

OVERSIGHT VISIT REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION - TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (TLP)

ISIFISOSETHU PRIMARY SCHOOL & VAALRIVIER SPECIAL SCHOOL - LEKWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

The Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) project took place at Lekwa Local Municipality from 12 – 16 September 2016.

As part of the preparations for the event, the Portfolio Committee on Education; Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Committee) conducted pre-TLP oversight visits to Isifisosethu Primary School and Vaalrivier Special School on 24 August 2016.

During the TLP oversight visits, the Committee was accompanied by the Permanent Delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) who were also conducting their Provincial Week in the Lekwa Local Municipality (Gert Sibande District).

House resolutions emanating from this TLP oversight report will be referred to the Department for the necessary interventions and report back to the Legislature.

2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISITS

The purpose of the TLP oversight visit was to assess progress made by the Department in implementing the House Resolutions from the pre-TLP oversight visits.

3. METHOD OF WORK

The Committee adopted its pre-TLP oversight report on Isifisosethu Primary School and Vaalrivier Special School on 30 August 2016 and the House Resolutions contained therein were sent to the Department of Education (the Department) for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

Invitations to the TLP visit were issued to the Hon MEC and HOD of the Department of Education, the Gert Sibande District Municipality and the Lekwa Local Municipality. The school management team (SMT) and school governing body (SGB) of both schools, as well as

SADTU (South African Democratic Teacher's Union) were present at the visit. The Committee adopted its TLP report on 13 October 2016.

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PRE-TLP HOUSE RESOLUTIONS

The HOD of the Department of Education presented the Pre-TLP progress report to the Committee on 14 September 2016. The meeting was held at Isifisoethu Primary School. The Principal, SMT and SGB of both schools (Vaalrivier Special School and Isifisoethu Primary School) were present, as well as the ward councillors and representatives from SADTU.

The Committee considered the progress report on the pre-TLP House Resolutions for Vaalrivier Special School and Isifisoethu Primary School, deliberating at length on each response.

4.1. VAALRIVIER SPECIAL SCHOOL

- (a) **House Resolution: Ensure that the school has sufficient capacity and resources to accommodate the planned introduction of the Grade 10 class in 2017. Submit a report by 09 September 2016 as to how the Department plans to phase in the envisaged changes at the school.**

Progress report: The Department responded that it planned to admit only twelve (12) grade 10 learners in 2017, which would not have financial implications or create resource challenges for the school. The Department indicated that the school had capacity to admit 300 learners, whereas the current enrolment was 182. The Department further reported that they had also phased in twelve (12) Grade 9 learners at the school in 2016 with no adverse effects. Grade 10 would be the exit grade at the school.

- (b) **House Resolution: The Department must not phase in girl learners at Vaalrivier Special School if the school does not have the relevant infrastructure yet; the nearby George Hofmeyer Girls' School should be used to assist. Submit documentation that informed the proposed phasing in of girls by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: The sister Departments (Education and Social Development) continue to work together to ensure that all learners receive quality education and adequate protection. Due to continuous low enrollment at George Hofmeyer, the two Departments agreed at the end of 2015 that the unused space be used to increase spaces required for Special Schools. A legal opinion was sought, pertaining to the proposed admission of

learners with Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) at George Hofmeyer; no legal contravention was found on the matter. A Memorandum of Understanding is in the processes of line function for conclusion and subsequent admission of learners in January 2017.

The Committee noted that:

- *The memorandum providing rationale for accommodating MID (Mildly Intellectually Disabled) learners at George Hofmeyer Girls' School was attached to the pre-TLP progress report. The Committee acknowledged the efficient use of available spaces at George Hofmeyer Girls' School for MID learners.*
- *The Department must ensure that all planned policy changes are effectively communicated to the school management; schools must be provided with the necessary resources to accommodate the planned changes.*

- (c) **House Resolution: Engage the SGB and District office regarding the quotation (costed at R314 000.00) and plans that were secured by the SGB to construct toilets needed at the school. Provide progress by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: The District has prioritized toilets for the 2017/18 financial year. As an interim measure, the Department committed to relocate mobile toilets from Wesselton Primary School (in Ermelo) to Vaalrivier Special School by 30 September 2016 to alleviate the current toilet challenges.

- (d) **House Resolution: Eradicate the nine (9) asbestos classrooms at the school and provide mobile classrooms to the school immediately as an interim measure while the process of eradication is underway.**

Progress report: The Department's priority was to eradicate the basic services backlog in order to comply with Norms and Standards for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years. The provision of mobile classrooms was at procurement stage and the Department envisaged delivering them in October 2016.

