

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

### **OVERSIGHT VISIT TO SITHENJISIWE SECONDARY SCHOOL, DR JS MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2018**

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#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Section 118 (1) (a) and (b) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers a provincial legislature to facilitate public access to and involvement in its oversight processes. The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature conducted the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) event at Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality from 17 – 21 September 2018.

The Portfolio Committee on Education; Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Committee) has a mandate in terms of Rule 119 of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature to hold the Department of Education (the Department) accountable through various oversight mechanisms during the course of a financial year. The Department is responsible for Outcome 1 of the Provincial Outcomes (to provide quality basic education).

To this effect, the Committee conducted an oversight visit to Sithenjisiwe Secondary School on 19 September 2018.

#### **2. METHOD OF WORK**

In preparation for the TLP visit, the Research Unit conducted preliminary visits to Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality (the Municipality) and identified a number of schools for oversight by the Committee, of which this school was selected to be visited.

The TLP Political Steering Committee adopted the proposed programme for the Social Cluster. Coordination of the planned TLP activities was done through formal invitations to targeted stakeholders and the TLP programme was sent to all stakeholders. As part of the overall TLP preparations, the Legislature briefed the Municipality on the TLP programme, requesting municipality structures to participate in the various activities of the Committee.

Subsequently the Committee met on 12 October 2018 to consider and adopt its draft report. House resolutions emanating from this report were referred to the Department for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT

The aim of the oversight visit was to assess the state of infrastructure and the overall functionality of the school.

### 4. OBSERVATIONS BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee was cognizant of the Department's budget constraints but advised that the District should prioritize condition assessments of schools in order to prioritize schools that need urgent intervention the most.

The Committee was briefed on the school profile, challenges and improvement plans during the Education Stakeholder Engagement Session which was held on 18 September 2018. The Committee then conducted the site inspection to the school on 19 September 2018.

The following stakeholders were in attendance:

- Department of Education (Provincial and District Management);
- School management and SGB;
- Learner Representative Council (LRC);

It must be noted that the stakeholders such as South African Principals' Association (SAPA), South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB) had already made their inputs at the Education Stakeholder Session on 18 September 2018.

After interacting on site with the stakeholders in attendance, the Committee took note of the poor state of the building infrastructure at the school. There was much to be done by the Department and the school management and leadership to ensure that this school becomes a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

#### **General challenges noted at the school:**

- Non-functionality of the borehole and newly constructed waterborne toilets
- Infrastructure challenges (dilapidated and unsafe classrooms)
- Poor maintenance (broken ceilings, windows)
- No Science laboratory; no computers and computer room;
- Shortage of water (general challenge in the Municipality at large);
- Shortage of textbooks;

- Poor facilities for NSNP (no proper kitchen structure);
- No administration block and staffroom;
- Poor fencing (old and worn out);
- Socio-economic challenges (poverty, ill-discipline, drugs, over-aged learners)

## 5. SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY AND CHALLENGES

The school is administered under the Marapyane Education Circuit of the Department of Education, Nkangala District. It offers classes from grade 8 – 9 (General Education and Training band) and from Grade 10 – 12 (Further Education and Training band).

The enrolment of the school in the 2018 academic year is 417 learners and it has a staff complement of 20 teachers. The school maintained a constant number of learners enrolled in the past four years, which is about 400 learners.

### School Enrolment

Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018
8	91	90	104	110
9	64	82	94	85
10	115	86	66	86
11	86	100	77	73
12	58	52	62	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>417</b>

### Over-aged learners

One of the challenges which are confronting the school is the high number of over-aged learners across all the grades. It was noted that in the last four years the school has indicated this challenge to the Department. The table below indicates the number of over-aged learners enrolled in 2018 academic year.

Over aged learners in 2018 per grade				
8	9	10	11	12
65	70	74	69	57

### Staff establishment

The school staff establishment is well-constituted with a Principal, Deputy Principal, two (2) Education Specialists (HOD's), 16 Level 1 Educators, one (1) Administrator and two (2) General Workers.

Principal	D/Principal	HOD	PL1	Admin	G/Worker
01	01	02	16	01	02

The teacher to learner ratio of the school is 1:20, which is far below the provincial ratio of 1:30. This should give an advantage to the learners to better perform.

### Curriculum Provision

The school provides two streams which are: Mathematics/Sciences and Commerce Subjects.

### School management

The SMT is well-constituted and all positions are filled. The four members of the management team have programmes of developing teachers according to their allocations in the different phases and grades. The management is functional and this is realized by the number of meetings which they hold with teachers, the control of quality teaching and teacher development in the various subjects.

