**Report of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education on an oversight visit to KwaZulu-Natal Province (Zululand, King Cetshwayo and Harry Gwala Education Districts) dated 28 February 2023.**

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, having undertaken an oversight visit to the KwaZulu-Natal Province (Zululand, King Cetshwayo and Harry Gwala Education Districts), reports as follows:

**1. Introduction and Background**

* 1. The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education conducted an oversight visit to the KwaZulu-Natal Province from 29 January to 3 February 2023. The Districts and school visited included the following:
* Zululand Education District
  + KwaMame Full Service School
  + Zamimpilo Special School
  + Phumanyova Technical High School
* King Cetshwayo Education District
  + Dover Farm School
  + Thuthukani Special School
  + Ilembe Primary School
  + Tisand Technical High School
* Harry Gwala Education District
  + Nombewu Full Service School
  + Mhlaba Combined Junior Secondary School
  + Vulekani Special School
  + Kromhoek Primary School
  + Dingeka Comprehensive Technical School

1.2 The primary purpose of the oversight visits was to assess the re-opening of schools and the state of school readiness for the 2023 Academic Year. This included, amongst others, the following focus areas:

* Early Childhood Development (ECD) - The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children from birth to four years;
* Grade-R Implementation;
* Professional Development of ECD Practitioners;
* Assessment: National Senior Certificate 2022 Results and Improvement Plans for 2023;
* Curriculum:
  + - Coding and Robotics;
    - Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST);
* Support for Rural Education;
* Special Schools:
  + - Provisioning of Resources;
    - User-friendly Infrastructure;
    - Preparing learners for Post School Education or entry into Workplace Based Learning (WBL) Programmes;
* Social Cohesion:
  + - Gender Based Violence Framework;
    - Safety in schools;
    - Grooming learners for participation in School Sports and Talent identification in Music Eisteddfods;
* Teacher Development:
  + - Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD);
    - Utilizing Educator Research Outputs for school’s improvement;
    - International exchange opportunities for educators;
* District Support: Support role of Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors;
* ASIDI: Progress on completion of infrastructure projects, brief engagement with Implementing Agents;
* Sanitation: SAFE progress on eradication of Pit-latrines;
* QLTC: Key Deliverables of QLTC structures, successes and challenges;
* SGB: Effectiveness, Capacity building in respect of roles and responsibilities;
* LTSM : Digital content to promote e-learning, ICT roll out plans to ensure that all schools have internet connectivity, text book and laptop retrieval systems; workbooks/stationery procurement and delivery;
* Learner Transport: Policy review outcomes, scholar transport service providers;
* Education Legislation: Schools stakeholder’s participation in the forthcoming BELA Bill Provincial Public Hearings.

* 1. The Portfolio Committee’s oversight approach entailed visiting Provinces through Districts to continually monitor and oversee the implementation of key priority areas. The framework for state of school readiness for the 2023 Academic Year oversight visits is guided by key interventions and priorities for the Basic Education sector set out in major government plans. The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education has undertaken to visit provinces and continually monitor and oversee the work of the Provincial Departments in respect of schools in their districts.
  2. As part of the oversight visit, the Portfolio Committee received briefings from the Office of the MEC, Head-of-Department and Senior Officials from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE). These engagements also included 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 KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislatures. 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.

1.6 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**

* Early Childhood Development (ECD) - The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children from birth to four years;
* Grade-R Implementation;
* Professional Development of ECD Practitioners;
* Assessment: National Senior Certificate 2022 Results and Improvement Plans for 2023;
* Curriculum:
  + - Coding and Robotics;
    - Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST);
* Support for Rural Education;
* Special Schools:
  + - Provisioning of Resources;
    - User-friendly Infrastructure;
    - Preparing learners for Post School Education or entry into Workplace Based Learning (WBL) Programmes;
* Social Cohesion:
  + - Gender Based Violence Framework;
    - Safety in schools;
    - Grooming learners for participation in School Sports and Talent identification in Music Eisteddfods;
* Teacher Development:
  + - Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD);
    - Utilizing Educator Research Outputs for school’s improvement;
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* District Support: Support role of Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors;
* ASIDI: Progress on completion of infrastructure projects, brief engagement with Implementing Agents;
* Sanitation: SAFE progress on eradication of Pit-latrines;
* QLTC: Key Deliverables of QLTC structures, successes and challenges;
* SGB: Effectiveness, Capacity building in respect of roles and responsibilities;
* LTSM : Digital content to promote e-learning, ICT roll out plans to ensure that all schools have internet connectivity, text book and laptop retrieval systems; workbooks/stationery procurement and delivery;
* Learner Transport: Policy review outcomes, scholar transport service providers;
* Education Legislation: Schools stakeholder’s participation in the forthcoming BELA Bill Provincial Public Hearings.

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 P R Moroatshehla MP (ANC), Hon W Letsie MP (ANC), Hon E K Siwela MP (ANC), Hon B Yabo MP (ANC), Hon B Nodada MP (DA), Hon M Van Zyl MP (DA) and Hon S L Ngcobo MP (IFP). Parliamentary staff consisted of Mr L Brown (Committee Secretary), Ms P Mbude-Mutshekwane (Content Advisor), Ms S Mkosana (Committee Assistant), Mr M Kekana (Parliamentary Researcher) and Mr M Molepo (Parliamentary Communication).

**4. Oversight and Monitoring Visit in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE)**

The oversight visit to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education occurred from 29 January to 3 February 2023. The Portfolio Committee had a meeting with the MEC, HOD and senior officials from the Department at the Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg. The format of the engagement was as follows:

* 1. A briefing meeting with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, the National Department of Basic Education, Senior and District Officials of the Provincial Education Department, SGB Associations, South African Principals Association and Organised Labour.
  2. Schools visited by the delegation included:
* Zululand Education District
  + KwaMame Full Service School
  + Zamimpilo Special School
  + Phumanyova Technical High School
* King Cetshwayo Education District
  + Dover Farm School
  + Thuthukani Special School
  + Ilembe Primary School
  + Tisand Technical High School
* Harry Gwala Education District
  + Nombewu Full Service School
  + Mhlaba Combined School
  + Vulekani Special School
  + Kromhoek Primary School
  + Dingeka Comprehensive Technical School

1. **Engagement with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE)**

The MEC welcomed the delegation from the Portfolio Committee and thanked them for their presence in the Province. She alluded to Mhlaba Combined Junior Secondary School the Portfolio Committee had visited for a follow up whereby recommendations to be implemented from the first visit in 2021 were not addressed. She apologised for what had happened and assured the Portfolio Committee that her office and the Department was committed to look at those recommendations and would ensure that they are implemented. She indicated that KZN Province have many infrastructure challenges broadly but the Province also experienced severe budget cuts. The Department continued to engage Treasury to try to alleviate the financial constraints faced. The Department was committed to prioritise addressing all challenges faced by schools as identified by the Portfolio Committee and beyond. From the current visit, the Department would ensure they relooked at the Committee Report and its recommendations and ensure these were resolved speedily.

**5.1 Presentation by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Education Department – Mr Ngcobo**

In his opening remarks Mr Ngcobo indicated that, as part of the School Functionality Programme, the Portfolio Committee visited three districts i.e. Zululand District, King Cetshwayo District and Harry Gwala District. He also listed the schools visited and gave a detailed summary of issues raised during the visit to schools as follows:

**5.1.1 Learner Transport (Dedicated Learner Transport)** - In many of the schools visited there was a similar outcry about the Learner Transport Programme not being available. The Department outlined the policy in terms of the qualification of schools and how learners benefit from the programme. The Department also indicated that budget constrains were amongst the major reasons why the department was unable to provide transport to all qualifying learners. KwaMame Full Service School had learners with special education needs who came from as far as Ulundi, in excess of 15km, to this school of need but there was no dedicated learner transport. Similarly, there were learners with special education needs at Nombewu Full Service School who travelled more than 10km as there were no dedicated learner transport for them. The Portfolio Committee requested the Department to make means to assist the learners in spite of financial constraints facing the Department to ensure that the learners’ right to basic education was protected.

**What the Department will do:** The provision of learner transport was the joint responsibility between the Department of Education and the Department of Transport. In terms of the provincial learner transport policy, it was provided to learners traveling three (3) kilometers to their school of need. Public ordinary schools were classified in terms of Quintiles. Learner transport was provided to learners attending schools in Quintile 1 to 3. Learners attending full-service schools were entitled to dedicated learner transport. To this end, the Department was engaged in a process of identifying funds to provide transport to full service schools.

**5.1.2 Learner Transport (Special Needs School) -** In the main, two (2) issues were raised i.e. request for additional buses and delay in repair of broken busses.

**What the Department will do**: With respect to special schools, the Department was aware of some of the challenges and was attending to all of them. A needs analyses was conducted and established that 30 new buses were needed for 75 special schools in the Province – these were mainly replacements. To this end, a submission was prepared but due to financial constraints only 15 buses would be procured during the new financial year. The Department was aware of the delays in repairs to buses and the service provider responsible for servicing and repairing the fleet was sourced through the Department of Transport. This contract also provided for the servicing of the entire fleet of the Department, including buses for special schools. Upon being alerted to the challenge of delays with repairs, two meetings were held with the service provider and the Department of Transport. The service provider has undertaken to improve its turnaround time. A follow up meeting will be held before end of February 2023.

**5.1.3 Infrastructure -** In many of the schools visited, the team was satisfied with the level of investment that had been made by the Department regarding infrastructure. However, there were few schools visited where there was a dire need for infrastructural intervention. One such school where a serious need for intervention was identified was Dover Farm School in King Cetshwayo. The school had very limited ablution facilities and the Committee also indicated that more proper classrooms be built since the school had many mobile classrooms which were in a very bad state. In Harry Gwala, at a school called Mhlaba Combined Junior Secondary School, the situation was even worse. The school had a block which had the roof blown away by the severe storms couple of years ago. To make matters worse, the Committee visited the same school in February 2021 and crafted specific resolutions on issues to be attended to urgently. During the 2023 oversight follow up visit to the same school, it was discovered that the 2021 resolutions had not been attended to. For example, the structure with the roof that was blown away in 2020 was still standing, posing a serious danger to learners. Consequently, the Portfolio Committee wanted to get a proper explanation as to why the resolutions had not been implemented after two years. Amongst other infrastructural issues identified during the visit was the lack of sanitation and ablution facilities in some schools. Those schools include Dover Farm School in King Cetshwayo, Nombewu Full-Service School and Mhlaba Combined School in Harry Gwala District.

**What the Department will do:** The Department had taken a decision to demolish the block that was damaged by storm at Mhlaba Combined Junior Secondary School. The demolition of the structure would commence within the next 24 hours. With respect to the ablution facilities, the appointment of the contractor would be finalized by 15 March 2023 and would be on site for a 3-month period and completion scheduled for 14 June 23. On the upgrades and additions project, an appointment of PSP would be made on 30 March 2023. The appointment of the contractor would then be made on 10 January 2024. It is worth noting that considerations had been made on procurement process including utilization of open tender and appeals period.

**5.1.4 Post-Provisioning Norms (PPN):** Whilst in many schools visited there were no serious issues with PPN, it was however noted that in special schools and a technical school there was a challenge of weighting of learners. With correct weighting the schools could qualify for more teachers. In all special schools the shortage of support staff was identified as one of the biggest challenges. The Department was asked to work on this matter.

**What the Department will do:** The PPN certificates were issued to all the schools at the end of 2022. All schools that had experienced an increase in learner enrolment were allowed to submit such increases for adjustments in their PPNs and new posts to be allocated. This was done after the 10th day after the start of each year. The allocation of PPN took into account subjects weighting and included technical subjects and special schools. It should be noted that due to budget cuts during the current Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) the Department may struggle to fill all substitute posts.

**5.1.5 Filling of Posts:** The non-filling of vacant posts for support staff was also raised as a challenge. The major outcry was that even in instances where there have been resignations but there have been no replacements. Special schools were the most affected by that as they have a shortage of professional staff such as nurses and physiotherapists.

**What the Department will do**: The filling of vacant posts in special schools and existing attrition posts which do not get filled. The Department was able to fill all the vacant education posts in special schools. However, due to austerity measures implemented in the Province the Department had been unable to fill posts for support personnel. Two requests to fill 600 identified critical posts in special schools were disapproved by Treasury. The reasons given was that the Department could not afford the recurring costs associated with filling those posts.

**5.1.6 National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP):** Thuthukani Special School had three (3) challenges with the provision of NSNP i.e.

* + - Not all learners were provided for. In 2022 about 100 learners were not catered for.
    - Per learner allocation was for primary schools whereas the school has 19 year olds.
    - The school did not have volunteer food handlers although it was not a boarding school.

**What the Department has done:** All learners would be catered for from 1st April 2023. The secondary school per learner allocation would commence on 1st April 2023. The school would be provided with two (2) volunteer food handlers from 1st April 2023.

**5.1.7 Safety and Security in Schools:** In all three Districts that were visited schools complained about the lack of safety and security. The Committee pleaded with the Department to find some innovative ways to come up with some security measures in schools especially because the Department was providing resources and equipment that may attract criminals.

**What the Department will do:** The Committee advised the Department to help ensure that school principals identify police stations or police personnel with whom they are going to work in ensuring the safety of their schools. To address the issue of safety schools were encouraged to implement the (Adopt a cop initiative). In terms of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), each school was required to establish a school safety committee and also to adopt a police from local police station. All schools had established the committees but weaknesses had been identified in this area. This will be rectified by ensuring that Districts attend to the relaunching of the QLTCs and also ensuring that safety committees were operational and effectively implemented. Districts were to report on this by the end of March 2023.

**5.1.8 Shortage of Water:** Many schools face the challenge of water shortage and the Committee advised that the Department consider installing boreholes in schools. To this end, the Department was requested to put aside the budget to deal with this issue. At Vulekani Special School the Department installed a borehole but the quality of water was such that it was not fit for human consumption due to excess acid in water. The Committee advised the Department to find ways to reduce acid in the water. The Committee emphasized that at their level the PED would need to engage other relevant Departments and stakeholders.

**What the Department will do:** The Department would engage the Department of Water for guidance and try to address this challenge (acidic water) before the end of February 2023.

**5.1.9 Quintile Ranking of Schools:** The Committee raised serious concerns with some schools with higher Quintile rankings but located in impoverished areas. The Department was therefore asked to look at this issue.

**What the Department will do:** Each affected school would contest the Quintile ranking following the normal process and the Department would attend to the matter.

