

# WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT



## REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ON ITS OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE ALPINE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MITCHELLS PLAIN AND ERICA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BELHAR

**16 AUGUST 2022**

## REPORT

The Standing Committee on Education having conducted oversight visits to the Alpine Primary School in Mitchells Plain and Erica Primary School in Belhar on 16 August 2022, reports as follows:

### 1. The delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Education included the following Members:

Baartman, DM (Chairperson of the Committee)  
Christians, F (ACDP)  
Fry, C (DA)  
Kaizer-Philander, W (DA)  
Mackenzie, RD (DA)  
Sayed, MK (ANC)

**The following parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:**

Ms. W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

### 2. Visit to the Alpine primary school in Mitchells Plain

Mrs. N Patherv, the Principal of the school received the Committee.

#### 2.1. Key aspects discussed at the school

Mrs. Patherv, briefed the Committee on the basic functionality of the school, she reported that:

- 2.1.1. Alpine Primary School has been serving the community for 35 years.
- 2.1.2. The school has phased out Afrikaans classes because the number of learners who enrolled in Afrikaans has dwindled over the years.
- 2.1.3. As part of the safety measures, the school is part of the Walking Bus Campaign.
- 2.1.4. The school has had no break-ins lately because it employed community workers to assist with the safety of the school.
- 2.1.5. The teacher-learner ratio at the school is 1:40 across all the grades.
- 2.1.6. The school has an afterschool programme which is coordinated by the RUN4SCHOOLS NGO. They provide programmes such as music, outdoor free play, soccer, netball, and arts (drama, singing, and dance). All coaches are paid by the NGO. Coaches assist with teaching skills to learners during physical education (PE class).
- 2.1.7. The school has a safety committee, which is functional. This includes the walking bus, ground duty staff, weekly check-ins with the social crime unit/SAPS, and security guards during the day and night.
- 2.1.8. The school reported that it had no burglaries, but it has been affected by gang violence.
- 2.1.9. The school has the following infrastructure projects and planned maintenance for the 2022/23 financial year:
  - Replacement and repair of door locks and taps;
  - The safety gates need a fresh coat of paint;
  - Sewerage blockage and drainage issues need to be resolved;

- Replacement of windows frames and handles;
- Upgrade the plumbing in the FP;
- Welding of fences;
- Security shelters require plumbing and electricity;
- The school will look at installing solar panels to reduce electricity costs;
- A renovated kitchen is required for the school;
- A shelter covering the pathway leading to the Grade R classes.
- Grade R mobile units need to be immediately upgraded especially the supporting foundation beams, as this could collapse if not urgently addressed together with replacing the floors and repairing the leaking roof;
- A replacement fence is required for a part of the perimeter as the previous fencing palisade is unstable and broken;
- The staircases are unsafe due to unevenness and chipping of concrete;
- The water meter on the field should be disconnected, even though it does not belong to the school. This needs to be terminated immediately as the school is still being billed for it;
- The school requires a hall;
- The embankment between the school and the main perimeter fencing is deteriorating. This poses a danger to students and homeless people who may use the area as a shelter; and
- Due to the current damping between a neighbour's perimeter fence and the school's fence, the Health Department should be notified to take further action.

2.1.10. The school reported the following challenges with regards to its feeding scheme:

There is a need at the school to feed more than 281 learners. The program provides food for 281 learners, but the daily feeding data indicate the following:

- The schools need an extractor fan in the food preparation area for which there is no funding.
- The food preparation area experiences ongoing plumbing challenges.
- The cupboards and shelves in the kitchen area need to be replaced.
- The school principal was advised by the WCED to log their infrastructure challenges onto CEMIS, which he did.

2.1.11. The school reported successes with regards to the National School Nutrition programme (NSNP) at the school. The NSNP provides a nutritious cooked meal to 281 learners which includes a cooked breakfast served before 8:00 am. The NSNP provides funding for two Volunteer Food Handlers who prepare and provide meals to learners. The NSNP supplies the school with the following menu items: Rice, Maize, Samp, Pilchard, Chicken Livers, Beans, Soya, Flavouring, Cooking oil, Fruit, Vegetables, and long-life milk.

### **3. Visit to the Erica Primary School in Belhar**

Mrs. HP Rolls, the Principal of the school received the Committee.