### School governing Body

The Committee acknowledged the election of the new SGB in March 2018 and that the SGB was active and functioning well in executing its functions. It was also noted that the SGB was supportive of the school activities and were always available when the school requested their assistance. However, the shortcoming of the Department in this regard was that the SGB was not inducted yet.

### School Finances

Date allocation transferred	Amount transferred	Amount used	Expenditure as a percentage	Balance as at the date of report
24/05/2018	R 160 585.5	R 34 985.79	21.8%	R 125 599.71

It was noted that the school managed its finances satisfactorily.

### Quality teaching and teacher development

Quality teaching is promoted in the school through the schools' own teacher development programmes. The utilization of subject advisors and subject specialists from the district is also sourced by the school. There is moderation of work which seeks to validate quality of work done in the school and where gaps are found the school develops improvement programmes together with the teachers concerned.

### Leave management and absenteeism

The Committee noted that the school needs to improve on leave taken by educators as the current reflection was standing at 8.12%, which was above the Department's target of 4% leave ratio. The learner absenteeism ratio stood at 5.82%, which was also above the target of the Department, which is 2.4%.

### Summary of results December 2017 and June 2018

Grade	No enrolled	Pass	% pass	Enrolled	pass	% pass
	December 2017			June 2018		
8	104	74	71.1	110	17	15.5
9	94	85	83.0	85	9	10.6
10	66	86	87.9	86	4	14.7
11	77	73	74.0	73	9	12.3
12	62	63	74.2	63	9	14.3

### Breakdown of grade 12 results

Year	Bachelor pass	Diploma	Higher certificate
2015	5	13	12
2016	7	18	22
2017	5	16	21

The school does not produce many bachelors' passes; there are mainly diploma and higher certificate passes.

### Progressed learners

Progression means the advancement of a learner from one grade to the next, excluding Grade R, in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements.

Progression can be used to prevent a learner from being retained in a phase for a period exceeding four years, as stipulated in the *Admission policy for ordinary public schools*. Once a learner is progressed, the under performance of the learner in the previous grade must be addressed in the grade to which the learner has been promoted.

However the number of learners progressed at Sithenjisiwe Secondary School in the past three years (2015-2017) is worrisome; these are huge numbers across the four grades as presented below. To this effect, the Committee noted that the school needs to develop a better mechanism that will improve academic performance.

Grade	8	9	10	11
<b>Number of learners</b>				
2015	74	49	76	50
2016	54	41	44	55
2017	74	78	58	57

#### **Education levels of the school management team (SMT)**

Below is a list of qualifications of members of the SMT:

Title	Name	Education level	Subject offering
Principal	Sebidi SD	PTD, BA, B.Ed. (Hons), Med	Life Orientation
Deputy Principal	Aphane MD	STD,HDE, B.Ed. (Hons)	EMS + ECON
Education Specialist	Mabuse MP	UED,ACE ,B.Ed. (Hons)	Physics + Maths Lit
	Kgarbjang FA	BA, HED, SMC	Agriculture + Maths Lit

#### **REQV of educators**

REQV 13	REQV 14	REQV 15	REQV 16	REQ 17
01	11	03	00	01

#### **Availability of textbooks**

The Committee noted that the school had a shortage of textbooks and even though the school makes requisition for topping up the available stock, the Department does not provide the number of books requested but fewer than the requested. The school therefore

was not able to meet the expectation of every learner having a textbook for all the subjects enrolled in.

### **Learner furniture**

There is no shortage of learner furniture, except that the furniture is too old.

### **School infrastructure**

The Committee raised a concern about the school infrastructure. The classrooms are a hazard which the Department must urgently attend to. There are huge cracks in the brick walls; some of the bricks are loose and they fall on the learners sometimes.

The school does not have an administration block or a staffroom. Two classrooms were converted into an admin block, whereby the principal, deputy principal and administrator share a makeshift office. The other classroom is used by teachers as a staffroom.