**5.1.10 Input by SADTU** – The South African Democratic Teachers Union stood for access to quality public education and while acknowledging the efforts of the Department, emphasised that the Department prioritised issues of safety and security in schools. There was a need to ensure safety committees were functional and able to protect school property and assets. It was concerning that teachers were being attacked and robbed. Practical steps should include the implementation and revival of QLTC structures. Issues of gender-based violence was a reality in communities. The Department needed to ensure support and assistance with the supply of the necessary resources required by teachers and learners. Issues of teacher allocations needed to be addressed and possibly reviewed to ensure learner education was not compromised. The Union also cautioned against “silent retrenchments” where substitute educators were not being appointed when teachers left their posts. The Union urged the Portfolio Committee to intervene at a National level in respect of the effects of budget cuts on education. Other matter that was of concern included the blocking of learners and teachers to access schooling during community protests over issues of service delivery – leaders in communities needed to lay their part in this regard. There was a need to also review the current Quintile ranking system as many schools were incorrectly ranked. There was a need to also lift the moratorium on appointments, especially administration clerks.

**5.1.11 Input by NATU** – The National Teachers Union raised concern that many of the challenges identified by the Portfolio Committee during its visit to school should have been identified by the Department and dealt with. The Union would welcome a progress report on the implementation of recommendations by the Portfolio Committee. It was important that educators and learners had an environment conducive for teaching and learning. NATU also requested that fiscal constraints be attended to so-as to ensure there was no shortage of educators and substitute educators. With the support staff, especially in special schools, administration clerks played a vital role in administration of schools. When they retired, their posts were not being filled and put further strain on over-worked educators. The Union also urged that the moratorium on appointment of support staff be lifted/reviewed. Issues of safety and security could not be confined only to issues of violence against educators, but also building infrastructure and assets.

**5.1.12 Input by SAOU** – Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie also raised concerns with the challenges in respect of post-provisioning and the filling of vacant posts. Although schools received their PPN certificates, many schools experienced teacher shortages, even when the posts were available. Many parents then had to pay educators that were budgeted for by the Department. A further concern was the overcrowded classroom in schools. SAOU was pleading for the lifting of the ban on single transfers. The Union also noted with concern that there were District officials who were forcing schools to admit more learners even when schools were full – and threatened Principals if they did not comply. There was concern that there were still surplus educators that were not being placed.

**5.1.13 Input by FEDSAS** – The Province had a functioning PCF with meetings held once a term. The Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools (FEDSAS) was concerned with issues of HRM and the transfer of educators, including promotional posts. Vacancies formed part of the PPN for which there was an approved budget and there were many schools who experienced teacher shortages - who’s salaries reflected in the budget of the Department. There were also delays in respect of single transfers within the Province. FEDSAS also raised concern with the neglect of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) schools in the Province. Every LSEN school needed to have a registered nurse which was not the case for most LSEN schools. FEDSAS was also calling for consideration of school fees exemptions for parents who, due to financial difficulties, was unable to make payments as not all schools received subsidies for exemption of fees. It was concerning that undocumented learners could not be captured in South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) system and could not be accounted for.

**5.1.14 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members indicated that it was evident that there were classrooms, ablution facilities and water supply challenges in the Province.
* Members mentioned that non-viable schools needed to be attended to by the Department. The Department needed to consider closing/merging possible non-viable schools to alleviate learner transport challenges.
* Other challenges included learner transport challenges with budget cuts not assisting the situation.
* Members queried the initiatives and alternate interventions of the Department to attract more Funza Lushaka graduates to deep rural school.
* The level of planning and implementation by the Department was a challenge.
* Schools need to be protected from fire hazards by ensuring all schools had emergency evacuation plans and equipped with fire prevention equipment.

**5.1.15 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

**Input by the MEC** – The MEC assured Members that all the issues raised by the Portfolio Committee was taken seriously and would be addressed. The Department was committed to ensuring quality teaching and learning in the Province. She further thanked Teacher Unions and SGBs for their valued input and noted the issues they had raised. Many of the issues raised would require the Department to properly analyse the report and formulate adequate responses. The Department remained committed to meet with all relevant stakeholders in dealing with the many issues that needed the attention of the Department.

The Chairperson thanked all for their valued contributions and commitments to address challenges. She also took the time to thank the Member of the Provincial Legislature for her participation during the week and her valued input. The Department was doing well overall and challenges would always be there. It was a fact that schools were aging and there were not always enough funds available to address school infrastructure challenges. There was a need to look at innovative ways of dealing with the matters. The main challenges faced by the Provinces was that of learner transport, water and sanitation and support to special schools.

* 1. **Visits to Schools (Zululand Education District)**
     1. **KwaMame Primary School**

KwaMame Primary School was a Quintile 1 school in situated in the Mashona Circuit in the Zululand Education District. The learner population stood at 752 learners with a total of 32 educators. Non-educators were four. The school was named after a Roman Catholic Church Mission called the Holy Mother translated to IsiZulu as “KwaMame Ocwebileyo”. It was established by the Roman Catholic Church in the early sixties and was later fully transferred to the Department of Education. The nearby Roman Catholic Church building was initially used as a classroom and parents later built classrooms assisted by the former Department of Education & Culture on a rand for rand basis. The classrooms that were built by the parents were not strong enough as the school was attacked by the storm several times. In 1995 the Department of Education renovated the school and added some classrooms. In 2007 the school was elevated into a Full Service School, to accommodate learners with moderate barriers to learning. The school was provided with human and physical resources like the Learner Support Assistant (LSA) and the Support Centre. Being a Full Service School led to the influx of learners with moderate barriers from different areas, hence the need for additional classrooms.

With admission and registration of learners the school indicated that the processes were completed with a few walk-ins in Grade R that were admitted as and when they came. Regarding provision of LTSM, all textbooks and stationery had been received and the distribution of textbooks and stationery to learners was done on day 1 of the 2023 academic year. In respect of staff establishment, the school Post-Provisioning Norms (PPN) certificate for 2023 had been received and there were no unfilled vacancies. The staff composition of 32 was 1 x Principal, 1 x Deputy Principal, 3 x Heads-of-Department, 24 x Post Level 1 Educators and 3 x Grade R Practitioners. With district support and the role of Subject Advisors, the school was fully supported by the CMC and the District. In 2023 the school had been visited by the district team for School Functionality Monitoring and support. SNES visited the school for support and guidance. The Directorate for Infrastructure also visited the school to monitor the school infrastructure. Further to this the Subject Advisor for Grade 7 Technology also visited the school for support. Regarding learner transport and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), KwaMame Primary School was not part of the learner transport programme although there were learners that qualified for learner transport. Currently these learners (159) used privately arranged transport to come to school. All learners were benefiting from NSNP but a makeshift kitchen structure was being used to prepare meals – the school required a kitchen with adequate utensils. With the effectiveness of the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT), the SGB was properly constituted and was fully functional. All school policies had been adopted. The SMT meets on a weekly basis in terms of KZN Circular No. 41 of 2012 – and minutes were available. In respect of the state of school infrastructure, it was mentioned that the state of school infrastructure was satisfactory. There were 18 toilets for boys, 18 toilets for girls, 1 for learners with disabilities and 2 for educators. The toilet-to-learner ratio was currently 1:22. Special rooms consisted of 1 media centre, 1 computer room and 1 admin block. On the roll-out of ICT, the school had 10 computers for curriculum delivery and five computers were available for school administration. With the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), the schools had an established and functioning QLTC. There were no challenges and had quarterly meetings. Inclusive Education was fully implemented and the school addressed only learners with moderate barriers to learning. In respect of the implementation of Conditional Grants, the school had received R 142 620.00 Conditional Grant to cater for 131 leaners with special education needs which was distributed as follows:

* Assistive Devices : R 57 048.00
* Support and Interventions : R 57 048.00
* Running costs : R 28 524.00

The following challenges were highlighted for the school:

* Two mobile classrooms were dilapidated and posed a danger to learners and teachers.
* Shortage of classrooms making it difficult for teachers to apply the principle of individuality.
* School premises was stony and posed a danger to learners and teachers - especially those with physical barriers.
* Content gaps due to irregular attendance in 2020 & 2021 caused by Covid-19.
* High temperature in the mobile classrooms compromised teaching and learning during summer months.
* Blocked drainage system was a challenge at the school.
* Unreliable water supply interrupted the nutrition programme – as well as flushing type of toilets.
* Tragic loss of the school administration clerk.

Some of the school highlights shared with the Portfolio Committee included the following:

* The school took part in the Eskom expo and proceeded up to the district level.
* Our boy learner participated in 1200m athletics up to the district level.
* The school took part in the spelling bee competition up to the district level.
* A successful celebration of read aloud day and careers dress up day.
* There was a significant improvement in the reading skills of our learners through our intensive reading strategy e.g. the DEAR programme and reading competition.
* The soul buddyz club identified a needy learner and decided to fundraise towards groceries and uniform for that learner. The staff and the soul buddyz club went to the home of the needy learner to deliver the donated food items and uniform.
* The soul buddyz club also identified a learner that had a transport challenge who was no longer able to come to school. They were able to get a sponsor for the transportation of the learner for the whole year.

In respect of support for ECD practitioners, the school had a state-paid and two school-paid Practitioners. One of the two ECD Practitioners received a bursary from the North West University to study towards a Diploma in Grade R Teaching. All 3 Grade R teachers attended Gender Responsive Pedagogy and Professional Learning Communities Training. The Practitioners also benefited with receiving GRP documents that were distributed during the Gender Responsive Pedagogy and Professional Learning Communities Training. The ECD conducted regular workshop on capacity building. Regarding learner access to early learning programmes a total of 90 Grade R learners had been admitted for the 2023 academic year and teachers were trained on the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to enhance teaching and learning through resources provided. LTSM for learners had been provided to the school. Workbooks had been provided to enhance learning through play and Emergent Reading and Mathematics resources were provided to the school.

**5.2.1.1 Input by the District –** The District, together with the Provincial Department had committed to address the shortage of the two mobile classrooms requiring urgent attention in respect of renovations - and would attend to this before end of the financial year. The District explained the current programme regarding the supply of mobile kitchens to schools identified. They were looking to prioritise those school with no kitchen infrastructure before attending to those who had make-shift kitchens. This programme was ongoing – and would attend to the school after completion of other schools.

**5.2.1.2 Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED) –** On infrastructure, the Department could confirm that they had engaged and collaborated with all relevant components from the Department to address all issues relating of school infrastructure. Most issues covered confirmed what the Department was doing for the school. The Department would look to address all challenges raised by the school in collaboration with the various directorates within the Department.

**5.2.1.3 Input by COSATU** – The Congress of South African Trade Unions appreciated the good work by the school and the District. Issues of safety in schools needed to be addressed in the area as there had been teachers who had been attacked in the past. The Union requested the Portfolio Committee to reconsider and reprioritise education as an apex priority to address vulnerability of learners and teachers. The school was stony/rocky and difficult to provide recreational facilities for learners. The Union was also of the view that the Portfolio Committee, at a National level, engaged with National Treasury to assist with alleviating budget cuts to schools.

**5.2.1.4 Input by NATU** – The Union was of the view that a pragmatic solution from the Department was required to deal with challenges raised by the school.

**5.2.1.5 Input by PSA** – The Public Servants Association (PSA) indicated that there was a need to emphasise and remember the work of support staff within the Department. The non-teaching staff component was not being replaced when they left. Non-teaching staff contributed to the good work and performance of schools and they also needed to be appreciated. The District also needed the support of the Portfolio Committee in respect of schools in the deep rural areas of the District.

**5.2.1.6 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Regarding the dilapidated classrooms, Members queried whether learners were still being housed in them – or whether they had been moved to alternate classrooms.
* Members noted the large number of learners who needed learner transport and queried how this may affect the schooling e.g. late-coming and absenteeism.
* With the mobile classrooms and challenges with water reticulation, Members queried whether the Department had any engagements with the local municipality in this regard. It was common that the District had water and sanitation challenges – and Members queried the collaboration and interventions from the local municipalities to address these challenges.
* On issues of pass-rate and learner progression, Members queried whether learners who may have failed, had been returning to school.
* Members also queried the safety and security at the school and queried whether LTSM delivered was safe from burglaries. Members also queried other forms of vandalism at the school, if any. Members queried whether the school had collaboration with the SAPS through the adopt-a-cop initiative.
* It was noted that schools in the District were very far from the District/Circuit offices. Members queried how the District managed to interact with their schools.
* Members noted the concern raised regarding language transition through the use of mother-tongue tuition for learners from Grade 1 – 3 – and thereafter there was a switch to English.
* Members queried whether the school experienced any learner drop-outs – and how was the school looking to attract learners back into the system.
* Members queried whether the school had made any submission on the BELA Bill
* Regarding Subject Advisor visits, Members queried whether there had been any visits since the re-opening of school.
* The Union was also of the view that the Portfolio Committee, at a National level, engaged with National Treasury to assist with alleviating budget cuts to schools.

**5.2.1.7 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal –** The Principal mentioned that the media room was in the form of a mobile library and Grade R did utilise the facility – but was more effective when the Educator Assistants were appointed to make use of library more effectively. With the mobile classrooms requiring refurbishment, the Principal indicated that learners had been using the classrooms in the past but as of the start of the year, there was a decision that one of the mobiles be emptied and learners had been shifted – the second mobile was not too bad and was still housing learners. With scholar transport, learners came from far and were not there by choice – with some having barriers to learning. Many arranged their own private transport to access the school daily. The school did offer various extra-mural activities e.g. Netball, Soccer etc. There was no reservoir on the site, but the municipality piped water to the various areas including the school, however, the water supply was not consistent and not reliable. With progressed learners, the school had a special programme to assist these learners with a support needs assessment done with an individual support plan for respective learners. The learners that failed were currently in the classroom and receiving the necessary support. A total of 159 learners required learner transport. The school did not have challenges with vandalism and the school had a safety committee with a representative from SAPS that serviced the school regularly. With issues about the language transition, the Principal was of the view that this caused challenges when learners transitioned to English at Grade 4 – after being taught in isiZulu mother-tongue from Grade 1 – 3. The school had a state-paid security guard and the SGB had appointed two night-watchmen. With learner drop-outs, the school had only one learner who dropped out the previous year due to medical reasons – but the learner had returned to school. In the past, the school enjoyed regular visits from various Subject Advisor.
* **Input by the Circuit** – The Circuit agreed with many of the serious challenges raised by the school and agreed that the Department needed to address services required by learners with disabilities.
* **Input by the District** – There were a total of 763 schools in the District and the District officials supported and serviced all the schools through individual visits and also looking at the needs of the various schools who needed urgent attention. - some visits were unplanned. The District also had multi-disciplinary team visits to schools. The District also conducted workshops and training for SGBs and SMTs – and there were schools who indicated when they needed urgent support.
* **Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department in the province created a further layer of officials and support to assist schools – something that only existed in the province. This level was that of a circuit management sector positioned between the District and Circuit. The Department also gave a detailed breakdown of the delivery of LTSM to all schools in the province. With Learner transport, the Department spoke on issues of the provision of dedicated learner transport and transport for those with special needs. There were a total of 159 learners who travelled more than three kilometres to school. – and they did qualify for learner transport. However, currently the Department had budget constraints and was unable to provide learner transport to learners who qualified. The budget the Department received was ring-fenced and the Department was only able to provide learner transport for a certain number of learners. The Department did mention that there was unavoidable overloading of scholar transport. The Department also had many schools on the waiting-list who applied for learner transport. Many schools had not applied for learner transport when they qualify – and they were encouraged to do so. The budget required by the Department to transport all learners who qualified would be around R1.8billion. The Department had continuous engagements with Provincial Treasury on an annual basis. The Department requested an urgent intervention from the Portfolio Committee around budgets for learner transport. On issues of school infrastructure, the Department, due to budget constraint, had to prioritise specific schools in the District – and was prioritising issues of water reticulation, sanitation and infrastructure.