The Committee noted that:

- *The pre-TLP progress report did not respond to the Committee's concern about the health risks of the asbestos classrooms and the recommended eradication thereof. However, during the TLP discussions on 14 September 2016, the Department agreed with the Committee that the asbestos structures were not healthy and indicated that the classrooms would be demolished during the December holidays for the safety of the learners and staff.*

- (e) **House Resolution: Investigate all maintenance and equipment needs of the school and have a plan in place to address these needs. Provide progress by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: The investigation for the development of a maintenance plan was to be completed by 30 September 2016.

- (f) **House Resolution: Meet with the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison and ensure that the security guards are increased at the school and that the school be assisted to pay the R9 175.00 monthly for security company fee that it is currently paying from its own funds.**

Progress report: The Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison (DCSSL) reduced the number of security guards during the commencement of the current security contract due to financial constraints. This affected all departmental sites, including schools throughout the province. This concern was raised with the DCSSL as the custodian of security issues in the Province. The Department of Education also reported budgetary constraints and could not afford to fund security services costs for schools.

The Committee noted that:

- *Provision of adequate security at schools is a critical matter due to the expensive equipment and infrastructure, as well as the safety of the learners and staff.*

- (g) **House Resolution: Ensure that the vacant Nurse and occupational therapist posts at Vaalrivier Special School are filled. Provide progress by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: In terms of the Draft Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education submitted to the Heads of Education Committee for consideration by the Department of Basic Education, social support posts such as Occupational Therapist should, going forward, no longer be attached to a school but rather to a Circuit Office or District Office to service a larger cluster or schools.

The Department indicated that filling of the Clinical Nurse post is dependent on the approval and implementation of the revised Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education and that the post will be included in the next advert to be issued by the Department, for filling from 01 January 2017.

Regarding the filling of the OSD Occupational Therapist post, the pre-TLP progress report explained that Vaalrivier Special School currently has three (3) Occupational Therapist posts, of which two (2) posts are already filled. The OSD Occupational Therapist post of the school was advertised together with a number of other Social

Support posts in the City Press of 12 July 2015, with a closing date of 30 July 2015. However, no applications were received for this post.

During the short-listing meeting on 16 November 2015, the panel (in the presence of organized labour) agreed that alternative recruitment methods were required for these scarce skills posts. Head hunting was recommended. To this effect, the Directorate: HR Provisioning and the Director: Inclusive Education and Education Support initially consulted the Department of Health to assist in the process of getting qualified candidates for Social Support posts, including the post of Occupational Therapist: Hoërskool Vaalrivier. The Department of Health committed that potential applicants will be referred to the Department of Education, but to date no applications were received.

- (h) **House Resolution: Ensure that the exit qualification process at the school is monitored and quality assured as this is a critical pathway for learners to further their training and seek employment. Provide progress by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: The Department reported that it supports, monitors and assesses the effectiveness of the school's programmes through the office of the Circuit Manager and Subject Specialists from the District and Head Office.

4.2. FINDINGS

After considering the responses of the Department to the Pre-TLP House Resolutions, the Committee made the following findings for **Vaalrivier Special School**:

- 4.2.1. The Department failed to effectively communicate its 2017 expansion plans for the school with the school management.
- 4.2.2. The Department assured the Committee that phasing in the twelve (12) Grade 10 learners in 2017 will not create financial or resource challenges for the school.
- 4.2.3. There is an increasing need for special education facilities in Gert Sibande District, specifically for mildly intellectually disabled (MID) learners.
- 4.2.4. The Committee supports the Department's initiatives to accommodate more learners with special education needs at the existing schools in the Gert Sibande District and is not averse to girls being enrolled at Vaalrivier Special School, provided that the school receives the necessary support to accommodate girls.
- 4.2.5. After the Committee's intervention, the Department implemented an interim plan to alleviate the current shortage of toilets at the school, so that the planned increased

intake in 2017 can be catered for. Mobile toilets were relocated from Wesselton Primary School (in Ermelo) to Vaalrivier Special School. However, the Committee also noted that the District has prioritized construction of toilets for the 2017/18 FY.