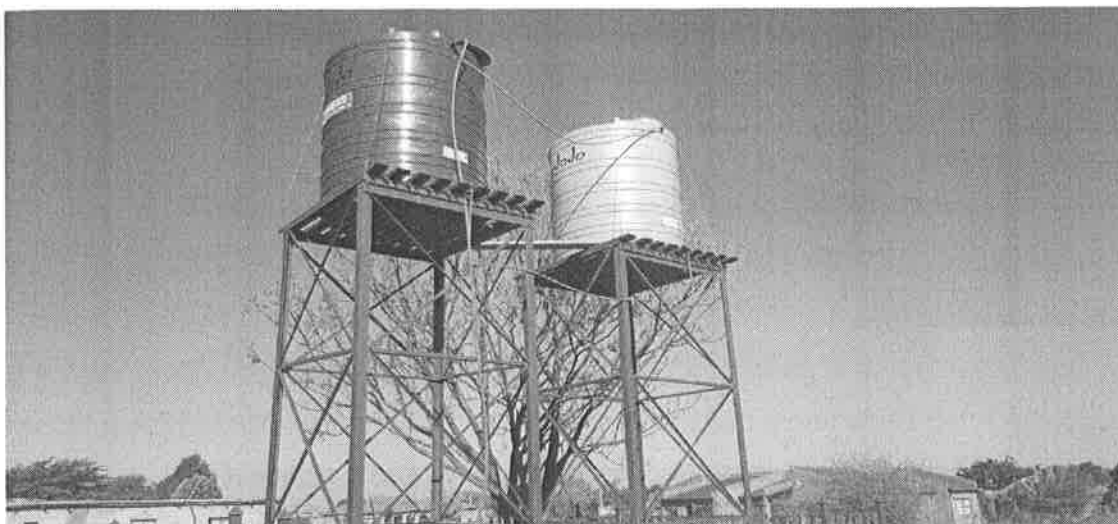
The school fence is old and worn out; this creates an unsafe school environment for learners and staff.

The makeshift kitchen structure was built by the SGB and does not meet the required standard as it was initially designed as a shelter from the rain.

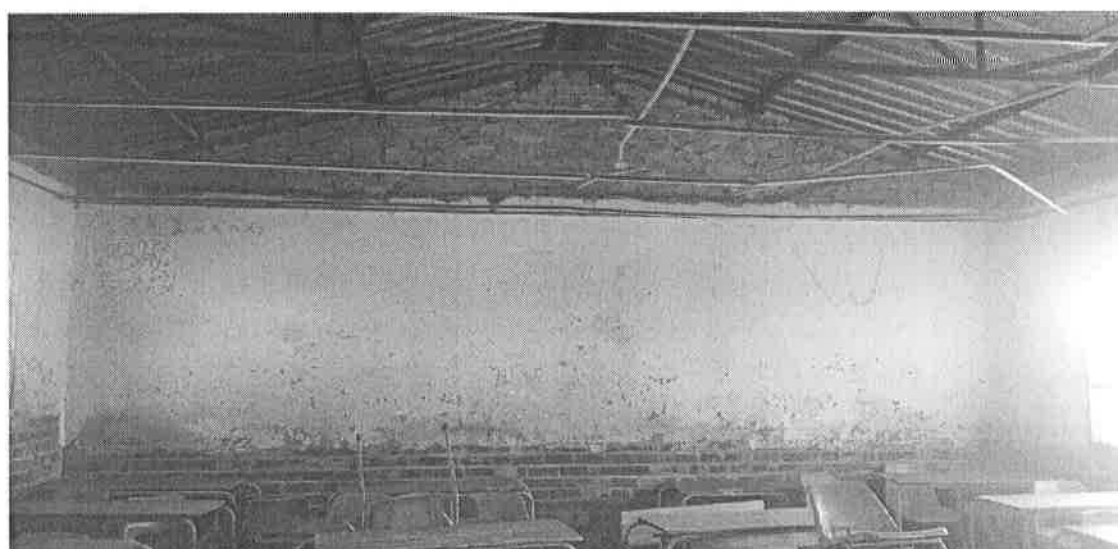
### **Ablution facilities**

The Department constructed new water-borne toilets, which is appreciated. However, they were still awaiting hand over to the school. The toilets met the expected safety standard and they replaced the unsafe pit latrines, which are a menace to schools in the province and the country.

The Department also provided the school with a borehole; however it was not yet handed over by the time of the Committee's visit. The borehole will supply the school with water and enable the newly built water-borne toilets to function. The problem was technical in nature, in that the pipes that connect the tanks were not the required type of pipes.



***Unsafe building infrastructure***





### **Access to ICT**

According to the Department there is a set target to provide ICT access to children in public ordinary schools. The Committee noted with concern that this target is still not achieved as most schools do not have the ICT infrastructure or even computers. The Committee further noted that in most cases when computers are donated by private businesses and purchased by the Department, they get stolen before they are even used. Therefore, it was advised that more awareness campaigns must be done to give awareness to parents and communities that the technology provided to schools seek to improve the quality of education delivery for their children and the community members at large.