**5.2.1.8 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Investigate issues raised in respect of a particular school raised by an Honourable Members and submit a detailed report on how the school would be assisted within 90 days of adoption of the report.
* Urgently prioritise and address challenges with regards to learner transport for those who qualify for the service, especially learners with special needs, by the first quarter 2023/24
* Prioritize the supply/renovation of two mobile classrooms for the school by end of first quarter 2023/24
* In collaboration with the local municipality and relevant stakeholders, ensure that the school is supplied with running water and additional ablution facilities. Further, the Department assist the school with addressing challenges causing blocked drainage system.
* Ensure that the school is provided with a mobile kitchen to prepare meals.
* Engage, and collaborate with all relevant components from the Department to address all issues relating of school infrastructure.
* Consider replacement staff for the non-teaching staff component by end of first term 2023

**5.2.2 Zamimphilo LSEN**

Zamimphilo Special School is an LSEN school situated in the Mahlabathini Circuit in the Zululand Education District in the Kwanohlonga Areas. The learner population stood at 150 learners with a total of 11 educators – with 2 SGB educators. There was a total of 39 non-educator staff. The school offered CAPS subjects Grade 1 – 6. Zamimpilo is a comprehensive special school for learners with special needs. The school was established in 1996 by Hon Mrs September. It is situated in deep rural area of kwaCeza, 1km away from Ceza Hospital. The school accommodates learners from different districts around KZN i.e. Ingwavuma and Jozini (uMkhanyakude District), Empangeni (King Cetshwayo District), Nquthu (Umzinyathi District), Mandeni (Ilembe District), and within Zululand District (Nongoma, Vryheid, Dumbe, Ulundi). Currently the school has 150 learners (Grades R – 5) who are living with Severe Intellectual Disabilities. The school has learners who are living with the following conditions: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Developmental delays, Down Syndrome, Multiple Epilepsy and Cerebral Palsy (Wheelchair bound).

In respect of admission and registration of leaners the school admission for 2023 was completed and the school used the Strategy for Screening SIAS policy when admitting learners. The school admitted learners from 5 years and admitted learners from Grade R - 6. With the provision of LTSM the school stationery was purchased and delivered for 2023 academic year. As a special school they also purchased assistive devices. The school also received work books from DBE. The school was guided by retrieval policy to control LTSM. In respect of the Post-Provisioning Norms (Staff Establishment), the current school PPN was 11 and the staff establishment was 1x Principal, 1 x Deputy Principal, 2 x Heads-of-Department, 8 x Post-level 1 educators, 10 x support staff and 29 x SGB support staff. With District support and the role of Subject Advisors, the Special Needs Education (SNE) was giving support to the school through workshops and support visits and included capacitation of teachers and hostel staff. The Circuit Manager visited the school to offer support and this included District officials from various sections visiting the school. Regarding the availability of learner transport and NSNP, the school had an allocation of two buses with a capacity of 34 passengers each. The buses services two routes i.e. KwaCeza and Ulundi. The KwaCeza route had 53 learners – the first local load was 30 and second local load was 23. The Ulundi route had 21 learners. With the NSNP, a total of 130 learners were benefiting from NSNP and the school was satisfied with the delivery of food and had a storeroom to store food. The school had enough cutlery and crockery and food was distributed to the learners in the dining hall, caregivers and teacher assistance assist in monitoring. The school had a Nutrition Committee. On the effectiveness of the School Governing Body and School Management Team, the SGB was well constituted and created the necessary school policies e.g. Admission policy, Finance policy, code of conduct etc. The SGB was working in line with government policies and had meetings convened at least once per month. On the state of school infrastructure, the school infrastructure was in good condition but there was a challenge with floor space. The school had four classrooms and an Administration Building. Although the school had ablution facilities, they were not adequate. The school had piped water and six water tanks. With the roll-out of ICT, the school had 30 learners` laptops and 4 teachers` laptops. The DBE provided the Principal with a tablet for administration. On QLTC effectiveness, it was indicated that the QLTC had been formed and was functional with meetings held on a quarterly basis. In respect of the implementation of Conditional Grants, Zamimpilo LSEN had received R 53 7436 as a first and second tranche respectively conditional grant to cater for the 140 learner with special education needs which was distributed as follows:

* Running cost : R 395 834.00
* Redress : R 16 602.00
* High level support : R50 000.00
* Disabled Youth Skills Development : R75 000.00

The following challenges were highlighted by the school:

* Floor space was a challenge although the new site had been secured and the building project was planned to start in 2023.
* Unreliability of Water and Sanitation
* Human Resource (SGB paid support staff)
* Human Resource (Professional staff): Speech therapists, professional nurse and dietician.

On issues of support to ECD Practitioners, the Department of Education no longer provided ECD Practitioners for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) schools. As a special school, the ECD (Grade R) classes were grouped into Profound Intellectual Disable (PID) (5 with 1 state paid teacher and 1 SGB paid assistant, Autistic unit (16 with two state paid teachers and 2 state paid assistant and Grade R (16 with 1 SGB paid educator and 1 SGB assistant). The school receives ECD Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) from the Department of Education and the school did have outdoor playing equipment (Jungle gym). Workshops were conducted by ECD at District and Provincial level for all educators. The school admitted 34 learners in grade R in 2023. Readers were purchased by the school in 2023. Available. Practitioners and caregivers were paid by the SGB.

**5.2.2.1 Input by the SGB** – The SGB was grateful for the visit by the Portfolio Committee and urged the Department to provide the school with sporting facilities. Learners were able to progress to higher levels of competitions and demonstrated their abilities. There were not sufficient facilities to use and hostels were full. There was a shortage of educators as those who left where not being replaced. The access road was too close to the school and posed a safety challenge for learners.

**5.2.2.2 Input by the Circuit** – The Circuit mentioned that the biggest challenge was space – a matter that had been discussed over the years. The Department had indicated that construction work would commence in March 2023. The land to be utilised had been granted by the local Traditional Authority. The Circuit continued to address issues of learner age-cohorts. The Department was struggling with appointment of support staff to schools.

**5.2.2.3 Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department requested that the school offer further details on the ECD Practitioners having to be replaced – as the Department tried to ensure practitioners were replaced as required. The Department indicated that special school were treated favourably in respect of learner/teacher ratio. For the school, the Department needed to look at specifics regarding support personnel appointed to the school. The Department was engaging Treasury on a constant basis. The school would be moved soon and would resolve the challenge with school proximity to the road. The DBSA had been appointed as implementing agent for the building of new school on the new site. The Department currently provided two school buses and acknowledged the request for a third bus to be considered.

**5.2.2.4 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried whether the school had any ablution and water shortage challenges – and whether the school had any pit-latrines.
* After learners exited the school, Members queried which institutions of learning they were accommodated for further schooling.
* Members queried whether the school experienced any vandalism or theft and what safety and security measures were in place for learners and teachers.
* Members queried whether school buses were adequately equipped for special needs learners/learners with disabilities. Added to this, Members queried whether ablution facilities were adequately suited for these learners. Did the school have the necessary ramps for learners requiring wheelchair access.
* Members also sought clarity on the condition and age of the laptops and computers supplied to the school – and whether they were current and updated.
* Members queried whether the school had a nurse on site, if not, whether they had experienced first-aiders at the school.
* With the new school site to be build, Members queried how far this was to the existing school hostels.
* Members noted the school had seven grades and only four classrooms – and queried how the school managed learner spacing.
* Members noted with concern the challenges with appointing replacement teachers and practitioners. The Department was urged to address the matter urgently.
* Members queried the timeline for the school to be supplied with the third bus as requested by the school.

**5.2.2.5 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal –** Regarding ablution and water facilities, the school had communicated with the Circuit that their facilities were not conducive to learners. As of March 2023, the new site would be built – and currently the school continued to assist learners through care-givers and support staff assistance. The school established a good relationship with a College in Empangeni where learners were admitted after completing their studies at Zamimphilo school. The school also had a good relationship with Ulundi Garden Court hotel to employ and train some learners in hospitality. The school previously also had a relationship with the Boxer retail store to assist with employment learners. With regards to the issue of safety, the area around the school was relatively safe and quiet and therefore the school did not experience vandalism nor burglaries. Pertaining learner transport, the school had a policy that no learners were dropped off at home unattended and insisted on an adult be present when learners were picked-up or dropped off. All buses were fully and adequately equipped and adapted to be user-friendly learners. The school had the necessary ramps for wheelchair access to accommodate wheelchair-bound learners. Due to shortage of floor-space, the school divided some classrooms to create more space. The school also had first aid assistant to support learners in classes and on buses. The new site for the build-project was less than a kilometre from the current site. The laptops and computers supplied were useable with the necessary programmes loaded.
* **Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department had done the necessary needs analysis in respect of the bus requirements, Currently the Department had supplied 30 school buses out of a total of 75 special schools. The Department supported the request for additional busses but only 15 buses were approved. The commitment was to buy the buses in new financial year – and the school would be considered. The Department had to prioritise schools with no buses or only one bus – and those that needed to be replaced due to ageing. Regarding staff challenges, the Department had a specific number of educators in the province which needed to be provided to schools. Due to cutting measures, it was a requirement that before filling any vacancies, the Department submit a motivation at Treasury for approval. The Department was also not able to fill posts of officials within the Department itself – even critical posts of DDGs, CDs etc.

**5.2.2.6 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Ensure that the school is supplied with additional classrooms as well as additional appropriate ablution facilities.
* In collaboration with the local municipality and relevant stakeholders, ensure that schools receive running water and appropriate sanitation.
* The Department should consider supplying the school with additional support staff as well as professional staff (Speech therapists, professional nurse and dietician etc.). The school also be assisted with additional educators and
* Ensure that ECD Practitioners are replaced as required before the end of the 2nd term, 2023/24
* The Department should consider the school for supply of sporting facilities and equipment.
* In collaboration with the local municipality address safety measures around the access road being too close to the school.
* The Department must consider supplying the school with an additional bus for scholar transport as requested within 90 days of adoption of this report
* The Department must ensure the school had adequate ramps for wheelchair access.

**5.2.3 Phumanyova Secondary School**

Phumanyova Secondary School is a Quintile 2 school situated in the Mona Circuit in the Zululand Education District in the Esiphambanweni Areas. The learner population stood at 1 689 learners with a total of 70 educators. The non-educator staff was three. The school started in 1977 under the leadership of Mr Dlamini as the Principal and was named after Inkosi Phumanyova kaZibhebhu kaMaphitha. The school was under Mandlakazi Traditional Authority. At the first place the learners were at kwaBazini Primary school due to the infrastructure shortage (January to June). In July 1977 school started with three classes from grade 8 – 10, offering general subjects and science subjects. The school gradually developed up to grade 12. Mr Dlamini was succeeded by Mr J.J Ndaba who was then promoted to be Circuit Manager at Umkhanyakude District. He was succeeded by Mr N. Z. Ncalawho was then promoted in 2020 as DCES in Nongoma CMC. The current principal is Mr T.R Sibisi who was appointed in 2021. Mr N.Z Ncala introduced new streams in line with 3-stream model (Vocational, Sciences and Technical curriculum streams). The school accommodates learners from different communities in Nongoma since there is no main feeder primary school. Since the school is located in a rural place, maximum number of our learners receive grants and are from mostly poverty stricken communities. The school PPN is 72 (1 School Principal, 2 Deputy Principal, 5 Departmental Heads and 64 Post Level educators). The school has an enrolment of 1 689 learners, which is in line with the school capacity which is 1700. In 2016 school dilapidated buildings were demolished and the new structure construction which is in under construction. The school is currently enrolling 1 689 learners. Since the school was started the school performance was virtuous and very well. From 2017 to 2020 the school excelled in the NSC results obtaining 100% with quality results under the leadership of Mr NZ Ncala, and it is still maintaining its best performance under the Leadership of Mr T.R Sibisi. The school was invited to NSC National Awards in 2020 and 2021 respectively for obtaining the 1st position in quintile 3 schools. The 2022 NSC results is 99,6% for 252 out of 253 candidates who sat for 2022 NSC Examination, only one candidate failed. The school has a potential to return to its 100% performance in 2023 NSC results, by adhering to its routine and culture every day, i.e grade 12 starts at 05h00 am to 05h00 pm in order to help learners to pass with quality results. All systems that are in place will be monitored effectively, all stakeholders will be continuously involved in order to achieve the school vision, mission and its values.

In respect admission and registration of learners, the admission and registration for 2023 had been completed and the current school enrolment was 1 689 learners. The school had a capacity of 1 700 learners. With the provision of LTSM, the teacher support material and learner support material was approved by the SGB and orders were placed through the central procurement and suppliers. Deliveries for LTSM were made for the 2023 academic year. Regarding staff establishment, the school PPN was 72 and the staff establishment was 1 x Principal, 2 x Deputy Principals, 5x Heads-of-Department and 64 x Post-Level 1educators. The school had two PL1 vacant posts for technical science and dramatic arts. The vacant posts had been advertised through District office. On issues of District support and the role of Subject Advisors, it was mentioned that teacher development assisted the school to conduct self-evaluation for 2022 and the improvement plan was developed for 2023. TLS assisted the school to report about academic performance 2022 and academic improvement plan for 2023 was in place. The following documents were available for effective management of the school, School Self Evaluation (SSE), School Improvement Plan (SIP), Annual Academic Performance Report, (AAPR) and School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). The Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) section was supporting the school through content workshops, moderation workshops and school visits. Governance and Management was supporting the SGB for effective management of school governance. SGB members were trained and workshopped on effective functioning of SGB. With the availability of learner transport and NSNP, the school did not benefit from the Departmental Learner Transport Programme. Some of the learners were using public transport while most of them walk to school. All 1 689 learners were qualifying for the National School Nutrition Programme. The school was adhering to the approved Department menu for NSNP and there were eight food-handlers and one chief food-handler. The interviews for food handlers that would start on the 01 April 2023 had been done and all documents submitted to the District office. Regarding the effectiveness of the School Governing Body and the School Management Team, the SGB was functional and correctly constituted – with SGB meetings conducted as per plan. All SGB subcommittees were functional and all school policies were available. With state of school infrastructure, the school reported that the learner to class ratios stood at 1:40 with 10 ablutions facilities for boys, 17 for girls, 6 for educators and 2 for disabled learners. The ablution facilities were in a good condition and the ratio of learners to toilets was 1:62. Special rooms included one media room, one computer room, one Science room, one admin block, 1 kitchen and three workshops. In respect of the roll-out of ICT, the Principal receives workshops for SA-SAMS quarterly and was able update school data on DDD dashboard, attendance of the staff and learners was updated every Friday. The Principal was trained on E-Submission and currently the school Principal was able to submit SA-SAMS data and termination of services forms through Electronic Submission. The school had a computer laboratory which was used by the learners doing CAT. Regarding the effectiveness of QLTC, the school QLTC has been launched with functional committees. The QLTC composition was the principal, educator, learner, non-educator, SGB, Induna, ward councillor, South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Development (DSD) and South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). With inclusive education, the school did receive support from SNES and the school referred a learner with psychological problem and SNES intervened, the learner was assessed, screened and referred to a hospital. SNES also assisted a learner who was short-sighted by granting her a concession. Sign Language was not yet introduced. With the implementation of Conditional Grants, the majority of learners were receiving the grants and 962 out of 1 689 learners received different types of social grants.

