

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION ON THE OVERSIGHT VISIT TO LUGEBHUTA SECONDARY SCHOOL IN NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY DURING THE TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (TLP), 16- 20 SEPTEMBER 2019

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. Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature conducted the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) outreach at Nkomazi Local Municipality from 16 -20 September 2019.

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 **Lugebhuta Secondary School on 17 September 2019.**

2. METHOD OF WORK

In preparation for the TLP visit, the Research Unit conducted preliminary visits to Nkomazi Local Municipality (the Municipality) and identified schools with issues that needed to be attended to.

Invitations were issued to the Department, the school management team, school governing body, Nkomazi Municipality; Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT); Office of the Auditor-General SA (AGSA); Office of the Public Service Commission (PSC); South African Local Government Association (SALGA); House of Traditional Leaders (HTL); South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Social Development, Teacher Unions (SADTU and NATU); South African Principals Association (SAPA); National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB), Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT) and Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER).

The Municipality was engaged on the overall TLP programme with a request to participate in the various activities of the Portfolio Committees.

Subsequently the Committee considered its draft report and the House resolutions emanating from the report were referred to the Department for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

3. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT

The oversight visit to **Lugebhuta Secondary School** sought to assess the overall functionality of the school in relation to the delivery of quality education.

4. INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

The meeting at the school was chaired by Hon JL Thabethe in the absence of the Chairperson. The Committee interacted with the Department, the school management team, school governing body and other invited stakeholders.

The Department's delegation was led by the Ehlanzeni Education District Director (Dr. Hazel Brukwe) in the absence of the MEC, acting HOD and the Chief Director District Coordination, whose apologies were received and duly accepted by the Committee.

The District Director, briefed the Committee on the school profile, including SWOT analysis and main challenges at the school and interventions made by the Department to date.

From the invited stakeholders, the following were in attendance during the oversight visit:

- South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)
- National Teachers Union
- National Education and Health Workers Union (NEHAWU)
- Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT)
- South African Principals Association (SAPA)
- National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB)
- Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER)
- South African Police Service (SAPS)
- Office of the Premier
- Provincial Treasury

4.1. OBSERVATIONS

After interacting with the Department and the stakeholders, the Committee noted that the school was generally functional. However, a serious concern was raised about the one block of classrooms that was very old and dilapidated, with a serious infestation of termites in the foundation and the woodwork. The Department confirmed that the school had a C1 rating after condition assessment was done; this meant that the school was on the Department's priority list for the 2019/20 financial year.

Despite the noted infrastructure challenges, the school grounds were neat and the school gardens were well-maintained in an effort to make the school a conducive environment.

The main challenges discussed during the interaction were:

- Overcrowding, including a dilapidated and termite infested block of classrooms
- Insufficient and inadequate sanitation (4 old unsafe pit toilets for 1390 learners)
- Poor learner performance in grades 9,10 and 11
- Poor textbook retrieval resulting in textbooks shortage
- Damaged (vandalized) school furniture resulting in furniture shortages
- High learner pregnancy rate; over-aged learners and progressed learners
- Poor learner discipline
- Lack of scholar transport service for qualifying learners

Response by the Department

The Department committed to look into all the issues raised during the Committee's visit, and to support the school where possible, as per the advice of the Committee.

Streaming

Lugebhuta Secondary is one of two secondary schools in the area which offer Mathematics and Science and are classified as MSTA schools. The learners have no choice in terms of other streams besides Mathematics and Science.

School enrolment

Grade	2016	2017	2018	2019
8	276	226	266	282
9	202	245	233	267
10	293	277	326	334
11	199	238	277	352
12	262	173	128	155
Total	1 232	1 159	1 229	1 390

The school enrolment has been increasing since 2017. There was also a high rate of over-aged learners from Grade 8 up to Grade 12.

