



The Speaker /The Petition Committee
National Assembly, South Africa
90 Plein Street
Cape Town
8000

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Petition of the Seekoegat Community in regard to the School Closure of Seekoegat VGK Primary School

Hereby to formally submit and support the petition against the closure of the Seekoegat VGK Primary School, on behalf of the community of Seekoegat, in the Eden and Central Karoo district.

The school was closed by the WCED in December 2021, after a flawed process of public engagement, that fundamentally undermined the constitutional rights of the community. The community has appealed against the closing of the school during the public engagement process, and thereafter. The WCED has not effectively engaged the community or addressed the concerns raised by parents.

In January 2022, upon the reopening of schools, the department continued to insist on the school remaining closed, in spite of the protest by the community, and the poor communication on alternative arrangements to accommodate the children. The community refuse to accept the closure of the school due to the social impact on their children and in protest continue with keeping the school open. The school chosen by the department is 90 km away in Beaufort-West, and parents will only see their children once a month.

We are petitioning parliament to intervene in the matter to re-open the school. Any policy development or implementation process should consider the social and environmental impact upon people, and should employ an effective public engagement process. WCED has failed to effectively engage the community, and did not consider the social impact of closing the school. In accordance to the Children's Act, the best interest of the child should be paramount, and closing this school is not in the best interest of the children or community.

We have met with the WCED in order to re-open the school, and in that meeting the WCED referenced the national policy objective re rural schools, and the fiscal constraints that the PED face in regard to rural schools. The WCED stated that once the school is closed, the decision cannot be reversed by the MEC and that the community have recourse through the courts alone.



This points to a national policy failing that further marginalizes the poor.
We have subsequently corresponded with the Secretary General Education in order for the community to pursue an independent/collaborative school model. The WCED has not replied to our request for an engagement on these alternatives, and persist in its position regardless of the calls from this community.

We call on Parliament to consider the petition and restore the rights of the people and children of Seekoegat.

I hereby request for the matter to be urgently reviewed and presented to the relevant Committee.

Kind Regards

Honorable Marie Sukers, ACDP Member of Parliament, National Assembly