Some of the challenges reported by the school included:

* School safety and security needed to be upgraded and addressed.
* The school had two unfilled vacant posts that need to be filled.
* The school had challenges with water reticulation. Although the Department had opened a borehole for water access, the pump had been faulty and needed to be repaired
* The school experienced a shortage of ablution facilities
* There was a significant decline in results for Economics which needed to be addressed.

**5.2.3.1 Input by the SGB** – The SGB requested that there be an intervention from the Department in respect of security and safety of the school.

**5.2.3.2 Input by the Circuit** – Although the school performed well, there was a request that learners who may have failed be given a second chance.

**5.2.3.3 Input by the District** – The school was one of the best performing schools producing quality results. After analysing their results, the Department noted a decline in performance in Economics. The District wanted to commit that the school be prioritized at District Level e.g. 1 + 9 programme etc. – and that Economics be part of this programme and also part of district monthly progress reporting. The District would also allocate a lead teacher to assist the teacher and learners in sharing knowledge.

**5.2.3.4 Input by the PED** – The Department noted the two unfilled vacancies and would engage the PED on the matter to fill the vacancies by the end of the week. With issues of safety and security, the Department was of the view that the school utilised their school safety committees.

**5.2.3.5 Input by SADTU** – The Union applauded the Principal and SGB for the good work and school performance. The school had become a flagship for the District and Province. The Union queried what the level of discipline was at the school as well as issues of school safety and security which needed urgent attention.

**5.2.3.6 Input by NATU** – NATU raised the challenge of the lengthy period of time it took the Department to fill vacancies and requested that this matter be addressed.

**5.2.3.7 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried whether the 1:62 ratios for learners to ablution facilities was not a challenge
* Members noted that not all learners qualified for learner transport and requested an explanation for this anomaly.
* Members queried whether the school experienced any safety and security issues e.g. vandalism, theft etc.
* Regarding teenage pregnancies, Members queried whether there was any teenage pregnancy at the school – and what may be the causes.

**5.2.3.8 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal** – The Principal indicated that although some learners received scholar transport, many learners utilised public/private transport to get to and from school. The ratio for ablution facilities was high due to the school only having 17 toilets – there was a shortage of ablution facilities. The school was requesting the Department to assist with additional toilets. The school had programmes to deal with issues of teenage pregnancies. The school’s source of water was rain harvesting - and the Department had opened a borehole for the school. Unfortunately, the borehole pump needed to be repaired.

**5.2.3.9 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school, the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Ensure that the school is assisted with filling of two PL1 vacant posts for technical science and dramatic arts 60 days after adoption of this report
* Ensure qualifying learners receive scholar transport.
* In collaboration with the local municipality and relevant stakeholders, ensure the school has running water and sanitation – that the pump is repaired as a matter of urgency.
* Ensure the school receives additional ablution facilities.
* Attends to the urgent request from the SGB for an intervention in respect of security and safety of the school.
* Address the matter of lengthy time-periods for filling of vacancies within 60 days of adoption of this report
  1. **Visits to Schools (King Cetshwayo Education District)**
     1. **Dover Combined Farm School**

Dover Combined Farm School was situated at King Cetshwayo District Empangeni on a farm called UVS Dover. The school was started by the farm-owner Mr Faby with the aim of assisting his workers’ children to access of education Mr S. J Ndlovu became the first Principal to open the school at Dover in 1993. The school commenced with teaching and learning at the hall. Mr Faby erected a full structure of Dover combined school. The school was under Section 14 of Land Act. The school had lately lost 2 hectares of land under the conditions the Department could not meet. The school was a Quintile 3 school with 864 learners and 28 educators – there were a total of eight non-educator staff.

In respect of admission and registration of learners, the school had concluded its admissions for 2023 with an enrolment of 864 learners. The learner numbers in Grade 8 stood at 157 learners admitted in 2023. With the provision of LTSM, it was mentioned that the exercise books were delivered on time and in good quality condition. Regarding the staff establishment, the school had a staff establishment of 28 educators. In respect of District support and the role of Subject Advisors, it was mentioned that Subject Advisors had conducted school visits to the schools - both individually as well as part of multi-disciplinary team. Schools had been provided with subject content support materials for Grades 10-12 as well as content workshops were conducted for Grades 10 and 11 in 2022. The focus was on mathematics and difficult content. With issues pertaining to learner transport and National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), the school had no learner transport and learners used public transport which affected the learner’s punctuality to school. The school had a policy on late coming and attempts to ensure that late coming was not condoned. All learners came from various surrounding areas. The School was of the view that there was a need to consider a common transport approach for all learners who utilise public transport. Regarding the NSNP, the programme was running in order and a total of 742 learners benefited. The school was happy with the supplier of the food. On the effectiveness of the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT), the SGB was fully functional and all Committees were in place and meetings took place every month. The SMT meetings were held monthly – with records available. On the state of school infrastructure, the school required upgrades to school infrastructure and was engaging the Department in this regard. There was progress in respect of the building of new ablution facilities - as the current ablution facilities was not in keeping with the enrolment. The Department of Public Works had been appointed to build the new ablution facilities. As per the Department of Education – the process for renovation was currently at the tender stage. With the roll-out of ICT, tablets were provided in order to access learning programs and Websites with study materials were always accessible and projected for learners. Offline ports were also provided for different subjects to benefit from. Training on ITC was conducted where the school would have a person propelling implementation. On the effectiveness of QLTC, the school was linked to the local SAPS, Department of Health and Department of Home Affairs. The school also enjoyed the support from the Traditional Leadership and local leadership. Regarding inclusive education, the school was not SA Sign Language compliant. In respect of the implementation of Conditional Grants it was mentioned that the school was a no-fee school. The school reported on some of the highlights and challenges as follows:

* Good academic record from grade R to 12;
* Increase in Bachelor from 28 to 44 passes, with a 98;
* Achieved position 3 in SASCE Choral Competitions;
* Matric camps, cross nights successful;
* Challenges were the absence of facilities that could adequately promote flare in camps e.g. no showers for learners, classrooms are turning into hostels.

On issues of ECD focus, the school indicated that there was a total of 10 learners enrolled. The Primary School enrolment was a challenge and the schools was unable to attract primary school learners. The school was trying to give support to ECD Practitioners in terms of material that could meet the minimum threshold but enrolment was dwindling and this was a challenge. With capacity building, the school was on record that programmes to develop and broaden the horizon for the teachers was on roll as such there were meetings and workshops that had already been put into play to build capacity. Stipends were paid to Practitioners and caregivers; no challenges were reported on the latter.

**5.3.1.1 Input by the Circuit** – It was noted that, in respect of scholar transport, the Department only accommodated schools within a certain radius. Due to the performance of Dover school, many learners from all areas were drawn to the school. This was a growing town and the school was experiencing overcrowding. The Circuit tried to encourage other schools to admit learners from the towns. The Department was in the process of relocating the school to another area. There had been consultation with various stakeholders, including the farm management on the relocation. The Department indicated that the school was being assessed to deal with issues of overcrowding.

**5.3.1.2 Input by the District** – It needed to be noted that the school was remote and far from the township. The school continued to attract learners from far-flung areas and these learners utilised public transport to get to and from school. The District, in collaboration with the Provincial Department was addressing challenges relating to the school infrastructure. The District also acknowledged the hard work of the SMT and SGB of the school. As the District offices were close to the school, they were able to offer support to the school on a regular basis.

**5.3.1.3 Input from the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – In respect of the challenges with scholar transport, the Department needed to clarify issues regarding the radius for school transport as a learner who qualified for scholar transport needed to travel a minimum of three kilometres. It was mentioned that the school may not qualify for dedicated transport. Many parents chose the school for their learners and was a school of choice – as such the Department did not offer scholar transport. The Department’s approach was to always try to avoid younger learners from having to travel on busses to school. Regarding infrastructure, the Department had appointed DBSA to attend to renovation and refurbishment of the school infrastructure damaged by storms. There had already been work started on the designs and contractors would be on site in May 2023. The ablution facilities would be handled by the Department of Public Works and there had been a start to this process already.

**5.3.1.4 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried what the learner to toilet ratio was for the school.
* In respect of water, Members queried whether the school had any challenges with water supply and reticulation.
* On the Norms and Standards, Members were eager to know if the school received the full amount per learner – or was this a lesser amount.
* Members also queried the learner to teacher ratio and queried whether the school had any shortage of desks and chairs.
* Members noted that the school infrastructure was in a bad state and queried the assistance from the Department in addressing such challenges.
* It was also noted that the school was ranked as a Quintile 3 school. Members queried whether the school had contested the ranking as Members were of the view the school needed to be ranked as a Quintile 1 school.
* As the school was on farm property, Members queried the relationship with the farm owner.
* Members noted the possible relocation of the primary school section and queried how this would impact on the increase of non-viable schools in the area.
* The issue of scholar transport not being provided by the Department was a common issue at most schools. Members urged the Department attend to it urgently.
* Members noted the challenges with water availability and requested the Department supported and assisted the school with running water and adequate ablution facilities.
* Members also queried whether the school had experienced any burglaries or vandalism of school property.
* Members noted that the presentations lacked a breakdown of the gender balance of the staff compliment. Members were of the view that the school needed to have a more equitable balance in terms of gender.
* Policies on sexual harassment in workplace needed to be addressed. It may be under reported but it was prevalent and there was a need to know what policies existed to deal with such cases of sexual harassment/misconduct.
* Members commended the school for the good pass performance but queried what happened to the learner that failed – and reasons why the learner may have failed.
* Members also noted that the school continued to accept learners for admission noting the high enrolment figures. Members queried why the school continued to do this.
* Members also queried the type of support the school was receiving from the Traditional Leadership in the area.
* Members also queried who provided the training and capacity building for ECD Practitioners.
* Members also queried the number of Subject Advisors that had visited the school since reopening in 2023 – and for which subjects.

**5.3.1.5 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal** – The school had engaged with bus owners to assist the school with learner transport and have a dedicated bus service for learners. Unfortunately, learners would rather walk than pay a fee to use the bus. The school needed to find ways to address the underperformance in Mathematics. The Chiefs were the springboard in fighting challenges affecting the school e.g. faction fights etc. The local Chief was vigilant in commanding the community. It was difficult to deal with issues of parental choice and many kept coming to the school. The school continued to admit learners. Some classes had 1:80 teachers to learner ratio – but as a school they still performed although the learner numbers were high. Regarding the learner who had failed, the school did all they could to assist the learner – the learner had challenges in his home and was relocated to another family. The school Code of Conduct reminding learners around issues of safety and security. The school had the necessary policies in place for indigent learners, including school safety policies. Regarding school furniture, the school did experience some breakage and vandalism of school furniture. At times, there were three learners sharing a desk. The school was a Section 14 school and enjoyed a good relationship with the farm-owner in the past – this had changed and was not as pleasant. The school lost two hectares of land from the farm because the Department did not utilise land as promised. It was noted that the provisioning of food was good in the past but as of the previous year, there seemed to be down-sizing of the food based on financial constraints. The school was maintaining the prefab classrooms themselves with the 16 permanent structures as classrooms. The school also experienced a loss of sponsors during transition and leadership changes. SGB were also concerned over issues of transport for learners as many still hiked to school.
* **Input by the Circuit** – The Circuit was looking at the intake of the school to deal with issues of overcrowding. Having the school relocated would alleviate the challenges faced.
* **Input by the District** – Issues of reporting on gender-balance was noted. The District was also addressing the concerns around the viability of the relocation of the school. The District also noted the request for a review of the school Quintile ranking. The District did note issues of classroom overcrowding due to the unequal distribution of learners in classrooms. Regarding furniture, the Department did receive an allocation but would consider the school for additional furniture.
* **Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – For the Province, the teacher to pupil ratio was ideally at 1:30. The school did not have a problem with staffing – but a problem with learner numbers in certain grades/subjects. On the land ownership issue it needed to be noted that the owner of the land had ownership of the fixed property – and the Department was not willing to over-invest on private property.
* **Input by NAPTOSA** – NAPTOSA also visited school on a yearly basis with the Provincial Legislature Committee and there are agreements to implement many solutions to challenges encountered – but not much is ever done. The school would have difficulty attracting the ECD section as the school did not have adequate ECD infrastructure. If the school was relocated, it may change. There was a need to ensure proper timeframes and timelines for the relocation.
* **Input by SADTU** – The Union urged the Department to assist the school with the learner transport challenges. They also called on the SGB to address challenges with a lack of cooperation from parents - to intensify relations and curb late-coming due to transport challenges.

**5.3.1.6 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school, the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Ensure consideration of the school for scholar transport, within 90 days of adoption of this report.
* The Department should address the shortages of ablution facilities.
* The Department must supply the school with adequate ECD resources to ensure that the school is able to attract more ECD and primary learners within 60 days of adoption of this report.
* The Department should make necessary assessments regarding the shortage of classrooms to address overcrowding within 60 days of adoption of this report
* The Department must ensure that renovation and refurbishment of the school infrastructure damaged by storms is prioritized within by end of the 2nd calendar term 2023/24.
* Review the Quintile ranking of the school with a view to lowering the ranking.
* The Department should assist the school with the supply of running water as a matter of urgency.
* The Department should consider the school for supply of additional furniture within 90 days of adoption of this report.

**5.3.2 Thuthukani Special School**

Thuthukani Special School was founded in 1981 with four learners and currently the school has a total of 455 learners. The school had merged with Sonskynhoekie - a Department of Education school. In 1990 land was donated and building started with DoE grant. In 2000 the adapted Curriculum CLASSIC was published and used in KZN schools and in 2017 the Learners with Severe Intellectual Disability (LSPID) was piloted – as well as CAPS Severe Intellectual Disability (SID) piloted in 2020 for Grade R – 4. CAPS SID for Grade 5 was introduced in 2023. The school was a Section 21 School and offered Grade R – 5 for learners with Severe Intellectual Disability & Learning Program for learners with Profound Intellectual Disability.

