



**20 March 2023**

**Ms BP Mbinqo-Gigaba (MP)**

Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Basic Education  
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa  
120 Plein St  
Cape Town City Centre  
CAPE TOWN  
8000

(By email)

**Subject: Request for Postponement and Improved Organization of Public Hearings on Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill**

Dear Chairperson Mbinqo-Gigaba and Members of the Portfolio Committee,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to kindly request the postponement of all public hearings on the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill until after Easter. The main reason for this request is to allow the necessary time for staff to ensure the hearings are well organized and inclusive, ultimately fostering a more effective public consultation process. Nearly 2000 concerned members of the public have signed a petition supporting this request, emphasizing the importance of a thorough and inclusive approach.

Recently, it has come to light that the normal procedures for public hearings were not followed due to the short-staffed public education office. This led to insufficient communication and a lack of proper arrangements for suitable venues, ultimately affecting the quality of public participation in the process.

In light of these concerns, I would like to propose the following improvements to the current organization of the public hearings:

Postpone the hearings until after Easter, allowing for adequate time to address organizational challenges and ensure a more inclusive consultation process. Add additional venues in provincial capitals and major cities like Potchefstroom and Mbombela, catering to a wider audience and facilitating increased public participation.

Choose venues based on expressed interest and major population centers, ensuring that the selected locations are both accessible and relevant to the communities involved.

Hold virtual public hearings, particularly for home schoolers and other stakeholders who might face geographical or logistical barriers to attending in-person hearings.



Provide clear and timely communication regarding hearing dates, times, and locations, allowing interested parties to make necessary arrangements and avoid confusion.

Consider the scheduling of hearings to avoid conflicts with significant events, such as school holidays and religious observances. In the Gauteng province in particular, hearings are scheduled on Palm Sunday weekend and during school holidays, which may limit participation.

Acknowledge the efforts of people in Kwa-Zulu Natal who have been working to ensure there is no violence during today's protest action and have had little time to prepare for the hearings this coming weekend.

While I support as many rural areas as possible being visited, this should not be done at the expense of having hearings in major population centers. Some of these centers justify two locations, which we strongly urge the Committee to consider.

By implementing these improvements, we can ensure that the public hearings on the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill provide a fair and inclusive platform for all stakeholders to voice their concerns and opinions. This, in turn, will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the Bill's implications and promote a more effective legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration. I trust that the Committee will act in the best interest of the public and work towards ensuring a fair and inclusive consultation process.

Sincerely,

*Marie Sukers*  
Marie Sukers (MP)