Staffing

The table below reflects the staff establishment

Principal	Dep. Principal	HOD's	PL1 Educators	Admin	General Workers
01	02	07	47	02	04

The learner educator ratio was 1: 50 and the learner classroom ratio (LCR) was 1: 70, which is well above the provincial norm of 1:35 and 1:30 respectively,

Educator and SMT qualifications (number of educators in each REQV)

	Qualifications	Subjects teaching	Performance
Principal	PTC; BTECH	-	-
Deputy Principal	STD; FDE; BA	L.O	80%
Deputy Principal	PTD; B TECH; BEd HONS	Natural sciences	90%
Education Specialists	PTD; BA; FED	Afrikaans	80%
Education Specialists	STD; ACE in physical sciences	Physical sciences	40%
Education specialists	STD; BA	EMS	80%
Education Specialists	STD; BA	Siswati	100%
Education Specialists	SPTD FDE; BA	Natural sciences	92%
Education Specialist	BA; PGCE	English	85%
Education Specialist	PTD; MA	Siswati	96%

The SMT members are suitably qualified; they all meet the expectation of the Department in terms of the relevant education qualification value or NQF level.

Educators

Below REQV13	REQV 13	REQV 14	REQV 15	REQV 16	REQV 17
	04	33	09		

It was noted that Relative Education Qualification Value (**REQV**) 15 was the highest qualification of the educators. This is satisfactory but there is room for further teacher development to REQV 17. The 04 educators at REQV 13 also need to upgrade qualification.

School management team

The school principal, in conjunction with the school management team (SMT), has a challenging yet crucial role to effectively manage a fairly large and complex institution. The SMT consists of seven (7) HODs and three (3) senior management. It was noted that the SMT was monitoring the teaching and learning, as well as classwork and homework.

SGB Functionality

Regarding governance and community relations, the SGB is responsible to monitor the smooth running of the school and assist the school management with discipline of the learners and security at the school. The SGB has a duty to involve parents and members of the community to assist the school.

School finances

Allocation transfer date	NSNP allocation	Total allocation to the school	Amount used as at 30 August 2019	Expenditure %	Balance as at date of report
13/08/2019	R97 550,80	R97 550,80			
	Paper budget	R558 499,50	R218 670.22	49.6%	R276 829,28

As indicated in the table above, the annual allocation to the school is R 558 499.50 and expenditure as at 30 August 2019 was R 218 670.22 (49.6%). The use of finances indicates satisfactory financial administration and management.

It was noted that the funds from the Department of Education are allocated on time.

Poor Learner performance

Grade	2017			2018			JUNE 2019		
	No enrolled	No pass	% pass	No enrolled	No pass	% pass	No enrolled	No pass	% pass
8	226	171	75%	283	266	94%	283	187	66%
9	245	215	86%	228	184	81%	269	15	6%
10	277	176	43%	353	337	95%	334	17	5%
11	294	215	73%	294	239	81%	353	130	37%
12	173	136	86%	128	122	95%	157	103	66%

According to the above table that depicts the learner performance, it was noted that the June 2019 results in Grades 9, 10 and 11 were very poor. However, Grade 8 and 12 are performing consistently above 60%.

The Committee noted that the Department must strengthen implementation of the learner performance improvement plan (LPIP) and subject performance improvement plans (SPIP) to improve the dismal performance in the affected grades.

The school indicated that the Department (circuit manager and subject advisors) visited the school frequently to provide support. However, the Committee noted that this must also reflect in the improved learner performance for the support visits to be deemed effective.

In 2018 the school produced 38 bachelor passes, 48 diploma passes and 30 higher certificates.

A concern was raised about the very high number of progressed learners. The following numbers were noted for progressed learners in the 2018 academic year:

- Grade 9 (99 learners)
- Grade 10 (30 learners)
- Grade 11 (51 learners)
- Grade 12 (15 learners)

The Committee urged the Department to assist the school to improve performance and lower the number of progressed learners.

Textbooks

Not every learner has access to textbooks as there are not enough in some subjects. In most cases learners are sharing textbooks. In some subjects there are no textbooks at all and the teachers rely on photocopies.

Although there is a retrieval strategy in place, it is not effective. The school reported that all textbooks given to learners are recorded and some of them are returned at the end of the year. However, some learners do not return them and despite engaging the parents, the system has been ineffective.

Infrastructure

There was a shortage of classrooms; the school has 23 classrooms of which 20 classrooms are not conducive for teaching and learning. Four (4) of the classrooms are infested with termites that are eating away the wooden roof trusses and going through the foundation thus leaving termite mounds on the classroom floors. There was even a termite nest in one of the classrooms. It was a concern that teaching and learning was still taking place in these classrooms, although there was one classroom which was no longer used due to the obvious safety risks.

The cement floors in the affected classrooms also have pot-holes, which creates a dusty atmosphere.