Regarding admission and registration of learners – For 2020 there were 43 school leavers and in 2021 a total of 43 learners were enrolled 43. In 2021there was a total of 47 school leavers with an enrolment in 2022 of 50 learners. In 2022 there was a total of 40 school leavers and enrolment in 2023 of 67 learners (the school was awaiting 10 learners to arrive). With the provision of LTSM, it was mentioned that the school was a Section 21 School with LTSM purchased. The school received two Coding and Robotic Grade-R kits as well as Rainbow Workbooks. The school had requested adaption and differentiation of the Workbooks to suit needs of learners in various grades. It was noted that the numbers and Grades were incorrect. The school needed to deviate from the standard order and also used an adapted Curriculum based on ECD to Grade-3.

Staff Establishment - The school had a staff compliment of 39 educators with 455 learners. The number of state-paid educator stood at 39 with 9 Post-level 1vacancies. The number of SGB paid educators was eight and the number of state paid therapists, nurses and social workers stood at 13. Non-educator staff paid by the state was 18 (with 7 post frozen). The number of SGB paid support staff was 15 with the no of volunteers at 38. The staff compliment was as follows:

* LPID : 5 teachers and 5 class assistants
* CAPS SID Gr R : 1 teacher and 1 class assistant
* CAPS SID Gr 1 : 2 teachers and 2 class assistants
* CAPS SID Gr 2 : 4 teachers and 4 class assistants
* CAPS SID Gr 3 : 6 teachers and 6 class assistants
* CAPS SID Gr 4 : 5 teachers and 5 class assistants
* CAPS SID Gr 5 : 3 teachers and 3 class assistants
* Bridging Phase : 4 teachers and 4 class assistants
* Specialists / Skills : 7 teachers and 8 class assistants
* School Nurse : 1 with 1 assistant
* School Based Occupational Therapist : 9 with 4 assistants
* School Based Physio Therapist : 3 with 2 assistants
* School Based Social Worker : 1
* Drivers : 2
* Office based staff : 6
* Security : 2
* General Workers : 15
* Total Staff : 122
  + Staff paid by DoE : 61 (of whom 42 are Teachers & Therapists)
  + Staff paid by SGB : 61

The envisaged staff establishment as per the PPN Certificate and the PAM Document was as follows:

* PPN: 31 PL 1 Teachers,
  + 5 PL2 Departmental Heads,
  + 2 PL 3 Deputy Principals, and
  + 1 PL 4 Principal;
* PAM: 32 School Based Therapists (of whom 5 can be Senior Therapists)

In respect of district support and the role of Subject Advisors – The school received support from SNES Special Education Section in respect of the SNES programs such as admissions, learner placement, SIAS policy support and support to therapists and educators in respect of trainings related to barriers to learning. The school also received support from EMIS Section. Human Resources had been trying to support the school’s special staffing needs. The CAPS SID Curriculum was not finalised with no Subject Advisors for CAPS SID. The school was not part of 34 Special Schools in KZN who were benefiting from the Learners with Profound Intellectual Disability (LPID) grant program services. Regarding the availability of learner transport and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), in 2022 the school provided for 325 primary school learners portion. Enrolment for 2022 there was a total of 435 with a shortfall of learners not catered for being 110 learners. In 2023 the enrolment stood at 455 learners and those benefitting from NSNP was 325 for primary school learners portion with a shortfall of learners not catered for at 130. Around 75% of learners were over 12 years old, hence portion size (Primary School) was not adequate. The school sought further clarity regarding the shortfall of learners not benefitting from NSNP. With learner transport, the school was offered free learner transport from Ikhwezi and KZN Bus Service for about 90% of learners. The school had 2 school buses with 2 drivers - but buses were very often out for repairs for extended periods of time. In respect of the effectiveness of the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT), the SGB was fully and effectively functional and had meetings every 6 weeks. Members on the SGB received FEDSAS training and were actively involved parents and experts from the community who understood the diversified needs of a LSEN school and learners. The SMT was actively involved in piloting CAPS SID & LPID LP while supporting the learners at school. The SMT was functional and effective. On the state of school infrastructure, it was noted that the school infrastructure was aging but holding up. The main challenges were as follows:

* + - Water pipes were old;
    - Groundwater management system no longer functioning effectively;
    - New playground does not have any drainage;
    - Access road to school and internal roads are unsafe - damaged by erosion and busses; and
    - Play grounds and most classrooms are not accessible to wheelchair users.

On the roll-out of ICT, the school indicated that ICT delivery in 2022 was successful and the school reported on sponsored training provided to all professional staff – with ongoing training provided internally. In respect of the effectiveness of QLTC, the school was piloting CAPS SID and LPID LP and using the Quality Management Systems (QMS) processes to support and develop teachers. The teacher training was ongoing. There was adapting and differentiating to meet needs with ongoing development and standardisation of processes and LTSM to meet learner needs. Stakeholder engagements included:

* Department of Health (DoH) - allows for good partnership for referrals and the health promotion school program
* Specific projects that are funded from time to time by local and international Business partners
* Department of Social Development – In respect of Abused learners and Vulnerable learners
* Department of Home Affairs – to secure Identity Documentation for 16 year olds and above

With inclusive education, the school embraced SASL as an alternative language across the school for communication purposes. On the implementation of Conditional Grants, the school was not a recipient of the LPID Conditional Grant Services. Some of the challenges reported by the school included the following:

* CAPS SID curriculum not completed/promulgated, but the school needed to implement and report (without training, support and resources).
* Buses were months out of school for services, standing in sun without service
* Lack of support staff.
* Water shortage and no support from Municipal Services
* Water bill doubled to what it should be.
* Not enough classrooms.
* Therapists incorrectly recorded on PPN Certificate.
* Placement of teachers without due process – not involving SGBs.

**5.3.2.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried why the school was not benefitting from the LPID Grant programme.
* Members also queried why certain posts were not covered.
* With the challenges of water availability, Members queried why the Municipality was not able to assist the school.
* For learners who were wheelchair-bound, Members queried the assistance of the Department in ensuring adequate ramps were built for the school.
* With school safety and security, Members queried whether the school had the adopt-a-cop initiative with the local SAPS.
* Members also noted challenges with learner transport and queried the assistance from the Department, especially for special needs learners.
* Members noted with concern the challenges with NSNP shortages and queried how the Department was addressing the matter.
* The school was requested to give more detail on the equity numbers for the staff establishment.
* When learners completed their schooling, Members queried what happened to the learners in respect of further education or employment.
* Members also queried whether learners participated in any form of sporting codes at the school.
* With the assistive devices, Members queried whether the school had their own initiatives to acquire devices or whether they relied only on the Department to supply them.
* Members noted the concerns raised in respect of the long delays in having busses repaired. Members queried what assistance was being given by the Department to ensure busses were repaired more speedily.
* The school had a long waiting list of learners requiring admission to the school. Members queried whether these learners eventually did find placement at the school.
* Members noted the concerns with the posts being frozen and not filled and queried reasons for this – and whether the Department could not consider not viewing the school similarly as ordinary public schools and assisted with filling of posts at the school.
* With challenges of the access road to the school, Members were of the view that this was the responsibility of the local municipality and queried whether the school had been able to engage the municipality on the matter.
* Members raised concern with the shortfall of the NSNP for a portion of the learners and queried how those learners were being accommodated.

**5.3.2.2 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal** – The school had two security gaurds and adequate perimeter fencing around the school – with the school not being too susceptible to break-ins and vandalism. Further to this, the school was also covered by a local security company. The school kept a maintenance register for anything that may be out of order – and the maintenance team did respond to issues on a daily basis. The school support staff and assistants also helped to maintain safety of learners. The school was linked to a SAPS office and had a police Captain on the SGB and the Safety Committee. The school reported that they did have challenges with scholar transport – but had an additional vehicle utilised for emergencies. The school had a long-standing partnership with sponsored transport and the school had registered as a Public Benefit Organisation. School buses were most times in for repairs and maintenance. The Principal gave a breakdown ot he staff equity. Due to the school using an adapted differentiated Curriculum, learners did not necessarily pass to another grade – learners did not receive an UMALUSI Certificate but finished with their attendance period. After leaving the school, learners had three programmes to see if they had capacity to work in the open labour market - and added to the school sponsored skills programme. Some learners moved into sheltered working environment workshops which was located on the precinct of the schools. Unfortunately, due to ability, some learners could only return to their homes as they were unable to enter any form of labour. The school offered various sporting codes including table tennis, swimming, soccer netball, athletics, volley ball, mini-cricket, hocker and cerebral palsy soccer. Children did well in sport at district, provincial and national levels. With the acquiring of assistive devices, the school had a good relationship with hospitals and many of the devices were sponsored by hospitals and other organisations e.g. Operation Jumpstart. With learners on the waiting list for placement, these were brought to the attention of the District who assisted with placement. Many remained in their schools until placement could be found for them. Where learners were at home awaiting placement, the school tried to support them through support groups for these learner and parents. Many of these learners were eventually absorbed into the school or other similar schools.
* **Input by the District** – With the LSPID Grant, the Department received around R 37 million for the conditional grant of which around R 27 million went for salaries and the rest utilised for key outputs in respect of assistive devices, training and development etc. The Department needed to support many care centres – of which many belonged to the Department of Social Development. The Department had identified 33 special schools to absorb learners. The Department did not have sufficient budget to support all special schools and would only be able to support more schools if there was an increase in the funding. The Department also had a programme to address rationalisation of small and non-viable schools. Where a school was closed, the Department recommended that the District re-purposed the school as a special school to accommodate special learners on the waiting lists. Such schools were also linked to special schools in the immediate area for support and capacitation purposes. In respect of the NSNP shortfall, the Department was concerned that learners were not benefitting – as this was not normal. The NSNP was funded by a grant to feed all learners and schools needed to indicate their learner numbers for them to benefit from the NSNP. It was imperative that all learners at the school needed to be receiving their meals. The Department also noted that the school needed to benefit from the allocation of food handlers. The Department would ensure that all learners of the school benefitted from the NSNP as of 1 April 2023. The school qualified for two volunteer food handlers – and this would be address. As per the learner allocation. all special school learners received meals in different formats depending on age differentiation which was different from ordinary schools. With challenges of scholar transport, the Department would endeavour to assist the school with scholar transport and ensure repairs to school buses was fast-tracked. With water provisioning, the Department, in the past had relied on the municipality to supply water to schools but due to challenges had opted to installing boreholes at schools for supply of water. The Department would ensure the school was considered for installation of a borehole. In respect of the vacant post snot being filled, the Department had engaged Treasury on allowances to fill posts at special schools. This was declined. The Department would continue to engage and persuade Treasury to approve the filling of vacant posts at special schools. The Department was also in the process of ensuring that surplus educators be moved as a priority. The Department had done interventions on the decision to apply budget cuts – this needed to be done reasonably. The Department continued to raise the issue of budget cuts at various levels and requested the Portfolio Committee to assist and intervene.
* **Input by NAPTOSA** – NAPTOSA suggested that the Principal considered giving the Department a list for adaptation of workbooks for the Department to do the necessary supply.
* **Input by SADTU** – The Union appreciated the good work done by the school and agreed that, although there were challenges, they could be overcome. The issues of PPN in terms of the schools needed to be fought politically with intervention from the Union. The Union urged that issues of vacant posts at special schools be prioritised.

**5.3.2.3 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education;

* The Department must ensure that the turn-around time for repairs to broken busses was speeded up within 60 days of adoption of this report
* The Department must ensure the school is assisted with additional scholar transport, especially for special needs learners before the end of the 2nd term school in 2023/24
* The Department should ensure the school is supplied with running water in collaboration with the local Municipality – and address ageing water infrastructure.
* In collaboration with the relevant Department, conduct assessment of the groundwater management system to ensure that it is functioning effectively.
* The Department should assist the school with proper drainage for the newly build playground.
* The Department must ensure the school had the necessary ramps and rails for wheelchair access within 90 days of adoption of this report
* Ensure the school is assisted with additional support staff as required.
* Ensure the school receives additional classrooms before the end of the 2nd term
* Address the challenges with NSNP shortages as a matter of urgency, within 30 days after the adoption of this report
* The Department should ensure the school is supplied with sufficient and relevant assistive devices as required
* The Department must consider filling all frozen posts that existed at the school – and not treat the school as an ordinary school within 120 days of the adoption of this report

**5.3.3 Ilembe Primary School**

Ilembe Primary School was opened in 1989 operating as a higher primary school, starting from grade 5 to grade 7. In 2005, it phased in Grade 8 and Grade 9 in 2006 respectively, until 2012. The school was a Quintile 4 school with a total of 1 201 learners and 33 educators – and 6 non-education staff.

With the admission and registration of learners, the school, as per DBE admission policy, was expected to start with learner admission each year and Ilembe started with its admission in July 2022 for new comers in Grade R and Grade 1. The admission for these grades took only two days. The re-admission of the rest of grade was completed at the end of October 2022. In respect of the provisioning of LTSM, textbooks and stationery were ordered and delivered on time - and distributed to learners. The DBE Workbooks were delivered and distributed to learners as well. Regarding the staff establishment, the PPN was 29 staff with the breakdown of staff complement being 1x Principal. 1 x Deputy Principal, 4 x Heads-of-Department, 23 x Educators, 3 x Grade R Practitioners, 3 x Non-Teaching Staff and 4 x SGB-appointed non-teaching staff. In respect of District support and the role of Subject Advisors, the District did provide support through workshops e.g. orientation workshops, curriculum management workshop and workshops on special programmes. With learner transport and National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), learners were using their own transport and did not utilise learner transport. The school benefitted from the NSNP. The kitchen was conducive for providing healthy and nutritious meals daily. Regarding the effectiveness of the SGB and SMT, the SMT was fully functional and had meetings every Monday at 13:00 to discuss curriculum issues. The SGB was functional with one meeting per term, and also had functional sub-committees. The school indicated that state of school infrastructure was satisfactory. With the roll-out of ICT, the school mentioned that educators were trained in Coding and Robotics. In respect of the effectiveness of QLTC, the school was linked to the local SAPS, the Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs. The school also enjoyed the support from the Traditional Leadership and Local Leadership. The main challenge facing the school was that there was no suitable infrastructure for Grade R. With support for ECD Practitioners, the school provided the necessary resources and workshops were arranged.

* **Input by the SGB** – The SGB indicated that school infrastructure for Grade R was urgently required. The SGB was also happy with the secure perimeter fencing that was supplied by the Department.
* **Input by the Circuit** – The Circuit agreed that the school was well run with good management. The school served as a feeder school to other schools in the area. The Circuit also emphasised the need for Grade R infrastructure and requested the Department to address this.
* **Input by the District** – The District also agreed that the school was well managed with good leadership. The District did not see any major challenges needing urgent attention – except for the infrastructure for the Grade R classroom needing attention.
* **Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department appreciated the good work of the school and touched on the issue of the move from a Junior Secondary School back to a Primary School. The Department would be looking to address the matter of infrastructure for the Grade R classrooms and provide feedback to the school after consultation.