- 4.2.6. The Department also made a commitment during the TLP to procure and deliver mobile classrooms for the school during October 2016, to replace the nine (9) asbestos classrooms, which are to be demolished during the December school holiday period.
- 4.2.7. During the TLP visit, the Department indicated that it was in the process of developing a maintenance plan for Vaalrivier Special School.
- 4.2.8. The Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education is being revised; one of the proposals in the draft document is that social support posts such as Occupational Therapists should no longer be attached to a school but to a Circuit Office or District Office to service a larger cluster of schools. The filling of one (1) Occupational Therapist post is dependent on the approval and implementation of the revised Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education.
- 4.2.9. The post of the Clinical Nurse for Vaalrivier Special School will be included in the next advert to be issued by the Department for filling with effect from 01 January 2017.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the preceding findings, the Committee made the following recommendations that the Department must implement regarding Vaalrivier Special School:

- 4.3.1. The Department (Head Office) must develop a mechanism to strengthen communication with the Vaalrivier Special School management and all special schools in the District, regarding policy changes that have an impact on the schools.
- 4.3.2. Submit a report that outlines (a) the 2017 syllabus for the new Grade 10 class and (b) that clarifies the readiness of the Department and the school to phase in the new Grade 10 class as from the 2017 academic year.
- 4.3.3. Submit a report on the Department's policy and plans over the next two financial years to address the increasing need for special education facilities in Gert Sibande District.
- 4.3.4. For now, in view of the current inability of Vaalrivier Special School to accommodate girl learners, the Department should work towards preparing the school accordingly before enrolling girls at the school.

- 4.3.5. The mobile toilets relocated from Wesselton Primary School must be replaced with sufficient permanent toilets at Vaalrivier Special School, which must be constructed in the 2017/18 FY, as per the District plan and in consultation with the SGB and SMT.
- 4.3.6. Ensure that the mobile classrooms procured for Vaalrivier Special School are delivered by 31 October 2016 as committed by the Department during the TLP visit and that the nine asbestos classrooms are demolished during the December 2016 holiday period.
- 4.3.7. Finalize the maintenance plan for Vaalrivier Special School and submit it to the Committee by 30 November 2016.
- 4.3.8. Ensure that the one (1) vacant Occupational Therapist post is filled as per the revised Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education. Provide a progress report by 30 November 2016.
- 4.3.9. Ensure that the vacant Clinical Nurse post for Vaalrivier Special School is filled with effect from 01 January 2017. Provide an update on the process by 30 November 2016.

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON ISIFISOSETHU PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pre-TLP House resolutions and progress report (a-g)

- (a) **House Resolution: Ensure that the process to construct the four (4) classrooms begins and that the nine (9) mobile classrooms are delivered within three weeks from 24 August 2016, as committed by the District during the pre-TLP visit. Provide a progress report by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: Five (5) mobile classrooms would be relocated from Phaphamani and Diposi Primary Schools, including two (2) mobile toilets from Wesselton primary school. An order for the relocation was issued on 08 September 2016 to the service provider. However the construction of four (4) classrooms was not prioritized for the 2016/17 financial due to insufficient budget. The project has been prioritized for the 2017/18 financial year.

- (b) **House Resolution: Meet with Lekwa Local Municipality to discuss the feasibility of building a new school in Ward 15. Provide a progress report in this regard by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: A meeting to discuss this matter with the Lekwa Local Municipality was scheduled for 03 October 2016.

- (c) **House Resolution: Implement the basic services programme at the school as per the 31 December 2016 deadline of the Norms and Standards for basic services. Provide a progress report by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: A total of 334 projects were planned for the 2016/17 F/Y but not all could be implemented, due to budget pressures emanating from other programmes such as storm damaged schools and due to actual costs within the sanitation programme being much higher than anticipated. The pre-TLP progress report indicated that 166 projects were prioritized for 2016/17 F/Y and 167 projects will be deferred to the 2017/18 F/Y. Budget requirement to implement and eradicate the sanitation backlog was estimated at R 328, 570, 814 million for deferred projects.

Committee observation:

The Department has made a submission to the Budget and Finance Committee for additional budget in 2016/17 for basic services.

- (d) **House Resolution: Provide a mobile library for the school and a temporary kitchen structure for cooking and food storage. Indicate progress by 09 September 2016.**

Progress report: The Department indicated up front that they had no funds to supply a mobile library and temporary kitchen structure as the allocated budget has been dedicated for eradication of basic services and the provision of classrooms in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years. The school will be provided with these facilities as per the norms and standards time frame, which is from 2020.

Committee discussion/observations:

The Committee deliberated at length on this matter, requesting the HOD to exhaust all means to assist the school, mainly with regards to the kitchen. The HOD indicated that the Chief Director: Infrastructure will look into the matter.