Toilets (sanitation)

The school toilets are not in a good condition at all; the 4 pit toilets are not nearly sufficient for the 1 390 learners (659 boys and 731 girls). The pit toilets are unsafe, unhygienic, old and dilapidated (cracked floors).

The Committee noted that the toilet ratio was 1: 165 for boys and 1: 91 for girls yet according to the Department of Water and Sanitation, one toilet must be used by 25 learners. The situation at the school is thus abnormal and must be corrected as a matter of urgency.

There are two (2) staff toilets for 53 staff members (27 females and 26 males).

Administration block

The SGB assisted by building offices for the three senior managers (principal and 2 deputy principals). However, the HOD's still do not have proper offices and the admin clerks have too little space in their office to accommodate them all. Furthermore, the teachers have only one staffroom which is also too small to accommodate all 53 staff members.

Special classrooms

- The school does not have a library; there were some old toilets which were converted into a library initially but that is now used as a staffroom.
- There is also no school hall; exams are conducted in the community hall, which the school rents from the Municipality. For the year to date, the school has reportedly paid R13 000.00
- There is a small dining hall, which was donated by YEBO Foundation; however there is no furniture in it.

Sporting facilities

The sports field is not well fenced and needs to be levelled. There is also the threat of community invasion of the land due to poor fencing. It was noted that the SGB has tried to install palisade fencing but the learners still managed to break the fence.

School safety Committee

It was noted that the school safety committee was functional but not fully effective. The committee members assisted in monitoring access control at the school gate. It also organized searches for stolen cell phones and weapons.

Vandalism

The school reported a serious challenge of vandalism of school resources by the learners. Therefore there is a shortage of learner furniture (broken chairs and tables in the classrooms). Learners have also damaged classroom ceilings, chalk boards, plugs, switches, windows and doors. This was a concern and the school was urged to apply stricter monitoring of learners and implement consequence management in this regard.

Drugs, Bullying, Fighting and Gangsterism

The school has learners who take drugs, bully other learners, fight on school premises and who belong to gangs in the community. It was a concern that the learners were in possession of dangerous weapons (such as axes), dagga and alcohol on school premises.

It was reported that learners have easy access to providers of dagga and other drugs in the community and that the proximity ($\pm 7.5\text{km}$) to Jeppe's Reef Border Gate/Matsamo which accelerates the movement of drugs, especially dagga from Eswatini to Schoemansdal.

There is a discipline committee in place, which has been trying to cope with all the issues listed above. It was noted that the SGB and educators assisted with the searching of learners at the school gate.

In the absence of corporal punishment, other forms of discipline such as suspension of learners until parents had to bring them back to school, were implemented but were seemingly ineffective.

In an effort to curb the ill-discipline, the school appointed a youth facilitator who assists in monitoring the learners to confiscate dangerous weapons and drugs; and the SGB has also appointed a security company to secure the school and its property.

School furniture

As indicated there is a shortage of school furniture; learners share desks and some have to sit on the tables. It was noted that the SGB purchased some plastic chairs to alleviate the shortages but the chairs are not strong enough and get broken every time.

Learner welfare; NSNP

According to the school records, about 1050 learners benefit from the NSNP. However, there is no kitchen or dining hall for the learners and the cutlery is insufficient.

There is a store room for food items; it is well-ventilated and secure.

The NSNP is adequately managed as deliveries are done on time and if there are delays it is well communicated between the school and supplier.

However, the payment of food handlers is often delayed as the money is deposited late, thus causing the school to use other school funds to pay food handlers. There were four (4) new food handlers (3 female and 1 male) who were not yet trained.

Scholar transport

The school does not benefit from the Department's scholar transport policy.

Access to taverns

There is a tavern (Way Inn) opposite the school. The Department was advised to approach the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER) to assist in reaching an amicable solution with the tavern owner on behalf of the school, such that they regulate their operating hours and enforce stricter access control to the tavern. Learners should not be visiting the tavern during school hours.