#### **3.1. Key aspects discussed at the school**

Mrs. Rolls briefed the Committee on the basic functionality of the school, she reported that:

3.1.1. Erica Primary is a value-driven school of choice to holistically develop learners to reach their (full) intellectual, emotional, physical, and social potential.

3.1.2. The school currently has 934 learners enrolled.

- 3.1.3. Teacher-learner ratio at the school in Grades 1-7: is 40:1 and in Grade R: is 32:1.
- 3.1.4. Learners are transported privately by parents.
- 3.1.5. The Mass participation; Opportunity and access; Development and growth (MOD) sporting Codes offered at the school are: Soccer, Cricket, Netball, Rugby, Athletics, Cross Country – Basketball, and Tennis.
- 3.1.6. There are currently two MOD coaches, but there is no Centre Manager. The inconsistency in learners' attendance poses a challenge.
- 3.1.7. The MOD provides a nutritional meal for 40 learners. The programme also runs during the June holidays with an average of 150-200 learners in the community.
- 3.1.8. With regards to safety at the school:
- The Foundation Phase learners are governed by the principle of adult-to-adult (i.e. Learners are at all times handed over to adults.)
  - Educators, assistants, and maintenance staff follow strict rosters with regards to gate duty; playground duty; stoep duty; period change; toilet duty to consistently ensure that learners are safe, and a watchful eye is kept.
  - Parents and all visitors are required to sign a visitation register which is regularly monitored. No parent has direct access to classrooms.
  - After school, teachers and students accompany learners to the exit points where they are supervised until being collected. The security at the gate (Aunty Louise) ensures that learners are supervised until they are collected.
  - With regard to an alarm system, the school is sourcing new service providers for improved after-hour services. Security personnel constantly patrol the gates and premises.
  - Safety drills are held once a term. Currently, Safety and Security on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a prioritised focus area.
  - Communication with Neighbourhood Watch does ensure safety during holidays and weekends. A positive relationship with the various institutions enables continued education regarding human trafficking, gangsterism, drug abuse, etc. by Police Officers, Traffic Officials, and Concerned parties e.g. 2nd Chance Trust.
- 3.1.9. As part of its Infrastructure projects or maintenance planned for the 2022/23 financial year, the school envisages building rain shelters at exit points and upgrading the hall's kitchen and ceiling.
- 3.1.10. The STEAMAC (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics, Agriculture, and Coding) at the school focuses on robotics and coding in preparation for the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- 3.1.11. The school reported a pass rate of 80% during term 1 of 2022 and 84% in term 2 of 2022.
- 3.1.12. The school conducts a detailed analysis of its academic results and develops intervention strategies to modify teaching and improve learner losses.
- 3.1.13. There is no National Nutrition Scheme at the school.
- 3.1.14. The School Governing Body is functional, meetings are held regularly as part of the mandatory programme. The SGB members are cooperative and there is a positive synergy amongst members.
- 3.1.15. Learners are placed as per the school's planned enrolment. A list of unplaced Grade 1 learners was received from the Metro North Education District, these learners will be placed as vacancies arise.
- 3.1.16. The schools' computer labs (broadband/WiFi) have been upgraded to a 100 MB line. The lab has 20 mini-PCs. Its primary use is for IT, green shoots, and projects. ICT champions assist in this class.
- 3.1.17. The school is in a process of securing sponsorship for its coding and robotics laboratory.
- 3.1.18. The school reported the following challenges:
- Irregular payment of school fees by parents;
  - The quintile status of the school despite the current situation needs to be reviewed;

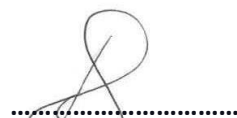
- 21% of learners come from the surrounding areas e.g. Delft, Belhar Extensions, Bishop Lavis, Ravensmead, Bellville, Brackenfell, Elsies River, Kuilsriver, Blue Downs, and Uitsig
- Since this school is a school of choice and situated in a safe environment, learners from neighbouring schools often request transfers. This complicates the placement process since the school prioritises unplaced learners. Currently, the school's infrastructure is unable to accommodate excess learners.
- The schools is prioritising maintenance and security despite its limited financial resources.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visits and took cognizance of the challenges experienced by the two schools that were visited. The Committee would also like to acknowledge the excellent work done by the teachers at these schools.

#### **5. Acknowledgments**

The Committee thanks the WCED, principals, and teachers of the two schools visited.



**ADV DM BAARTMAN, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
**WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**  
**DATE: 08 November 2022**