There was no commitment made by the Department on this matter. Regarding the provision of a mobile library, the Committee requested the Department to ensure that Isifisoethu Primary School is visited by a mobile library, even if it is once a week.

- (e) **House Resolution: Ensure that the two (2) unqualified Grade R practitioners at the school are enrolled at a relevant institution to acquire the Grade 12 qualification.**

Progress report: Currently these two practitioners are enrolled towards obtaining their Grade 12 certificate. They are also provisionally registered with SACE as they possess

the ECD NQF Level 4 qualification, which is a requirement for registration. During the time of their enrolment with the FET College and their appointment, Grade 12 was not a minimum requirement. The pre-TLP progress report further indicated that in the 2011 Provincial ECD Policy the Grade 12 and ECD NQF requirement were indicated as a *preference* for appointment. Practitioners were encouraged to attain Grade 12 but no timeframe was given.

Committee observation:

The Department was commended for assisting these practitioners with an opportunity to better their lives.

- (f) **House Resolution: Urgently review the situation of the Grade 6 Mathematics teacher who is on incapacity leave and consider offering the teacher an option of ill health retirement. As much as the situation is a delicate matter, the children need to have stability in the learning environment and the Department must ensure that the Grade 6 Mathematics results improve by the end of 2016.**

Progress report: The pre-TLP progress report indicated that follow-up with the Health Risk Manager will be made to speed up the case for final decision making by the HOD in this matter. It was further indicated in the report that provision was made to pay a substitute teacher to replace the teacher in question. This situation was ongoing for over two years and the Department acknowledged that the changing of substitute teachers brought instability in the subject in terms of quality teaching. In terms of PILIR, an employee qualifies for incapacity leave benefit for which he/she can apply in the event where normal sick leave days in the 3-year leave cycle are exhausted.

Committee observations:

During the TLP discussions it was noted that the teacher was recuperating well and should be able to report for duty in January 2017. The Department indicated that the school principal will continue to liaise with the District management on this matter.

The Committee asserted that in PILIR (Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement) matters such as medical boarding of teachers, the line functions of HRM (Human Resource Management) must ensure the dignity and humanity of the affected teacher.

- (g) **House Resolution: Ensure that Isifisoethu Primary School is prioritized to receive sports fields and facilities/ sport combo court to cater for the various sporting codes (soccer, netball, volleyball and cricket).**

Progress report: In terms of the current norms and standards, these facilities must be provided from 2020/2025 but new schools built before that timeframe will be provided with sporting facilities. The pre-TLP progress report further indicated that the Department will engage the Lekwa Local Municipality and the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation to assist the school with sporting facilities.

Committee observations:

The Committee appreciated the Department's planned discussions with the Municipality and the DCSR regarding provision of sports facilities at the school. This was in line with the Cabinet resolution that departments must join hands to work together. It was further emphasized that if children have access to sports facilities and participation in sports programmes; it helps to keep them out of crime and other negative social activities.

5.1. FINDINGS

After considering the responses by the Department to the pre-TLP House Resolutions, the Committee made the following findings for **Isifisoethu Primary School**:

- 5.1.1. After the Committee's pre-TLP recommendation for the Department to address the overcrowding at the school, the Department put interim measures in place by issuing an order to the service provider for mobile classrooms to relocate five (5) mobile classrooms from Phaphamani and Diposi Primary Schools and two (2) mobile toilets from Wesselton Primary School to Isifisoethu Primary School.
- 5.1.2. After consideration of the pre-TLP progress report, the Committee noted the Department's planned construction of four (4) classrooms at the school in the 2017/18 FY, but also noted that the Department had a scheduled meeting with the Municipality on 03 October 2016 to discuss the construction of a new school in Ward 15.
- 5.1.3. Isifisoethu Primary School was not included on the 2016/17 priority list of 166 schools for provision of basic services as per the Norms and Standards. However, the Department confirmed at the TLP visit that the school is on the list of 167 schools that were deferred to the 2017/18 FY to receive basic services (toilets).
- 5.1.4. The Department was unable to provide the school with a mobile library and temporary kitchen structure in the 2016/17 FY as an interim measure, due to budget constraints.
- 5.1.5. The Department reported that it currently has no budget to construct the ECD centre, SMT offices and admin block due to the prioritization of the Norms and Standards for

basic services until the end of the 2017/18 FY. The school is however, in dire need of these structures.

