

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

FRIDAY, 25 AUGUST 2023

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Standing Committee on Education (hereafter the Committee), having conducted an oversight visit to the Stellenzicht Secondary School in Stellenbosch on 23 May 2023, reports as follows:

The delegation

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

Baartman, DM (DA) (Chairperson of the Committee)
Brinkhuis, MK (Al Jama-ah)
Christians, FC (ACDP)
Fry, C (DA)
Plato, D (DA)
Sayed, MK (ANC)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the committee:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

1. Overview

The Standing Committee on Education resolved to conduct oversight visits to schools that achieved less than 60% on their National Senior Certificate (NSC) results during the 2022 academic year.

2. Visit to the Stellingzicht Secondary School

Ms C Abrahams, the Principal, and Mr W Maliwa, the Circuit Manager, were present at the visit.

2.1. Key aspects discussed at the school

Ms Abrahams provided an overview of the current state of the school's academic performance and identified areas that required improvement.

During the visit, the school reported that it had 715 learners enrolled. In 2021, the pass rate was 73%, however, there were challenges in specific subjects due to factors such as teacher availability and curriculum changes.

Ms Abrahams gave an overview of each subject that was an area of concern. The change by the school from CAT Lab to a Life Science curriculum that had been reestablished influenced learners' performance. Life Science was last offered at the school in 2019. They have put in place initiatives to assist learners, including ongoing interventions, teacher assistance, and attention focused on the afflicted learners.

She reported that Maths literacy was another area that needed extra focus; the school experienced issues with the new teacher and with fundamental Maths understanding, but those issues have been resolved. Through examination questions and quick activities, the school has emphasised the importance of quantitative and critical thinking abilities. After-school and weekend classes, the use of previous work, and routine supervision were introduced as part of the intervention initiatives.

It was reported that regarding the subject of business studies, learners experienced difficulties with terminology, reading comprehension, and question interpretation. The school's approach was to provide assistance with reading comprehension, question interpretation using exercises and examples from previous tests.

Learners in Grades 10 and 11 experienced problems such as technical barriers, and inadequate resources in subjects such as CAT, Agricultural Management Practice, and Business Studies. The school's interventions included Saturday classes, focused activities, and learner-centred approaches.

The school introduced a Medow Hub, in which learners can utilise computers to assist with research for assignments.

Many of their parents are from the surrounding farms and are seasonal workers, thus creating little to no parent involvement. The school addressed this by engaging parents on a one-on-one basis with the learner.

The school is part of the National Transport Scheme (NTS) which assists with transporting learners from various areas to the school.

3. Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the WCED assist in engaging the local industries surrounding the school so that the curriculum can be aligned to reflect local needs and opportunities for future employment.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the report outlines the challenges faced by the school in various subjects and presents comprehensive strategies to enhance learning and teaching culture. By addressing specific subject issues and engaging with local industry, the school aims to improve academic outcomes and better prepare learners for their future.

5. Acknowledgments

The Committee thanked the WCED, the principal and the teachers at the school visited.

The Standing Committee on Education (hereafter the Committee), having conducted oversight visits to the Kuilsriver Technical Secondary School in Kuilsriver and the Northpine Technical High School in, Northpine on 2 May 2023, report as follows:

The delegation

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

Baartman, DM (Chairperson of the Committee)
 Brinkhuis, MK (Al Jama-ah)
 Christians, FC (ACDP)
 Fry, C (DA)
 Plato, D (DA)
 Sayed, MK (ANC)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the committee:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

1. Overview

The Standing Committee on Education resolved to conduct oversight visits to two schools that achieved less than 60% on their National Senior Certificate (NSC) results during the 2022 academic year.

2. Visit to the Kuilsriver Technical School

Ms F Koning, the Acting Principal and Ms J L Williams, the Circuit Manager for the school were present during the visit.

2.1. Key aspects discussed at the school

During a recent visit, Ms Koning provided a comprehensive overview of the academic and instructional aspects the school. This report outlines the key highlights of the school's teaching and learning strategies, assessment methods, achievements, challenges, and future plans.

Currently, the school has an enrolment of 1171 learners, with a teacher-to-learner class ratio of 43:1. The school employs various teaching strategies, including both remedial and enrichment measures, to instil confidence in learners and help them achieve their intended learning outcomes. These strategies aim to address the diverse learning abilities and needs of the learners.