5. FINDINGS

After interacting with the school management and SGB, the Committee made the following findings for Lugebhuta Secondary School:

- (a) There is serious overcrowding (insufficient classrooms); the dilapidated and termite infested block of 23 classrooms was assessed by the Department and was given a C1 rating, which indicates replacement of the infrastructure. The Department has prioritized the school on its 2020/21 infrastructure plan (Table B5).
- (b) Sanitation at the school is very bad; there are 4 pit toilets with cracked floors for 1 390 learners, which is hugely inadequate thus rendering the school non-compliant with the national ratio for number of learners per toilet.
- (c) The school's admin block has insufficient space for its HOD's and admin clerks and the staffroom is too small to accommodate all 53 staff members. There is also no library, proper cooking facility and hall (hence they rent a municipal hall for exams).
- (d) The school has been under-performing in Grade 9, 10 and 11 for the past few years up to June 2019 exams, noting that this is an MSTA school. The current two streams that the school offers are inadequate.
- (e) Out of the reported 84 undocumented learners, three (3) are in Grade 12 in 2019.
- (f) The school has many over-aged and progressed learners; the pregnancy rate is also too high.
- (g) There is a shortage of learner furniture, mainly due to vandalism by learners.

- (h) Access to textbooks is challenged mainly due to shortages caused by poor retrieval of textbooks issued to learners, as well as negligence and theft of books. There is a retrieval strategy in place but it is not effectively implemented.
- (i) Some qualifying learners were reportedly not part of the scholar transport service.
- (j) Despite a safety committee and various safety mechanisms, the school environment is still not conducive to teaching and learning. The challenges of drugs and alcohol, bullying, fighting, gangsterism and overall ill-discipline are constant threats to effective teaching and learning.
- (k) The payment of food handlers is often delayed as the money is deposited late and there were also 4 new food handlers that were not yet trained.
- (l) The school sports field is not conducive for the learners; it is uneven and is not fenced thus resulting in incidents of community invasion of the land.
- (m) The close proximity of the Way Inn tavern is a threat to effective teaching and learning.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above, the Committee recommended that the Department must implement the following at Lugebhuta Secondary School and provide a **progress report by 29 November 2019**:

- (a) Submit the project scope for the planned replacement of the dilapidated, termite infested classroom block and ensure that it is implemented as planned on the 2020/21 Table B5. The Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign must also be implemented.
- (b) Prioritize the school for provision of proper sanitation (toilets) that is sufficient for the 1390 learners and remove the pit toilet system.
- (c) Prioritize the school for upgrade of the admin block and provision of library services in accordance with the norms and standards timeframes. The SGB must be engaged on the cooking facility, school hall and bigger staffroom.
- (d) Improve the learner performance outcomes for Grades 9.10 and 11 by strengthening monitoring of the learner performance improvement plan (LPIP) and subject performance improvement plans (SPIP). The progress report should also reflect on the possibility of adding more streams to the school.

- (e) Ensure that the 84 undocumented learners are assisted as a matter of urgency and that the three Grade 12 learners are able to write the final NSC examination.
- (f) Implement a plan to combat the high rate of over-aged learners and pregnancies at this school. The progress report must detail how progressed learners will be assisted.
- (g) Engage MRTT to assist in repairing the damaged learner furniture; the requisite top-up furniture should be provided where possible. All schools in the municipality must include the issue of vandalism in the Life Orientation curriculum.
- (h) Intensify monitoring of the departmental textbook retrieval policy at this school and also prioritize it for the provision of requisite textbook top-ups in the 2020 school year.
- (i) Implement the department's scholar transport policy to ensure that qualifying learners at this school benefit from this service.
- (j) Develop a plan to assist the school and its SGB (discipline committee) to combat the threat of drugs, bullying, gangsterism and vandalism. QLTC, Department of Correctional Services, DCSSL, SAPS, DSD, MER and civil society must be engaged.
- (k) All food handlers at the school must be paid on time and must be properly trained.
- (l) Engage the municipality to assist the school to level its sports field and intervene on the community invasion of the land due to poor fencing. The SGB must be engaged to partner with the Department in ensuring that the school is adequately fenced.
- (m) Engage the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER) to assist in coming up with an amicable solution to the issue of regulating the operating hours of the Way Inn tavern so as to avoid learners leaving the school premises to go there.

7. CONCLUSION

The acting Chairperson (Hon JL Thabethe) thanked the Members of the Committee for their constructive input on the oversight visit to **Lugebhuta Secondary School** on 17 September 2019 during the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) in Nkomazi Local Municipality.

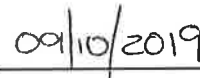
The Committee extended its appreciation to the Department of Education, all stakeholders who attended and its support staff.

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 29 November 2019**.



HON. NE HLOPHENE HLOPHE (MPL)

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



DATE