- 5.1.6. The two (2) Grade R practitioners without Grade 12 certificates are currently enrolled towards obtaining their Grade 12 certificate and are provisionally registered with SACE, (South African Council of Educators) as they possess ECD NQF Level 4 qualification.
- 5.1.7. It was noted in the pre-TLP progress report that a final decision in the matter of the Grade 6 Maths teacher on incapacity leave will be made by the HOD of the Department of Education, after feedback from the Health Risk Manager.
- 5.1.8. The Department made a commitment to engage the Lekwa Local Municipality and the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation to assist the school with sports facilities.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the preceding findings, the Committee made the following recommendations that the Department must implement regarding **Isifisoethu Primary School**:

- 5.2.1. The five (5) mobile classrooms and two (2) mobile toilets must be delivered and installed at Isifisoethu Primary School by 31 October 2016.
- 5.2.2. The Department should consider the feasibility of constructing the four (4) classrooms at Isifisoethu Primary School in the 2017/18 FY within the context of the outcome of the meeting with the Municipality, which was scheduled for 03 October 2016 to discuss construction of a proposed new school for Ward 15 to address the serious overcrowding at schools in the Municipality. Update the Committee on the outcome of the meeting with the Municipality and indicate the site identified in the IDP.
- 5.2.3. Ensure that toilets are constructed at the school in the 2017/18 FY, as committed during the TLP visit to the school.
- 5.2.4. Engage the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation to provide mobile library services for Isifisoethu Primary School, even if it is a weekly service. This should also apply to all schools in the Municipality.
- 5.2.5. While being cognisant of the timeframes of the Norms and Standards for basic services, the Department should continue its efforts to source funding for construction of a temporary kitchen structure, ECD centre, SMT offices and an admin block at Isifisoethu Primary School.

5.2.6. Update the Committee by 30 November 2016 on the two ECD practitioners enrolled to complete their Grade 12 qualification. Their provisional registration with SACE (South African Council of Educators) must also be made permanent.

5.2.7. The HOD of the Department must act decisively in the matter of the Grade 6 Maths teacher who has been on incapacity leave for over two years, as it is costing the Department to pay two teachers for one position. Provide a progress report by 30 November 2016 on the following:

- Measures to improve the implementation of PILIR so as to protect the dignity of teachers on incapacity leave.
- Finalization of the decision about the Grade 6 Maths teacher who has been on incapacity leave for over two years.
- Current performance and challenges of the Grade 6 learners as they prepare to write the final 2016 Maths exams.

5.2.8. Update the Committee on the outcome of the engagements with the Lekwa Local Municipality and the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation to assist the school with sports facilities.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AT LEKWA STADIUM

The TLP public hearing was held at Lekwa Stadium on 15 September 2016 in conjunction with the Economic Cluster and Permanent Delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

The following issues pertinent to the Department of Education were noted for further action by the Department:

Ward	Issue
Ward 14	Inability to register a child at school due to no birth certificate and bar coded ID documents of parents
Ward 5	Lack of school uniforms for poverty stricken children
Ward 1	Assistance needed for learners exposed to cold weather at Hlobisa School
Extension 26	School safety and security – school boys smoking nyaope

Response at the public hearing by the Hon MEC for Education, Hon MR Mhaule:

- a. The MEC reminded the community member who raised the concern of school registration and lack of birth certificate, to visit the Home Affairs mobile facility set up within the TLP precinct (Lekwa Stadium) for further assistance in this regard. The MEC further indicated that the parent would have a three month grace period to register her child even if the birth certificate and ID documentation of the child was not yet in order.
- b. The MEC informed the community member who raised the concern of lack of school uniform, food and shoes for poverty-stricken children that she should go to the Department of Education Circuit office with the names and details of the affected children/families and they should be assisted. The MEC further indicated that the Department works hand in hand with the Department of Social Development on such matters and also has partners who donate such items to needy school children.

6.1. FINDINGS – PUBLIC HEARING

- 6.1.1. It was noted that the Department would investigate the matter of learners exposed to cold weather at Hlobisa School.
- 6.1.2. The MEC indicated that the Department will take discussions with the Lekwa Local Municipality and the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison on the matter of dealing with school boys smoking nyaope and the issue of strengthening overall school safety and security in Lekwa Local Municipality.
- 6.1.3. A concern was raised by a community member in Ward 5 that there are poverty-stricken children who do not have school uniforms and other basic necessities.

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide an update to the Committee by 30 November 2016 on the following:

- 6.2.1. Interventions provided at Hlobisa School to deal with the root causes of learners being exposed to cold weather.
- 6.2.2. Discussions held with the Lekwa Local Municipality and the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison regarding school boys smoking nyaope and measures in place to strengthen school safety and security within the Municipality and the District.
- 6.2.3. Feedback from the District office regarding poverty-stricken school children in need of school uniform and other basic necessities.

