

Media Statement

For Immediate Release

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Portfolio Committee on Education Finds Shocking Conditions at Bavianskrans Farm School

On Thursday 17 January 2013, the North West Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Education, Sports Arts and Culture visited Bavianskrans Farm School in the Maquassi Hills Local Municipality as part of the visits the committee is conducting to various schools around the province to assess the schools' readiness for 2013 and to check on the challenges these schools are facing, especially farm schools.

The Portfolio Committee was shocked to find that the school is a two room dilapidated building that was donated by a local farmer in the late 1970s. The building where two educators and 27 learners operate is not conducive for learning and teaching. It has cracked walls and broken windows, rusty doors and mud floors. The school is not fenced and learners from Grade 1 - 7 have to share the two dilapidated classes.

The school's principal, Ms. Devon Mophuting said during rainy seasons, they often have to stop teaching and seek shelter on the parts that still have cover as class floors get wet and muddy.

"Books often get wet and we are forced to seek alternative shelter. In winter, absenteeism is high as these poor learners catch cold. The chilly winter weather is really a problem for us as the walls are cracked and windows are broken," said Ms. Mophuting.

She said a snake once fell from the cracked roof and bit a learner.

"Our learners are often get bitten by poisonous insects and snakes as the walls are cracked.

"I asked for help from the provincial Department of Education many times but received no help," said Ms. Mophuting. She said her pleas to move the learners to a nearby school were not taken seriously by the education department.

“They promised to provide us with transport for learners to move them to a school in Leuudoringstad, the nearest township from here.

“We received a response that they are waiting for approval of transport from the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport,” said Ms Mophuting.

She said they have also asked for two temporary mobile classes until the scholar transport issue is resolved and the department has since not responded.

Dr. Kenneth Kaunda’s District Manager for Department of Education, Dr. Mvula said a letter was written to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport to assist the school with transport in 2011.

“We realised that the school was built in a private land and government cannot develop it, an alternative was to move the learners to a better school at Leuudoringstad.

“The learners will be moved once the transportation is approved,” said Dr. Mvula.

The Committee Chairperson, Hon. Fenny Motladiile said the matter needs urgent intervention by the department as the environment is not conducive for learning and teaching.

“We need to move these learners to a better school within the district. We will urge the Department of Public Works to urgently provide transport for these poor learners,” said Hon. Motladiile. She said the department should prioritise farm schools.

Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Fenny Motladiile, said the Committee will meet on Tuesday 22 January 2013, to compile a full report of all the challenges the schools are experiencing. The Department of Education will be called to account for them in a meeting that will be held at the Legislature on Friday, 25 January 2013.

Ends

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