**5.3.3.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried the ratio of learners to ablution facilities as well as the staff make-up in terms of gender equity.
* The school was also queried on issues of safety and security of school infrastructure – and whether the school had any challenges with vandalism and burglaries. Members queried whether the school had a relationship with the local SAPS.
* Members also queried whether there had been any renovations/refurbishments done since the school was established – and whether there was any maintenance sanctioned by the Department regarding school infrastructure.
* Regarding water and sanitation, Members queried whether the school experienced challenges in this regard.
* Members noted that there were many learners coming from outside the immediate area – and queried whether there were challenges with learner late-coming and punctuality. How was the lack of learner transport affecting learners?

**5.3.3.2 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal –** Regarding issues of ablution facilities, the number of toilets tallied with the school learner numbers and was sufficient for Grade 1 – 7. The School Management Team comprise 6 members (3 males and 3 female). The school had a challenge with PL1educators with only 5 males and the rest being females. The school did not experience challenges with safety and security and no educator or learner had ever been attacked. The school had a good working relationship with the local SAPS and the school was linked to the police station. The school also had adequate and proper perimeter fencing which made it hard for anyone to enter the school premises. The school did not experience burglaries and vandalism since being fenced. The school, on its own, did minor maintenance and repairs and there had been no need for any major renovations to date. The water used by the school was supplied by the municipality and there were no challenges with water supply to the school. In the past, learners did use their own private transport and resulted in late-coming. The matter was discussed with parents and learners and had been resolved.
* **Input by SADTU** – The Union applauded the school for the good performance. They reiterated that it was necessary for all relevant stakeholders to collaborate to address some of the challenges raised, especially matters affecting teachers. The Union agreed that there was room for improvement in performance of the school.

**5.3.3.3 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

* The Department ensured the school was considered for supply of learner transport for qualifying learners.
* The Department ensures the school received suitable infrastructure for Grade R urgently.

**5.3.4 Tisand Comprehensive Technical School**

Tisand Technical High school was built in 1989 by Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) and opened its doors to Grade 8 the same year – it had its first cohort of Matriculants in 1993. The school was a fully-fledged Technical High School with quality results in all the specializations. It had Electrical and Mechanical workshops, two computer centres, two Physical Sciences laboratories and two Engineering Graphics and Design classes. The school had produced respected Engineers, Technicians and Artisans for big companies locally and abroad. The school had opened opportunities for the community, allowing skills development in the computer centres to improve the standard of living and to alleviate crime and curb unemployment. Healthy lifestyle and excellence were also the school’s priority. The school had managed to compete in music nationally for a number of years. Other excelling sporting codes were Rugby, Netball, Soccer and Cricket. In 2022 two national tennis players were able to compete abroad. Tisand was lucky to have its alumni actively involved in supporting the learners with extra classes and motivation. The school was ranked as a Quintile 5 school with a total of 775 learners and 18 educators. The non-educator staff was six. Regarding progress with admission and registration of learners, the school indicated that registration forms were issued in June to allow learners to choose, and parents to have enough time to plan since the school was a paying fee school. The total number of Grade 8 learners admitted was 194. With the provision of LTSM, the school procured the LTSM stationery through the utilization of the school budget to the amount of R486 336.51, subsidies amounted to R13 200 with no sponsorships. Auditing was done by the Inkunzi Zungu bookkeeping. The school staff establishment was 3 x Department Heads, 18 x PL1educators, 1 x Deputy Principal and 1 x Principal. With District support and the role of Subject Advisors, orientation workshops were held every year at the beginning of the year and officials visited the school each time they were requested to assist the school. The school made a concerted effort to improve its performance in Maths and Science and Tech Math and Tech Science.  With respect to Maths, there was assistance of the Subject Advisor, whereby weekly weekend classes were held for learners.  This intervention could very likely have lifted the school's Maths performance from 58.33% in 2021 to 70.42% in 2022.  Physical Sciences has also seen a positive improvement from 56.84% to 77.46%. Technical Maths results have also shown an impressive improvement towards 87.50% from79% in 2021.  In part this could be attributed to learner participation in the district learner camp and the schools' own initiative to conduct three weekend camps for Tech Maths. The general improvement in performance was also mirrored with the schools' NSC performance steadily improving from 71% in 2020 to 74% in 2021 and 84% in 2022. In respect of the availability of learner transport and NSNP, learners from round Esikhaleni used transport even though some came late because of the mode of transport they use. Learners ate healthy food every day and the kitchen was small but they manage to do their work and feed learners on time every day. With the effectiveness of the School Governing Body and School Management Team, there were good relations between the SGB and SMT which promoted a healthy atmosphere for teaching and learning. Regarding the state of school infrastructure, the school reports dilapidated labs, poor drainage system, leaking classes and falling ceilings. The school was very old and hazardous to learners and educators. In respect of the roll-out of ICT, the school had two unused computer labs because of outdated computers and lack of internet. With QLTC effectiveness, the school reported that the school was linked to the local SAPS, Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs. The school also enjoyed the support from the Traditional Leadership and local leadership. The school granted conditional grants to deserving learners every year. Some of the challenges highlighted included the following:

* Dilapidated laboratories
* Poor drainage system;
* The school ceiling poses danger to learners;
* Infighting of learners;
* Drug abuse;
* Library non-functional due to lack of material;

**5.3.4.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried how long the current Principal was in an acting position.
* Members also queried the fees being charged at the school and whether there was adequate budget for the school. Further to this, Members queried how much of the budget was allocated to school maintenance.
* Members note the report on learner drug abuse and queried whether the school received any assistance from the Department and sister departments.
* Members queried the number of learners who benefitted from the NSNP - and the criteria used to select learners.
* Members queried why the school could not be maintained - and the role of the SGB in respect of school maintenance.
* Members noted with concern the infighting amongst learners and queried how prevalent this was.
* Members noted that the school had many acting positions – and queried how the Department was assisting the situation.
* Members also queried whether the school experienced any learner pregnancies – and how was this reported, especially where underage learners were involved.

**5.3.4.2 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal** - The school used the school fees for maintaining the school. The underperformance of Grade 8 and 9 could be attributed to insufficient foundational knowledge. Further to this, the issues of the use of IsiZulu language was also a challenge. Due to a lack of funding in the past, the laboratories were never functional since 2017. There was only one educator for EMS and the Principal was acting for three months. Learner pregnancies were not prevalent and the school had only two cases in the past and the school engaged with the Social Workers on a regular basis.
* **Input by the District -** The drop in Grade 8 performance could have been due to Covid-19 and rotation that was done with ESikhaweni. The intervention strategies utilised included conducting of extra classes. All learners benefited from the NSNP. The school was ranked as a Quintile 4 school due to the economic environment the school was in. The District also indicated that, from time to time, data was collected and analysed to inform a strategy to support learners – hence there was improvement in Physical Science. With issues of drug abuse, the District had held an awareness campaign. With the PPN, the ratio did not tally as it was based on the fact that statistics used were those of the previous year. The 2023, ten-day statistics, would then have the PPN being corrected. With a 30-day absenteeism from school, this warranted that the school substitute the teacher. The school had a huge enrolment and the District had a programme of supporting such high enrolment schools. Content gaps were identified and a strategy was developed and the school was supported accordingly with focussed support given to the lower grades.
* **Input by Province Education Department (PED)** – The Department indicated that the school qualified for an additional three posts. The previous Principal retired in November and the process for appointment of an Acting Principal was three months. The Director post had been advertised and would be completed within three months. The Department also alluded to the focus schools, school of specialisation and Technical schools in the District. All teachers of technical schools were brought to a workshop as a means to empower them on how to improve their performance. There seemed to be a relationship between Grade 12 and lower grades performance and the underperformance in Grade 12 could be traced to the lower grades. The HOD was persuaded to write a circular 87 stating a renewed focus on the lower grades. The Department also reflected on recommendations made on PIRLS outcomes which suggested that Grade 4 was where schools should focus attention for improved performance in Grade 12.
* **Input by SADTU** - The school was congratulated for its consistency including the fact that a female Principal managed to take the school to even higher levels. The Union queried the budget being utilised on municipal services as the school was not receiving the necessary services it was paying the municipality for.

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**5.3.4.3 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* The Department strengthen collaboration, in respect of sharing of various concepts and practices with Universities and other entities that could prove to be useful.
* The Department ensure the school PPN was corrected and additional staff appointed.
* The Department ensure there were campaigns and awareness within communities regarding the safeguarding of school property as well as drug abuse.
* The Department ensure that learners who qualified for scholar transport are able to benefit from scholar transport.
* The Department consider supplying the school with a mobile kitchen with adequate utensils within 90 days of adoption of this report
* In respect of school infrastructure, the Department address the challenges pertaining to dilapidated labs, poor drainage system, leaking classes and falling ceilings as this posed a safety hazard to learners and teachers.
* The Department should assist with the upgrading and supply of computers for the school Further to this, the school should be assisted with connectivity challenges as part of ICT strategy
  1. **Visits to Schools (Harry Gwala Education District)**
     1. **Nombewu Full Service School**

On January 1960, St. Peter’s School, St. George’s School and Nazareth School were amalgamated to form Nombewu J.S.S. The Founder was Chief P M Jozana. The first Principal was Mr Mbhele from Clydesdale location who was also a choir conductor. The school environment was good and conducive based on the following:

* Grass cutting has been done and completed
* Play grounds are clean and safe for learners and all employees
* Hazardous material and general waste have been removed from the school premises for the safety of everyone
* Hazardous broken trees have been cut off and removed
* Classrooms, kitchen, admin offices and toilets have been properly cleaned

The school was categorised as a Quintile 2 school with a total learner population of 453 learners and 15 educators. There were a total of 5 non-educator staff.

Regarding the admission and registration of learners – The school had concluded its admissions for 2023 with an enrolment of 448 learners. As it was reflected, all learners had been placed but the implementation of KZN circular no 17 of 2022 (which stipulated that admissions must be done in March of the previous year). The school was still facing challenges as parents did not respond appropriately until the year in which schooling begins. With the provision of LTSM, textbooks and stationery for 2023 were ordered and delivered as per the required amount and delivery was completed on 15 December 2022. The ordering and delivery of graded readers was also completed. Regarding stationery, the ordering and delivery was completed on 15 December 2022 – similarly for ordering and delivery of graded readers. There were no shortages. In respect of the staff establishment, the school PPN was 15 with 1 x Principal, 1 x Deputy Principal, 2 x Heads of Department, 11 x PL1 educators and 1 x Grade R practitioner. The school also had 1 x screener, 1 x cleaner and 12 x Educator Assistants. With the District support and the role of Subject Advisors, the District officials gave support on site and at workshops on things to do to support learners and ensure that the following things were done:

* + - Results were analysed at the end of each term
    - The improvement of progressed learners was monitored
    - Subject improvement plan was drawn by all educators
    - LTSM was procured using needs analysis
    - Subjects were taught by educators who were qualified to teach
    - Capacity building workshops were organised by the SMT
    - Home-work timetable for each grade should be drawn
    - Parents were also encouraged to assist learners
    - ATPs were checked by SMT weekly
    - Written work to be reported on weekly basis
    - Curriculum coverage was monitored by the SMT
    - There should be no deviation on Programme of Assessment
    - Educator support team and learner support team developed psychosocial plan for learners and educators
    - External support from specialist has been recommended

Regarding learner transport and National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), the school was not benefiting from learner transport but was benefitting from the NSNP with nutrition teachers and the Principal checking the delivery note and food delivered by supplier prior opening. Food handlers were advised to report with educators on the 16th and 17th in order to conduct proper cleaning of the kitchen – cleaning materials were organised in advance. In respect of the effectiveness of the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT), the SMT and SGB were functional and the SMT conducted meetings on a weekly basis – also gave reports and plans weekly. The SMT also assist the Principal on management activities and monitored the curriculum delivery, develop curriculum management plan, moderate lesson plans and monitor curriculum delivery on daily basis. With the SGB all stakeholders were represented. The office bearers were in order and the FINCOM had meetings on monthly basis with the SGB meeting once a quarter. Feedback of the meetings were delivered to relevant stakeholders at the end of each term. The SGB offered voluntary support to the school and members participated in school committees. With the state of school infrastructure, the school was using rainwater and had a total of five water-tanks. The school had sufficient water supply. The school had 11 permanent toilets and recommended that damages doors and doorframes needed to be repaired – this maintenance would be placed on the upgrades and addition programme. With the classrooms, the school had managed to repair eight classrooms and a total of four mobile units were required to replace the storm damaged block – this block had since been demolished due to major cracks and the danger it posed to learners. Of the eight fixed classrooms there was a four-classroom block which was cracked and apparently built of mud blocks. To address water challenges, the school bought hosepipes to collect water from municipality piping water to the school JoJo Tanks. The school also encouraged learners to save water. The school also applied for borehole installation from DBE and did regular checks and maintenance of roof guarders. On the roll-out of ICT, the school did not have computers to support curriculum delivery. With the effectiveness of QLTC, the school indicated that the QLTC was launched at school and the structure was supportive to the needs of the school and learners. Regarding inclusive education, Sign Language was not tough as the school did not have the capacity - but other learners with barriers were supported. The school ensured that assistive devices and special LTSM were bought for learners. The school had continuous communication with parents and individual results analysis was considered. The SIAS tools were utilised by all educators and learners with minor barriers were assisted at school level. The school also organised specialist for learners with severe barriers in collaboration with parents. With the implementation of Conditional Grants, it was mentioned that the school received conditional grant to buy assistive devices for learners with barriers to learning – and the grant was audited every year.

* **Input by SADTU –** The Union emphasised the challenges with school infrastructure as well as shortage of mobile classes
* **Input by NAPTOSA –** Similarly, NAPTOSA also raised concerns regarding school infrastructure and water challenges.

**5.4.1.1 Portfolio Committee on Basic Education Questions and Observations**

* Members sought clarity on the status of water provisioning in the school as they were receiving conflicting reports on the matter. Similarly, Members sought clarity on the provisioning of ablution facilities.
* Regarding school safety, Member queried whether the school had the adopt-a-cop initiative.
* Members queried whether the school qualified for learner transport – as this was a common challenge of the school visited.
* Members noted the high numbers for learner to classroom and teacher to learner ratios – and queried how the school was coping with such numbers.
* Members raised concern that many of the issues raised, and recommendations made, during the 2021 oversight visit to the school had not been implemented or addressed. Officials could not be defended when they were not doing their job – and there was a need for consequence management by the Department. The main issues raised from the last visit was issues of infrastructure and ICT - and seemingly nothing had been done to address these matters.
* Members queried whether the school had any collaboration or relationship with the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation regarding challenges with water and sanitation.
* Members queried whether the school had any incidents of learner pregnancies – and how was this reported.
* Members also queried why the school was ranked Quintile 2 and not Quintile 1.
* Members queried which school they feed Grade 9 learners to – for the FET Phase. Members queried whether these learners were assisted with learner transport to these new schools.
* On Subject Advisors, Members queried the role and responsibility of the Subject Advisors and whether they had the necessary qualification.
* Members sought clarity on the status of the application by the school for borehole water.
* Regarding learners with special needs, Members queried the number of special needs learners at the school – and whether they were accommodated with the necessary special needs devices to assist them. If not, why were they brought to the school.