### **Sporting and extra mural activities**

The Committee noted the importance of sports in schools in that it increases self-esteem and alertness of the learners and it leads to balanced mental and physical growth. Sports also teach children life skills and teamwork, leadership and patience. The following sporting activities prevail in the school.

- Football
- Netball
- Volleyball
- Cricket
- Table tennis

### **Nutrition programme (NSNP)**

The Committee appreciated that all the learners of the school participate in the school nutrition programme. The school is classified quintile 1 (catering for children from the poorest households).

It was noted that the food quality delivered by the service provider had improved and deliveries were done on time. Handling food for school children requires awareness and training, thus the Department has trained the food handlers on how to prepare hygienic food for the children.

### **Learner pregnancy and dropout**

Year	2015	2016	2017
Dropout	28	41	36
Pregnant	07	04	06

### **School safety, drugs**

The Committee noted that the school's poor fencing contributes immensely to ill-discipline (drug abuse) and an unsafe school environment. There was no guard to man the gate. However, it was noted that the school established a Safety Committee to improve school safety. The Committee consists of different stakeholders including the SAPS and the SGB.

## **6. FINDINGS**

After interacting with the Department and the school management, the Committee made the following findings:

- (a) The Committee noted the Department's budget constraints but this should not prevent the District from conducting regular condition assessment of infrastructure at schools and providing relevant support wherever possible.
- (b) The infrastructure at Sithenjisiwe Secondary School is very unsafe; there are cracks in the walls and at times children are in danger of being hit by falling bricks. The school also does not do minor maintenance work such as fix ceilings and windows.
- (c) There is a shortage of classrooms at the school and no administration block.
- (d) The Department constructed new waterborne toilets and a borehole for the school, which are all awaiting hand over to the school. However, there were challenges with the pipes used for the borehole (incorrect size).
- (e) The school fencing is old and worn out and there is no security guard at the gate, which presents an unsafe environment for both learners and staff). However, the SGB has recently established a School Safety Committee.
- (f) The SGB was elected in March 2018 but to date it has not been inducted.
- (g) The Department has not provided textbooks for the school as per the school's requisition. The school has a serious shortage of textbooks in various grades.
- (h) Drug abuse by the learners is a serious challenge, which leads to discipline problems for the school.
- (i) The school has a high number of progressed learners and over-aged learners.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above, the Committee recommended that the Department must implement the following in relation to Sithenjisiwe Secondary School and provide a **progress report by 19 November 2018**:

- (a) The District, through the circuits, must strengthen its monitoring and condition assessment of schools infrastructure in Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality.
- (b) Urgently look into the unsafe infrastructure issues raised during the Committee's visit and if possible, the school's most urgent needs must be placed on the Department's Table B5 for the 2019/20 financial year. The school must also be assisted to develop a maintenance plan for the minor maintenance issues noted during the visit.
- (c) Relocate mobile classrooms that are not being used in the District, whilst putting a plan in place to attend to the shortage of classrooms at the school.
- (d) Fast track the handing over of the waterborne toilets and the borehole to the school and ensure that the technical issues in relation to the borehole pipes are attended to as a matter of urgency to ensure the functionality of the toilets and the borehole.
- (e) Assist the School Safety Committee to develop and implement a plan to ensure that the school has a proper fence and a security guard, thus ensuring a safer school environment.
- (f) Fast track the induction of the School Governing Body by 30 October 2018 and provide the Committee with written proof in this regard.
- (g) Urgently provide the school with the requisite textbooks per grade and ensure that the relevant textbook retrieval system is in place at the school.
- (h) Engage the Department of Social Development, SANCA and other NGO's to develop and implement a plan to address the drug abuse and discipline problem at the school.
- (i) Look into the reasons for the high number of progressed learners and over-aged learners and implement a plan to increase support to the school in this regard.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to thank the Honourable Members of the Committee for their constructive input during the oversight visit to **Sithenjisiwe Secondary School** on 19 September 2018 during the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) in Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality.

The Committee extended its appreciation to the Department of Education and all stakeholders whose participation contributed to the success of the TLP oversight activities. The Legislature staff members were also appreciated for their respective roles in support the Committee business.

**The House is requested to adopt this report with its findings and recommendations. The Department must implement the House Resolutions contained in this Committee report and submit a progress report by 19 November 2018.**



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**HON. TS KHOZA (MPL)**

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

16/10/2018

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**DATE**