

Media Statement
For Immediate Release
29 January 2015

North West Legislature Committee on Education Tells Education Department to Submit an Action Plan to Address Challenges of Electricity, Water and Sanitation at Pica Pau Secondary School in Pomfret co

The North West Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Education, Sports, Arts, Culture and Traditional Affairs told the Department of Education and Sports Development to submit an action plan by Friday 30 January 2015, that details their immediate intervention at Pica Pau Secondary School at Pomfret in the Kagisano Molopo Local Municipality. This came after the Committee held a meeting with the department, representatives of Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), community leaders and School Governing Body of Pica Pau Secondary School in Pomfret. Amongst the challenges found at the school was shortage of water and lack of electricity for over three months; out of the 9 teachers they have, 5 are temporary and therefore when school starts there are no teachers for more than 3 weeks as the temporary teachers awaits the department to tell them of their new contracts; and the schools' infrastructure has not been maintained for years, the last time they received furniture was in 1994.

There are also socio-economic problems in the community including high level of poverty and unemployment that affects learning and teaching. The school does not have security personnel thus experiencing lots of burglaries where office computers and important equipment is regularly stolen.

The Principal of the primary school section, Mr. Domingo Sebastiao said these conditions causes poor pass rates in all the school Grades.

"Learner enrollment is declining. The department is also failing to provide us with qualified teachers who can teach subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science.

"Since 1994, the school was never maintained and provided with proper infrastructure which includes office furniture and learner desks. We have to travel over 10 km to a nearby school to make photocopies of any administrative documents and for the preparation of our lessons ," said Mr. Sebastiao.

Ms. Rachel Chweneemang from the high school section said the school management wrote multiple reports and letters requesting assistance from all levels of the department without any responses.

“From November until now there has been no water in this area, water gets delivered twice a week if we are lucky and mostly during school hours, therefore this means learners have to be released to go and get water or else they will go without water for weeks.

“There are no toilets due to the water problems, the pit toilets we have are full and therefore everybody has to help himself in the bushes,” said Ms Chweneemang.

The Provincial Secretary of the COSATU, Mr. Solly Phetoe said COSATU adopted the school in 2010 and conditions of the school are worsening.

“We urge all government departments to assist the community of Pomfret because their condition is not getting better. The issue of temporary teachers is also a contributing factor to poor performance.

“We once managed to get assistance for them from the Gift of the Givers but last year they refused citing that we need to force the department to assist the school.” said Mr. Phetoe.

The Head of Department, Dr. Itumeleng Molale said an action plan would be submitted on Friday 30 January 2015 as requested by the Committee that will give all the details with time frames taking into consideration the urgency of the matter.

“As a department we are now moving beyond promises but instead we develop programmes of action. Tomorrow (Thursday 29 January 2015) I am meeting with our Human Resources Department to address the problem of the temporary teachers. In our plan we will involve other departments such as Social Development because we heard that some learners who are in child-headed family do not come to school on days of receiving social grants,” said Dr. Molale.

Chairperson of Chairpersons of Committees in the Legislature, Hon. Gordon Kegakilwe said the Legislature Portfolio Committees will all arrange a meeting with the community to get all their problem so that they can be escalated to the Premier for intervention .

The Committee Chairperson, Hon. Boitumelo Moiloa said the Committee will take this up with the department. The Action Plan will be interrogated to make sure that it addresses the urgency of the problems of this school.

For more information can contact Namhla Luhabe on 079 527 0628.

Ends

Issued by: North West Provincial Legislature: Media & Communications Unit on behalf of the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education, Sports, Arts, Culture and Traditional Affairs – Hon. Boitumelo Moiloa.