**5.4.1.2 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Input by the Circuit** – With transport, learners who came from other areas came due to the school being a school of choice. To mitigate this, learners are encouraged to go to schools nearest to their home. If a learner decided to attend the school form outlying areas, they needed to arrange their own transport. Where there was no school in a particular village the Department would take the responsibility to transport the learner. The Department needed an intervention for special needs learners and learners with barriers for scholar transport to be provided for them.
* **Input by the District** – The District concurred with Members regarding sentiments on Full Service School. On supporting learners with barriers, the Department was lacking and this issue needed to be addressed. There were learners who qualified for learner transport, but could not be accommodated due to funding challenges. The Department tried to accommodate as many as possible through reshuffling of available resources – and can be made available for needy learners. The Department also needed to ascertain which learners had been transferred to the school by way of referrals.
* **Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department agreed that many learners attended the school as it was a Full Service School and was a school of choice for many parents. There were some learners who may have been referred to the school and was a school of need for these learners. Schools of need learners needed to be accommodated for scholar transport. The District needed to engage with Department regarding teachers on the data base who meet criteria for teaching learners with barriers. Infrastructure was a critical matter raised by the Committee and the matter of the approach to water challenges at schools needed to be addressed with the support of municipalities. The Department had a borehole programme to assist with water supply to schools in the Province. The Department, in the past, had engaged municipalities but the billing for water was a challenge, hence the Department’s own borehole programme. The Department had an allocation budget to deal with water supply using boreholes and used the Department of Public Works as an implementing agent. The District had a large number of school structures built with mud/inappropriate material and the Department had a programme to eradicate all school mud-structures. The school formed part of the programme for upgrades and additions for the 2023/24 planning. There was a building that was affected by storms/floods and the school was supplied with temporary structures. The Department was faced with competing interest and over the past three years the rate of delivery of infrastructure had been disturbed. The Department had to deal with storm-damaged, flood-damaged and unrest-damaged schools - and not been able to plan for any new structures to date.
* **Department of Basic Education (DBE)** – The Department utilised various instruments to diagnose the system and identify gaps - and create interventions. There was a gross understaffing of Subject Advisors in the Province. Subject Advisors were promoted on the basis of their outstanding work in a certain subject. The Department had intervention strategies to mitigate the shortage of Subject Advisors. The Education White Paper-6 had been implemented and over years the system had matured. Many lessons that had emerged - and these had been referred to. The Department was confident that they were correct in term of the direction the Department had taken. With referrals of a learner from school to school, this needed to be coordinated by the District as this may have resource and support implications. When a school was converted to a Full Service School, they did not suddenly lose learners with barriers as there were processes and procedures followed when the system referred a learner. The Department had specific indicators relevant to teachers trained in specialisation.

**5.4.1.3 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Ensure that qualifying learners, especially special needs learner received the necessary scholar transport, within 90 days of adoption of this report
* Ensure all damaged infrastructure, as reported by the school, was refurbished and repaired within 60 days of adoption of this report.
* Ensure the school is assisted with a borehole and that water is supplied.
* Ensure the school is supplied with computers to support curriculum delivery.
* Ensure the school is supplied with additional classrooms to alleviate overcrowding, 60 days after adoption of this report.
* The Department must ensure that all recommendations made during the 2021 oversight visit to the school is implemented as a matter of urgency and provide a report within 60 days of adoption of this report
* The Department should review the current Quintile ranking of the school.
* The Department must put in place intervention strategies to mitigate the shortage of Subject Advisors

**5.4.2 Mhlaba Combined Junior Secondary School**

During the visit to this school, the Chairperson requested a different approach to the engagement with the school, as this was a follow up visit. The Chairperson mentioned that the Portfolio Committee had visited the school in February 2021 – had noted the challenges and made specific recommendations to be implemented by the Department to mitigate said challenges. Members wanted to understand whether the recommendations made during the last visit had been implemented, and if not, the Department needed to give an explanation. The Chairperson also took the time to read the 2021 Oversight Committee recommendations as reported to Parliament.

* **Principal** – The Principal indicated that, to date, there had been no work done on the issues raised by the Committee for implementation., specifically the collapsing ceilings. Further to this the school had a building that was deemed a health hazard – and to date there had been no visits from engineers or assessors to investigate the state of the building. The school had its own engagements on the conditions of the building in question and made recommendations to the Department to give the go-ahead for the school to demolish the building. In another instance there was a building roof that had blown off – and poorly repaired by community. The building was currently used as a store-room. The school had been promised that proper roofing would be provided to the school but here had been no movement from the Department on the matter to date. Further to this, the school perimeter fencing was also in a poor condition. In the past there had been engineers to investigate the condition of school toilets and had recommended that they be demolished. The school had then been supplied with mobile toilets. Officials from the Department of Public Works also assessed the general landscape of the school and did soil profiling. A site had been earmarked for the erection of new school toilets however to date, no work had been done and the school continued to use the mobile toilets.

**5.4.2.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members were unhappy with the state of affairs and the fact that there had been no implementation of the Committee recommendation from the last visit in 2021. Members were of the view that the school seemed to be run on auto-pilot. The Department needed to return to the drawing board with all relevant stakeholders to work on addressing the challenges of the school.
* Members also felt that Departmental official present needed to be held accountable for what had transpired. Further to this, the Department needed to explain how they planned to address the challenges with specific timelines. The Department needed to submit follow-up reports to the Committee with the commitments from the Department
* Members were of the view that it was pointless to continue the engagements at the school as there seemed to be a lack of accountability. The Departments did not have the luxury of deciding which recommendation to implement and which not. The matter needed to be elevated to the Political Leadership.
* There was a need for the Department to implement consequence management over errand officials.
* There was a distinction between public representative and public servants. If public servants did not do the work, they applied for there was a need for consequences. Members queried whether there may be a need to reintroduce contracted employment as the communities was receiving a disservice. Why was succession reporting not done?

The Chairperson noted that schooling was continuing at the school and requested that the Department took note of the matters raised. She alluded to the concerns of Members in submitting a report to Parliament on the current visit – when there was no action from the previous visit to the school. The Committee urged the Department to address the matter of the building being a safety risk on the premises and ensure this was demolished urgently. The Committee would look to schedule a virtual meeting with the Department in due course to receive a follow-up and progress report on the issues raised. It was clear there was no sense of accountability in the District and the Department.

**5.4.2.2 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Must ensure all recommendations pertaining to challenges identified during the 2021 oversight and current visit to the school is implemented as a matter of urgency, within 90 days of adoption of this report. These include the following:
  + Attending to collapsing ceilings.
  + Demolish the building that was deemed a health hazard
  + Fix the building roof that had been blown off – and poorly repaired
  + Replace/Repair the dilapidated school perimeter fencing
  + Dilapidated ablution facilities are eradicated, and new ablution facilities and construction of the school of given priority
* The Department must ensure that a detailed report is submitted to the Portfolio Committee on progress with the above implementation, by end of 2nd term school 2023/24

**5.4.3 Vulekani Special School**

Members reminded the Department and the school that this was not the first visit to the school, it was a follow up visit, as the Committee had visited the school in February 2021. Members were interested in understanding whether the previous Committee recommendations to mitigate challenges raised had been implemented.

**Principal** – The Principal concurred that the Portfolio Committee had visited the school in February 2021 and made certain recommendations based on the challenges identified by the school. The issues raised and recommendations made focussed on the following:

* Water shortages;
* Staff shortages, especially support staff;
* Challenges with busses for learner transport;
* Vandalism incidents at the school; and
* Relaunch of the QLTC.

From the above challenges, the Principal indicated that the school was receiving some assistance with water from the municipality - but this was intermittent and was not enough for the school hostel. The school still required the services of professional personnel (e.g. therapist, psychologists, nurses etc.). The school was still not receiving assistance from the Department regarding issues of school safety and security. Again, with the challenges with weighting of learners in respect of school PPN had still not been resolved. After completion, the school hostel was handed over to the school. It was noted that the QLTC had been relaunched. Further challenges highlighted by the Principal included:

* Delayed period for busses to be repaired
* Learners not able to attend school due to non-availability of scholar transport
* Borehole water not fit for human consumption
* As a special school, there were no specialist e.g. therapists, nurses, social workers etc.

**5.4.3.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members indicated that the main purpose of the visit was to receive a report on the challenges faced by the school and learners.
* Members queried why the recommendations from the previous visit to the school had not been implemented by the Department.
* The issue of water challenges was again raised. Although there was a borehole, the water was not for human consumption and the Department needed to test and treat the water to make it safe for drinking.
* Members noted other issues that still had not been addressed e.g. staffing. Members queried whether the Department could not consider a special dispensation for the school regarding vacancies to be filled as this was a special school.
* Members agreed that the Department found innovative ways to deal with issues of water supply to schools – and work collaboratively with relevant sister departments, municipalities and other relevant stakeholder to test and treat borehole water for human consumption.
* Again, Members urged the Department to assist and support the school with scholar transport for learners – and speed-up the repair to busses requiring maintenance.
* The Department also needed to prioritise challenges with staffing and the weighting of the school PPN.
* Members instructed the Department to revisit the recommendations of the previous visit and ensure they are implemented.

**5.4.3.2 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

* Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:
* Must ensure all recommendations pertaining to challenges identified during the 2021 oversight and current visit to the school is implemented as a matter of urgency within 90 days after adoption of this report. These included the following:
  + Interacting with relevant Department to alleviate Water shortages;
  + Filling of vacancies to address staff shortages, especially support staff;
  + Addressing challenges with busses for learner transport; with Treasury
  + Supporting the school with regards to Vandalism incidents at the school; and
  + Relaunch of the QLTC.
* The Department should also address some of the following additional challenges:
  + Delayed period for busses to be repaired
  + Learners not able to attend school due to non-availability of scholar transport
  + Borehole water not fit for human consumption
  + As a special school, there were no specialist e.g. therapists, nurses, social workers etc.
* The Department should ensure a detailed report is submitted to the Portfolio Committee on progress with the above implementation.

**5.4.4 Dingeka Technical High School**

Dingeka Technical High School started to operate in 1993 and was officially opened on the 12th of September 1996 by Hon. V.T. Zulu: MEC of Education in KZN. The school was meant to be a Technical High school and the approval to make it a fully-fledged Technical High school was approved in 2022. The school was situated in the deep rural area of Nkwezela in Bulwer. The school was a Quintile 2 school with 1 121 learners and 39 educators. Non-educator staff was 6.

Regarding the admission and registration of learners, the admission for the school for 2023 started in the second term of 2022. The school had been reporting to the circuit office for Grade 8 – 11 on monthly basis. There were only a few late registrations attended to in the last week. With the provisioning of LTSM, books and stationery were distributed to the learners as per retention and retrieval policy of the school. According to the staff establishment, the school qualified to have 39 educators but currently only had 37 educators – with 2 vacancies of Principal and PL1 educator. In respect of the Districts support and role of the Subject Advisors, the school was supported by the District through various programmes. For GET there was not enough support due to shortages and officials were over-stretched from Grade 1-9. Regarding issues of learner transport and the NSNP, the school indicated that no learners benefitting from government scholar transport and parents paid for their learners’ transport. Regarding NSNP, all learners enjoyed the benefit of the feeding scheme. On the effectiveness of the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT), the SGB was correctly constituted and sub-committees were functional and performing their said functions as per section 20 and 21 of SASA 1996. The SGB attended workshops on finance management. The SMT, especially Departmental Heads, attended workshops on curriculum management and monitor work and assess impact of programs. On the state of school infrastructure, the classrooms were not enough for teaching and learning and the school offered Technical Subjects without relevant workshops and the school just improvised. There were no consumer classes for practicals and the school required a school hall as well as workshops and laboratories. Ablution facilities were not in a good condition and not sufficient. There was a kitchen available for preparing meals. The school utilised a borehole with four stand-pipes. There were 16 ablution facilities for learners and four for educators – there was a need for additional chemical toilets. There were a total of 23 fixed classrooms and three mobile classrooms servicing learners. An additional 10 rooms were used as specialized rooms for storage, laboratories, staff room etc. With the roll-out of ICT, the school did not have computers for learners as they had been stolen. The matter had been reported but stolen items have not been retrieved – the school would procure from the 2023 procurement budget. With the effectiveness of the QLTC, the school QLTC was launched in 2022 but the structure was not as functional as desired due to members not honouring meetings. The school had put strategies in place to empower members in 2023. Regarding inclusive education, the school Support Based Team was in place and SIAS implemented for learners with barriers to learning. Sign language was not offered by the school as it did not have the capacity. On the implementation of Conditional Grants, there were a number of learners that benefitted from grants through SASA with the assistance of the school in identifying them. Regarding some of the school highlights and challenges:

* The school obtained 93 percent with a 48 percent bachelor passes
* The number of higher certificate passes reduced
* School need specialised rooms but improvising
* Ablution facilities not in good condition and are not enough
* Shortage of stationery but the Circuit is assisting
* The school did not have a school hall
* **Input by the SGB** – The SGB was of the view that it was important to have the necessary training and development workshops for SGB members on their roles and responsibilities. SGB members needed to be equipped, especially with issues of budgeting which was a responsibility of the SGB. SGBs needed to be workshopped on understanding their roles and function.
* **Input by the Circuit** – The DBE conducted consultations to be conducted into the move to a fully technical school. The Department needed to ensure that the necessary workshops were built with the necessary equipment for technical subjects. The issue of burglaries was a challenge and cases were reported to SAPS - but culprits were never brought to book. The Department highlighted the recent burglary of computers from the school – burglaries was a common problem on the area.
* **Input by the Mayor** – The Mayor alluded to their recent visits to schools and also reported on issues of ablution shortages of the school and requested that the Portfolio Committee intervened to have this matter addressed. The school also offered a specialised curriculum and many parents chose the school from outlying areas and they should be allowed access to scholar transport.

