

Basic Education on reopening of Vuwani Schools

15 May 2016

Stakeholders in support of Governments move to reopen Vuwani Schools tomorrow

Education stakeholders have supported government's plans to reopen schools and see a return to normal operations in Vuwani. This comes after schooling was disrupted as a result of residents of Vuwani and surrounding areas protesting against the High Court's ruling to incorporate parts of Vuwani with Malamulele to form a new municipality. For 10 days learners and teachers were unable to access the schools and teaching and learning time was lost.

Since then efforts by various stakeholders including the Inter-Ministerial Task Team led by Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) David van Rooyen have worked tirelessly engaging communities in a bid to resolve the issues and bring government services including education back to operations. The call for the reopening of schools was reiterated at a prayer session held on Saturday at Mashau organized by the Pastors Forum. At the prayer session the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) also called for schools to reopen on Monday.

The Education Forum, Pastors Forum, school governing body formations, the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), traditional leaders and teacher unions have taken a unanimous decision to support all efforts aimed at restoring education services. They have also supported the Education Department's plan to reopen schools on Monday (16 May).

At a meeting with the IMC, the department presented a report detailing the damage caused together with a plan to ensure the 84 hours without learning and teaching are recovered as quickly as possible. The department's catch up plan will ensure learners have an opportunity to get back into the normal routine as far as the school calendar is concerned.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said it was important for teaching and learning to resume in order for learners not to be adversely affected. The Minister has urged parents to accompany their kids to school where possible.

During a meeting with stakeholders in one of a series of meetings on Friday, 13 May 2016; Minister Motshekga commended the commitment of all and emphasized the importance of starting with teaching and learning as soon as possible.

The Limpopo Education Department also shared an assessment report detailing the following:

- 27 schools (11 high schools and 16 primary schools) burned and vandalized but 102 schools affected in terms of disruption to learning and teaching with 52 827 learners affected in the whole area.
- there are 2600 matriculants from the 11 high vandalized schools.
- 99 classrooms damaged
- 181 classrooms usable

- Cost implications - it's estimated that R250 million would be required to fix the damaged schools.
- 234 mobile classrooms needed and 74 would be delivered before the end of the week. Classrooms which had not been damaged would be used for teaching and learning.
- The education district office has assessed the lost time.
- 350 single desks and 220 double desks have been secured from the contracted service providers and delivery will start as soon as the mobile classrooms are installed.

Teacher unions committed to calling upon all teachers to work over the weekends and holidays to ensure successful implementation of the catch up plan.

NECT had conducted a study to assess the ICT needs of the affected schools and would mobilize resources and had already requested the business community to assist.

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the Professional Education Union (PEU) have both committed to availing their members to make up for lost time. It was agreed in the meeting that teachers would go to school from Monday to make the necessary preparations for learners in the senior phase to start attending class.

Fortunately when the schools were set alight learners had taken their textbooks home. However we will still need to procure a small amount to replace books that were destroyed.

Teacher support material was also destroyed but the department has already placed orders and delivery is expected in the next few days.

Learner Teacher Support Material (textbooks and workbooks) are still available as learners had taken their books home when the schools were burned down. We will need mainly Teacher Support Material because that is generally kept in the administration blocks which were targeted for vandalism. We are confident that our educators will be able to teach while we prepare for the deliveries to be made in the next few days.

Despite fears that learner records were lost, Vhembe District officials informed the IMC learner progress and performance data from the first quarter was in the system. The IMC has also appealed to all communities in the affected areas to support government efforts aimed at returning the situation to normality.

Enquiries:
Elijah Mhlanga
Cell: 083 580 8275

Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) -
Legadima Leso
Cell: 083 378 9495

Issued by: [Department of Basic Education](#)