissions on an adhoc basis.

**Background: Mohlamme Secondary School –** The school currently had a vacant position for a Deputy Principal. The learner population stood at 438 with 22 educators. There were learners at the school who had their own children at other schools in Foundation Phase. The school had three HODs and senior educators to assist with school management. The principal gave a detailed overview of the pass percentages of the school for the last three years. The access road to the school needed to be repaired as access to the school was impossible during rainy days.

**6.10.2 Challenges: Morwa Thebe Combined School**

* + - * The school was in need of a kitchen to prepare meals.
      * There was a shortage of at least 3 or 4 classrooms and school furniture.
      * The school had challenges with water reticulation.
      * The school needed the services of an extra administrative clerk, cleaners and general workers.
      * The school lacked proper security.

**Challenges: Mohlamme Secondary School**

* A shortage of classrooms, a school hall, a laboratory and library.
* There was a shortage of ablution facilities at the school. Those already installed needed urgent refurbishment.
* The school had a shortage of desks and chairs.
* The ratio of food-handler to learners was too much – there was a need for extra food-handlers for meal preparation.
* The access road to the school needed to be refurbished.
* The school had many orphaned learners.

**6.10.3 Portfolio Committee Observations**

* At Morwa Thebe, Members queried the sudden underperformance of the school.
* Members cautioned the Principal of Mohlamme High not to cast aspersions on the integrity of the Examinations when he queries the use of SBA marks.
* Members queried what the Mohlamme High strategy was to increase pass performance going forward. It was important that Principals be held accountable for underperformance.
* Members noted with concern that there were many learners at Mohlamme who were mothers and fathers themselves. It was worrying that these learners also needed to attend parent-teacher meetings for their own children thus missing out on learning time.
* At both schools, Members raised concern with ongoing vandalism of school property. Members queried the plans in place to deal with this matter.
* Members noted with concern the apathy between the Principal and SGB members from the primary school. There seemed to be a history of conflict – and Members wished that this did not spill over to the new Principal. Members queried whether the Department was able to ensure that SGB members and SMT attended further training and workshops on their respective roles in the running of the school.
* It was evident that the Department developed the necessary phsyco-social support for learners from both schools in collaboration with the Department of Social Development.
* A majority of the challenges at both school could be apportioned to the social ills in the area and needed proper intervention by the Department.

**6.10.4 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that the Limpopo Department of Education:

* Ensured that both schools received the necessary infrastructure they are short of e.g. extra classrooms, kitchen for preparing meals, school furniture, hall, library, laboratory and ablution facilities.
* Looked to fill vacancies at both schools.
* Considered providing both schools with security to curb vandalism of school property.
* Considered the refurbishment of the access road to Mohlamme High.
* Collaborated with Mohlamme High on strategies and plans to improve performance.
* Ensured that the ratio of food-handlers/cooks to learners was satisfactory.
* Ensure ongoing training and development of the SGB and SMT on their respective roles in the day-to-day running the school.
* Developed the necessary phsyco-social support for learners from both schools in collaboration with the Department of Social Development.

**7. Conclusion**

The oversight visit to the Limpopo Department of Education provided the Portfolio Committee with an opportunity to monitor, support and learn from the good work and best-practices of the Department, as well as ascertain the functionality of schooling system in the Province. The findings and recommendations contained in this report should help to assist the district and province to improve on schooling in general as well as to strengthen areas related to basic functionality.

**8. Portfolio Committee Recommendations (Overall)**

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

* 1. **Infrastructure –** Ensure that all schools in the province receive the necessary infrastructure and resources where such was reported to the Portfolio Committee. These include classrooms, mobile units, assistive devices, toilets, laboratories, libraries, school kitchens, halls, admin blocks and furniture. The Department should ensure that schools are placed on the priority list for the ASIDI Infrastructure Programme. Where schools have identified dangerous and hazardous buildings, that the Department should give focussed attention to these schools.
  2. **Overcrowding –** Ensure that schools are monitored to check implementation of admission policy and not accept more learners than they can accommodate. Principals need to be held accountable for such overcrowding.
  3. **Shortages of LTSM –** Ensure that where schools have reported shortages, the Department should urgently make arrangements for these shortages to be attended to.
  4. **Post-Provisioning Norms (PPN) –** Ensure that vacant posts are filled as a matter of urgency. The Department should consider lifting the moratorium on the filling of posts. The Department needs to focus on attracting and retaining skilled and qualified educators, especially for Maths and Science.
  5. **NSNP –** Ensure that NSNP service providers deliver food as required on time. Where service providers default on delivery, they should be held accountable. Furthermore, consequence management should be put in place in this regard.
  6. **School Security –** The Department should find ways to assist and support schools in ensuring proper safety and security of school premises and school property.

**9. Appreciation**

The delegation, led by the Hon B P Mbinqo-Gigaba MP, thanked the Members of the Provincial Department of Education and the National Department of Basic Education for their support given during the oversight visits. She also extended appreciation and thanks to the SAPA, Unions, and SGB Associations for taking the time to meet with the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education and share their experiences and challenges.

Report to be considered