**5.4.4.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members queried whether the Department had a timeframe and deadline to address issues of school ablution shortages.
* Although the issue of water supply was not the mandate of the Department, Members queried whether there had been engagement with sister departments and the local municipality to address water challenges.
* Members noted the high learner/teacher ratio and indicated that the school was experiencing overcrowded classrooms. Similarly, the number of toilets were not sufficient for the number of learners of the schools. Members queried what the Norms and Standards were for school infrastructure in the province pertaining to infrastructure. How did the Department allocate resources for the needs of schools in the Province?
* Members also queried who was responsible for the Quintile ranking of schools – as many schools had a problem with their ranking. Members also queried the criteria used to rank schools into the various Quintiles.
* Members queried whether the water from the school borehole was fit for human consumption. If not, was the Department ensuring the water was tested and treated to make it safe for consumption. Was the Department collaborating with the local municipality regarding issues of water supply to schools.
* Members noted the request from the school for a school hall – and queried how the Department was able to address the matter.
* Members also queried whether the school applied the adopt-a-cop initiative with SAPS for visible policing partnerships.
* It was concerning that the school offered technical subject but did not have a proper workshops and equipment. How was the Department going to address the matter?
* The failure rate in Grade 8 was cause for concern and Members queried reasons for the high failure rate in this Grade.
* Members received conflicting reports on the training and development of the SGB and queried the current situation.
* Members noted the concerns raised by the SGB that the school budget received was fit for an ordinary public school and not for a technical school. Members sought clarity on the matter. Members also queried the timeframe for the school to be converted to a fully technical school and what would happen to non-technical learners when the school was fully converted to a technical school.
* The shortage of 30 percent of LTSM stationary was reported and Members sought an explanation for this.
* Members also noted the shortage of Subject Advisors in the GET band and queried how the Department was addressing the matter.
* Members noted the shortage of two positions at the school and queried how long this was the case – and how soon the posts could be filled.
* With the learner practical, how were they assessed without the availability of workshops and adequate equipment.
* Members also queried whether the school was able to track, trace and retain learners who may drop-out or exit the schooling system.
* Members also queried the thoughts on the type of assessment mechanism needed to be utilised to assess learners e.g. continuous assessment or a single assessment system at the end of the year.
* It was queried whether special needs learner would also be accommodated at the school when it became a fully technical school.
* What was the Department’s timeline for the building of workshops and what intervention was in place regarding ablution facilities?
* Members also sought clarity on the number of learners who were beneficiaries of the SASSA Grant
* Members queried the number of Subject Advisor that may have visited the school since reopening in 2023.

**5.4.4.2 Responses to Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* **Principal** – In respect of the poor Grade 8 performance, the Principal did indicate an error in the statistics presented as there had been much adjustments done to Grade 8 and 9 marks. After the adjustments the statistics looked much better in terms of performance. The borehole water had been used by the school for a long time and the assumption was the water was safe for human consumption. It may be a good idea to have the water tested to be sure. With the mobile kitchen, the view was that the school required a proper kitchen to prepare meals – and this was provided for by the Department. The school was required to have two Deputy Principals and one Principal. Due to the shifting of the Deputy Principal to Acting Principal, there was also a shift for an Acting Deputy Principal. With learner transport, the school had submitted a request many times as learners travelled from far flung areas. Regarding school safety, there was a need to approach the Department for assistance as the school only had two night watchmen. The school had an adopt-a-cop programme running with the local SAPS. The GET band performance was not good and Subject Advisors mainly come for the FET band. The school had workshops for teachers on issues of assessment and Curriculum. The school was hoping that they received visits from Subject Advisors after first exam in March 2023. There was an issue of placement of stationary and this was reported to the District who gave assistance – it was later discovered that the original boxes of stationary were adequate. The School would need to consult with the District for allowing and accommodating special needs learners when the school became a fully technical school. Although the QLTC had been launched, there were certain challenges and the school was considering to have a re-launch of the QLTC.
* **Input by the Circuit** – The Circuit confirmed that the school was to be converted into a fully-fledged technical school. There had been the necessary engagements with the Department, including consultation with SMT and SGB on the matter. It was decided that there be a phased-out approach where learners chose their Curriculum stream post Grade 9. There were some matters that needed attention after consultation with Teacher Unions on the matter – the matters were pending.
* **Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department utilised the Quintiling criteria for ranking schools as per the National policy provided by DBE. When schools were established the Department had a resource planning component to categorise a school into the various Quintiles. If a school was not happy with their Quintile ranking, they could contest the ranking with the Department. Regarding issues pertaining to infrastructure, the Department indicted that this was linked to conditional assessment – and, based on this, they were prioritised for refurbishment, renovation, rebuild etc. The Department may need to consider a review of the condition assessment and re-prioritise schools. Regarding issues of SAFE, there was an audit done nationally, and a number of schools with pit-toilets were identified. In the Province, the Department dealt with pit-toilets as per the audit and the Department was working to eradicate these. The Department acknowledged that the school toilets are not in a good state and the plan was to allocate the project to the Independent Development Trust (IDT) to address toilets at the school. IDT had experienced challenges with contractors and had confirmed that by the start of March 2023 the contractor would be on site. For the construction of the technical workshops, the Department had appointed KOEGA to undertake the upgrading of school with workshops. They also had challenges with their contractor data-base but was in the process of appointing a contractor who would start with construction planning for workshops for school in 2023/24. Recently the Department had delivered a kitchen for the school after a request in August 2022. For the Province, the ratio of learners to toilets as per the Norms and Standards was around 1:34. The Department had engaged the Department of Water Affairs after experiencing challenges with the local municipalities. The Department now had its own funded programme for supplying boreholes to schools across the Province – the programme was budget dependent. The Department agreed that the school’s borehole water needed to be tested – and if needs be, treated for human consumption. With the staffing norms, the school had the necessary formula for what the school qualified for – depending on the leaner numbers of the school. The Principal post became vacant in July 2022 and the Department had subsequently advertised for the position to be filled. The Department was planning to advertise and fill posts on a quarterly basis. With learner transport, the policy stated that after consultation with the SGB, the school applied for learner transport if they qualified. The school would then be placed on the data-base. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, the Department was not in a position to supply scholar transport to all schools. The Department was appealing to the Portfolio Committee to plead their case at a National level. The Department also mentioned that it was the District that was responsible to ensure SGBs were capacitated, trained and workshopped on their roles and responsibilities. The Department would investigate whether the school SGB had attended workshops that had been arranged. The Department appointed Subject Advisors and Heads-of-Department according to their level of expertise, experience and qualification. Due to financial constraints the Department was not able to guarantee the appointment of a Subject Advisor for each subject. The Department indicated that currently the performance of the General Education and Training GET band was severely constrained due to lack of support personnel and staff attrition. Currently there was only one Subject Advisor for technical subjects in the District. The Department, in closing, argued that there be a rethink of budget cuts that were determined as this put sever financial constraints on Departments to fulfil its obligations.
* **Input by NATU** – The Union was concerned with the classroom overcrowding and appealed for additional floor space for the school. The Union queried how the Department was going to address the issue of additional classrooms. The Union also queried when the Department would address the issues of staff establishment and filling of vacancies. With some vacancies, the school needed to be assisted with temporary/substitute teachers – and the Union needed an update on this.

**5.4.4.3 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Ensure the school is assisted with additional floor-space and additional classrooms as per the need of the schools.
* Ensure that qualifying learners receive scholar transport.
* Ensure the school receive additional staff as required as a matter of urgency.
* Ensure that while the process of appointments is underway, the school is supplied with temporary teachers.
* Ensure that the school Quintile ranking is reviewed.
* Regarding school infrastructure, the Department should prioritise the school for refurbishments, renovations and rebuilding. This includes supply of new ablution facilities and construction of school workshop
* Ensure that the school borehole water is tested and treated for human consumption.

**5.4.5 Kromhoek Primary School**

The school was a combined school from Grade R – 12 and specialised in Maths and Science. The school was located in the Kromhoek administrative areas in Ward 20. The school perimeter was fenced and grass was cut regularly. The school provided bins to minimize littering. The school had water tanks available.

With progress in admissions and registration of learners it was noted that admissions were done the previous year and the mop-up early this year during reporting days for educators. The currently learner enrolment stood at 278 learners. With the provisioning of LTSM, textbooks and stationery was ordered and delivered with no shortages. Textbooks were procured centrally. The challenge was in stationery where the quantity was far below the school enrollment. This was due to late funding of Section 21 schools by the Department of Education which lead to change of prices as stationary was in demand. Regarding the staff establishment, the school was a Quintile 1 school with 278 learners and 14 educators – there were 4 non-educator staff. With District support and the role of Subject Advisors, it was reported that the school Management Plan and tools were in place. Plans included in a Year Development Plan and School Improvement Plan. Teachers attended the workshops organized by Subject Advisors who also visited the school to give onsite support. There were also extra tuition sessions for reading and counting in Grade 3,6 and 9 – with extra classes for the FET Phase. Tools to monitor syllabus coverage was in place and moderation plans were available to all educators. There were pre-and post-moderations conducted in each and every term. With the effectiveness of the School Governing Body and School Management Team, it was noted that the SGB of the school was correctly constituted with meeting plans available. The school held regular SGB meetings and minutes and resolutions of the meetings were kept. The school SGB had all relevant policies to manage the school. With the implementation of Conditional Grants, the school received grants from inclusive education to support learners with needs as well as grants for the nutrition programme and HIV and AIDS conditional grant. The school had a Learner Support Assistant (LSA) who received a stipend and the Orphans and Vulnerable Children OVCs were identified and 10 learners would receive school shoes from the ward councilor. Learners obtained their grant from SASSA. The school had School Based Support Team that helped in identifying learners with barriers to learning. Learners were supported at school and referrals were facilitated to relevant stakeholders in extreme case. Concessions were taken into consideration to help learners that had barriers to learning and concessions for Grade 12 learners with learning barriers to be marked separately. Regarding the state of school infrastructure, the school had three water tanks to harvest rainwater but the tanks were leaking. The school made use of six pit-toilets and was in need of additional ablution facilities. There were two mobile classrooms and 13 fixed classrooms but they all required major repairs. The school depended on rainwater as a water-supply for the school. The school had no piped water and during Winter, the school had no water. The school had approximately 50 learners who qualified for learner transport but was not benefitting. The school was able to feed learners and noted that the school nutrition was in order. However, the school felt they were disadvantaged by the feeding norm of a combined school as high school learners were also fed by the ratio for primary schools. The school had a small container kitchen which was not spacious for preparing meals. There was an arrangement with voluntary food handlers to clean the school kitchen prior to the school reopening. With the roll-out of ICT, the school did not have a dedicated budget for the rollout of ICT devices and connectivity to teachers and learners. The school had computers that were donated but they were not in good condition. The school also had a computer lab but this was dysfunctional as the area had challenges with network connectivity.

**5.4.5.1 Portfolio Committee Questions and Observations**

* Members raised concern that the school still had challenges with ablution facilities and queried why the Department had still not addressed the matter. There were small children and the pit-toilets posed a danger to them.
* Members were concerned that the Department was leaving all matter to be dealt with during the current financial year. Members were concerned that the budget might not be sufficient.
* Members queried challenges with the LTSM for Section 21 school being received late. The school also reported shortages and queried how this was being addressed by the Department – and how the shortages may affect learning and teaching.
* Members noted that the workload of the Principal was too much – and queried assistance for the Principal.
* Members also queried whether the Department could consider rationalisation of smaller schools and introduction of school hostels.
* **Input by the District** – In respect of the NSNP, the feeding for combined school was that they only consider primary learner statistics and this was in line with the policy. Regarding the ablution facilities, the school was in line for the infrastructure renovations programme of the Department.
* **Input by the Provincial Education Department (PED)** – The Department alluded to the appointment of a contractor as service provider and the target was to have the tender approved by April 2023. The scope of work would also include ablution facilities. With learner transport, there were 50 learners who qualified for scholar transport and the District indicated that the school had to apply and approval sought at Head Office – there had been no new routes approved. The Department was heavily constrained with providing scholar transport due to a lack of funding and the school may need to be considered as an emergency. With the NSNP, the Department did not differentiate between the various Grades and primary school’s allocation was less compared to the secondary school allocation and may be reason why the school may be classified as a primary school instead of combined. The Norms and Standards did not recognise combined schools that is why the advertisement is based on the flat-rate of primary schools. The Department would look to address the matter as a grey area – where the policy did not meet the needs of a school, it needed to be reviewed. The Section 21 spoke of capacity of schools and schools did not benefit from economies of scale. The school weighting was also determined by the weighting of subjects and small schools were likely to teach more. The Department alluded to the prescribed percentage for a Principal’s workload and according to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) Document, the Principal was not overloaded. In a move to save costs, the Department was considering the introduction of hostel facilities as well as the introduction of mega schools. In respect of the acting position having to be filled, this would be finalised as appointments were being finalised.

**5.4.5.2 Portfolio Committee Recommendations**

Having engaged with the school the Portfolio Committee recommended that the Minister of Basic Education and the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education:

* Ensure the process of filling vacancies and acting position is speeded up.
* Ensure that challenges with school infrastructure is prioritised, especially the ablution facilities. This should also include the refurbishment/renovation of classrooms that required major repairs
* Ensure all qualifying learners benefit from the scholar transport programme.
* Ensure issues of NSNP are addressed to ensure all learners benefit and there should be no differentiation with feeding learners
* Consider rationalisation of smaller schools and introduction of school hostels or possibly mega schools.
* Ensure the school has LTSM shortages addressed
* Ensure the school is supplied with adequate and updated computers and software as well as assist with network connectivity for a functional computer lab.

**6. Conclusion**

The oversight visit to the KwaZulu-Natal Departments of Education provided the Portfolio Committee with an opportunity to monitor, support and learn from the good work and best-practices of the Department with the reopening of school in February 2023. The Portfolio Committee further ascertained the functionality of schooling system in the Province. The findings and recommendations contained in this report should help to assist the districts and provinces to improve on schooling in general as well as to strengthen areas related to basic functionality.

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

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

* 1. **Infrastructure –** Ensure that all schools in the province receive the necessary infrastructure and resources where such is reported to the Portfolio Committee. These include the necessary PPEs, classrooms, mobile units, assistive devices, toilets, laboratories, libraries, school kitchens, halls, admin blocks and furniture. The Department to ensure that schools are placed on the priority list for the ASIDI Infrastructure Programme. Where schools identified storm-damaged, dangerous and hazardous buildings, that the Department give focussed attention to these schools.
  2. **Water and Sanitation –** Ensure that schools are supplied with adequate water supply through collaboration with municipalities, digging boreholes and ensuring water tanks are filled as required.
  3. **Overcrowding –** Ensure that schools are monitored to check implementation of admission policy and not accept more learners than they could accommodate. Principals need to be held accountable for such overcrowding.
  4. **Post-Provisioning Norms (PPN) –** Ensure that vacant posts are filled as a matter of urgency. Where schools had educator vacancies, these vacancies need to be filled. The Department needs to focus on attracting and retaining skilled and qualified educators, especially for Maths and Science – and ensure these educators received ongoing training and development. A balance should be found between the employment of Funza Lushaka graduates and non-Funza Lushaka graduates.
  5. **Scholar Transport –** Through engagements with National Treasury, ensure that the Province receive sufficient budget allocation to fully implement the scholar transport programme to prevent overcrowding of busses and ensure deserving learners had access to the scholar transport programme, especially learner with special needs.

**8. Appreciation**

The delegation, led by the Hon B P Mbinqo-Gigaba MP, thanked Members of the Provincial Legislature Committee on Education, Members of the Provincial Departments 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.