7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION – YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A session to engage youth development stakeholders was held at Sakhile Community Hall on 15 September 2016 in conjunction with the Economic Cluster and NCOP Permanent Delegates. The Department of Education was in attendance (led by the Hon MEC and the HOD). Stakeholders pertinent to the Department of Education were in attendance: Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT); Gert Sibande TVET College and the University of Mpumalanga.

The following matters pertinent to the Department of Education were raised by the youth of Lekwa Local Municipality:

- Poor safety and security at schools, leading to alcohol and drug abuse and violence
- Poor coordination of scholar transport and the need for road safety on the R23 road
- Lack of facilities at schools (sports, libraries, ICT)
- Lack of access to learnerships
- Cases of corruption were implied, where some people obtain learnerships without having the required Grade 12 qualification
- Lack of access to bursary information
- Shortage of Grade 12 textbooks (Ward 6)
- Non-availability of media studies (Ward 6)

The Hon MEC for Education responded as follows:

- a. The Department of Education was well aware of the triple threat of unemployment, poverty and inequality that plagues the youth of Mpumalanga and Lekwa.
- b. Despite the challenges raised by the youth at this session, the MEC pointed out that Lekwa was one of the best performing municipalities regarding academic results.
- c. The MEC acknowledged the threat of drug abuse and violence at schools. The matter of school safety and security was a priority to the Department and was receiving attention, such as engaging the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison as well as the Lekwa Local Municipality and the South African Police Services. The Department also budgeted for the provision of metal detectors to all schools.
- d. Mention was made of the Department's Maths, Science and Technology Academy (MSTA) intervention programme whereby 101 schools are being assisted with ICT infrastructure to link them up with other well-performing schools to help them improve in these critical subjects that if mastered, can help them secure a better future.
- e. Mention was also made of the provincial Fortune 40 programme, whereby young people are encouraged to follow a career in agriculture.

- f. The MEC informed the young people that bursary forms are accessible at circuit offices, the Department's website and youth centres.
- g. It was also indicated that advertisements for learnerships are advertised in the local media and young people should continue applying in the relevant sectors. The MEC raised a concern about the alleged corruption regarding awarding of learnerships.
- h. The issue of poor coordination of scholar transport specifically relating to the R23 road, which had led to concerns for the safety of learners, was also discussed. The Executive Mayor of Lekwa Local Municipality also raised a concern about this issue.
- i. Lastly, the MEC assured the youth that the matter of school dropouts is a great concern to the collective leadership of the Province as this phenomenon contributes to the high unemployment rate. She further indicated that the Department had a programme to provide a second chance to learners who wish to repeat their Grade 12.

7.1. FINDING – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

7.1.1. The following concerns were noted at the youth stakeholder engagement session:

- Poor safety and security at schools, leading to alcohol and drug abuse and violence
- Poor coordination of scholar transport and the need for road safety on the R23 road
- Lack of facilities at schools (sports, libraries, ICT)
- Lack of access to learnerships
- Lack of access to bursary information
- Shortage of Grade 12 textbooks (Ward 6)
- Non-availability of media studies (Ward 6)

7.2. RECOMMENDATION

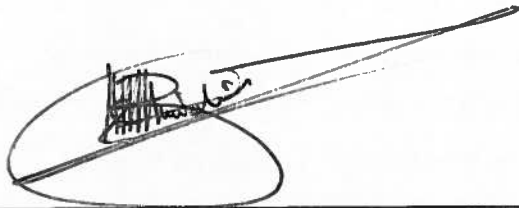
7.2.1. The Department of Education must investigate all the concerns raised by the youth at the stakeholder engagement session and update the Committee by 30 November 2016 on interventions put in place by the Department in consultation with other key role players where relevant, to address the challenges and their root causes.

8. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to thank the Honourable Members of the Committee for their constructive input during the TLP oversight deliberations on Isifisoethu Primary School and Vaalrivier Special School, which were held in Lekwa Local Municipality.

The Committee appreciated the responses from the Department of Education and the input of the Lekwa Local Municipality and all stakeholders who were present.

The House is requested to adopt this oversight report with its findings and recommendations. ***A progress report on the implementation of all the House Resolutions in this Committee report must be submitted to the Legislature by 30 November 2016.***



HON. VV WINDVOËL (MPL)

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION**

18/10/2016
DATE