

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

THURSDAY, 11 MAY 2023

### COMMITTEE REPORT

The Standing Committee on Education (hereafter the Committee), having conducted a follow-up oversight visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat on 14 February 2023, reports as follows:

#### **The delegation**

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

Baartman, DM (Chairperson of the Committee)  
Christians, FC (ACDP)  
Fry, C (DA)  
Kama, M (ANC)  
Plato, D (DA)  
Sayed, MK (ANC)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the Committee:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

#### **1. Overview**

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a follow-up visit and inspect the challenges that were experienced by the school regarding the quality of the new building after it was reported that the school had structural challenges although the facilities were new and were handed over to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) at the beginning of 2020.

In June 2021 the Committee visited the school to inspect whether the structural challenges reported in June 2021 were fixed. The Committee resolved during its meeting on 8 June 2021 to conduct a follow-up oversight visit to inspect the quality of work done by the contractor after the Committee raised the challenges with the WCED and the Department of Infrastructure.

## 2. Visit to the Crestway High School in Retreat

Ms Jacobs, the Acting Principal of the school, received the Committee.

### 2.1 Key aspects discussed at the school

Ms Jacobs gave the Committee an overview of the school's fundamental operations.

She reported that Crestway High School is a bilingual school consisting of 37 tenured teachers and one School Governing Body (SGB) post. The school was founded in 1976 in Retreat and currently has 1000 learners. The school fee is R1 200 per learner per year, and more than 60% of the learners' parents are SASSA recipients. The school is part of the Provincial Feeding Scheme. The school has a budget to feed 185, but currently feeds 250 learners. The teacher-to-learner ratio is 32.1. The school is a Section 21 school, registered under Quantile 4, but serving a community that falls under Quantile 1.

The school's basic safety measures and safety plan are in place. The school's SGB is functional and meets regularly.

The school offers accounting, mathematics, pure mathematics, physics, business administration, English and Afrikaans, Life Sciences, Geography, Consumer Sciences, History, and Computer Application Technology (CAT) in the Continuing Education and Training Phase (FET). The school's extracurricular programme includes a variety of athletic and cultural activities. Ms Jacobs informed the Committee that the functional computer lab is used full-time for teaching. Although the school's National Senior Results (NSR) are below 70%, the school is determined to improve them with its School Improvement Plan (SIP) and other initiatives.

Ms Jacobs informed the committee that the school plans to start a vegetable garden to improve the nutrition programme. She also reported that they are planning to expand the athletic field.

The school reported the following challenges:

- Poor student discipline.
- Poor parental involvement in the school.
- Drug abuse amongst the learners.
- Poverty and unemployment are prevalent in the community around the school.
- Gang violence in the community.
- The school has a high rate of teenage pregnancies.
- Power outages during practical subjects, difficulty completing practical assessment tasks.
- Learner absenteeism is high.
- Teacher absenteeism has increased.
- Non-payment of school fees by learners' parents.

Ms Jacobs presented the list of deficiencies and explained what has been fixed according to the list submitted to WCED and the Department of Infrastructure as follows:

In the administrative wing of the school, there are several cracks that are visible. The tiles in the secretary's office entrance are broken. The lights in the administration area have been repaired. Due to poor workmanship, the locks on the doors from the staff room leading to the quad area do not work. This was only discovered after a break-in at the school. The school hall backstage has been painted and the water pressure in the kitchen/feeding area has been fixed. The consumer studies room (Room D01) had low water pressure, which has been fixed. The lab water supply has been repaired. Bird guards on the stairs and other critical areas were replaced.

The roof around the school stage and inside the school hall leaks, which was reported in November 2022. The weatherboards need to be replaced and the hall lights are still not working. The door locks are faulty and need to be replaced. This was caused by poor workmanship. However, there are still areas that have not been bird-proofed. Lighting, especially outside the building, is poor. There are several broken electrical outlets, and some toilets are not functioning properly. The lab room at CAT does not have an interactive whiteboard. The upper floor expansion joints have visible cracks. The sports field needs to be repaired because it is uneven. Ms Jacobs further reported that a list of all the above deficiencies was sent to the contractors for repair.

### **3. Recommendations**

The Committee RECOMMENDS that:

- 3.1 The Department of Infrastructure engages with Crestway High School and the WCED to ensure that the above infrastructure is repaired and/or corrected in accordance with the specifications for the respective
- 3.2 The Department of Infrastructure should involve the WCED and Crestway High School when it conducts its final inspection of the items on the “snag list” that need to be remedied and/or corrected before the final report on the new building is completed.
- 3.3 The WCED Metro South Education District officials should work with Crestway High School to develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) that addresses low-performing subjects (including but not limited to mathematics).
- 3.4 The South African Police Service (SAPS) in Retreat and the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety engages with the WCED and Crestway High School on measures to address high drug abuse among learners and the impact of gang violence on the school.

### **4. Resolution**

The Committee RESOLVED that the Department of Infrastructure should report to the Committee by the last calendar day of each month on the progress made in correcting the infrastructure “snag list” of the new construction (Crestway High School) until it is completed. These reports must also be submitted to the WCED and the Minister of Education.

### **5. Conclusion**

The Committee successfully completed its inspection visit and noted the problems at the school visited.

### **6. Acknowledgements**

The Committee thanks the WCED, the acting principal and the teachers of the school visited.