The school demonstrates a solid grasp of various forms of assessment techniques, continuously working to maximise learner achievement. Assessment tasks are marked, returned to learners in a timely manner, and followed by feedback sessions. The results from these assessments indicate outstanding levels of competence and achievement. The use of moderation policies ensures that assessment tasks are appropriately standardised and aligned with the set outcomes.

Educators at the school actively engage in professional development activities to enhance their pedagogical skills. The resulting creative teaching strategies are evident in learners' assessment results, reflecting ongoing efforts to stay abreast of new developments in education. The appointment of a new school principal and deputy principal is anticipated at the end of the quarter.

The school operates as a Quintile 4 school and is currently not accommodating learners from a Quintile 4 background. The school's focus revolves around teaching pass question papers, emphasising subject matter understanding and question paper comprehension. The introduction of additional afternoon classes has effectively assisted more than 60% of at-risk learners.

Concerns raised during the visit:

- Many learners struggle with transportation, particularly those commuting from areas such as Delft, West Bank, and Mfuleni. This transportation issue contributes to challenges related to gangsterism in these areas.
- The School Governing Body (SGB) needs to address the upgrading of school fencing. Moreover, there is a pressing need for infrastructure upgrades in various areas of the school.
- Securing commitment from parents regarding school fees remains a challenge, with a significant percentage of parents not paying the required fees. The Norms and Standards funding percentage is insufficient to meet the school's financial needs.
- There are insufficient textbooks available for all learners, which impacts the quality of teaching and learning.
- The School Governing Body is currently non-functional, with only one member.
- While the school has achieved stability in its Maths department, there is a shift towards offering only Technical Maths and Technical Science in the curriculum.

2.2. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the WCED should:

- 2.2.1. Investigate the possibility of changing the school's quintile system to a no-fee school to accommodate the learners of the school.
- 2.2.2. Assist the school by establishing the School Governing Body (SGB) so that it can function and be useful to the school.
- 2.2.3. Assist with the transportation of learners where possible.

3. Visit to the Northpine Technical High School

Dr AV Bleazard, the Acting Deputy Principal and Mr T Paulse, Circuit Manager, were present during the visit.

3.1. Key aspects discussed at the school

The School Improvement Plan (SIP), which focuses on teaching and learning quality to improve National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, is described in this oversight report. The report outlines the main initiatives, plans, and methods the school has taken to improve academic achievement. Principal Dr AV Bleazard, the Acting Deputy Principal Mr T Paulse, and Heads of Departments (HODs) from several subject areas serve as the SIP's leaders.

Learners who are at risk of dropping out are supported by a team of matric teachers that includes Ms February, Ms September, Mr Shumba, and others. Each ARL has a file with details of parent and learner conferences, individual principal conferences, study schedules, problems noted, and statements duly signed. District support programs like Specialised Learner and Educators Support Services (SLES) educate and encourage learners by showcasing the relationship between their progress and district outcomes.

The school held regular parent meetings and subsequent individual meetings. These meetings aim to engage parents in supporting their children's academic progress. There are weekly counselling sessions by the Usapho Foundation and additional sessions if indicated by ISLES.

As part of empowering, leadership, and motivation, the school has in Term 1 and 2, camps that were conducted by Mr G Fortuin (a youth worker) and Mr G February (an assembly member) to empower and motivate learners. This is in recognition of excellence in biweekly Maths and language tests in assemblies.

Analysis of Grade 12 and Grade 11 results to identify weak subjects, with a focus on Maths, Science, English, and EGD. Subject teachers submit improvement plans for their respective subjects. The Identification of At-Risk Learners (ARL) based on Grade 11 results is conducted.

Dr Bleazard informed the Committee that the school has developed an extra class timetable for Grade 12, focusing on weak areas and utilising examination questions in collaboration with Siyavula and Telematics for supplementary support. The school is also participating in the autumn school, winter school, and spring school programmes.

She briefed the Committee on the career guidance school offered which has information sessions and talks conducted by Ms Burton-Pye (Career Development) Arrangement of sessions with TVET colleges, CPUT, UWC/Stell/UCT, and industry representatives.

The school has exam skills and Subject-Specific Support with an emphasis on terminology and exam guidelines in specific subjects. Conducting mock examinations with at least three full session papers per subject. Regular biweekly tests in the NSC exam setting. Encouraging active recall and inference-making.

Other Key Initiatives and Actions include the engagement with learners who failed Term 1: to address concerns and provide necessary support, regular updates and revisions of improvement plans based on term 1 performance, and continuous monitoring of progress in subjects such as English HL, mathematics, science, and EGD.

It was reported that the School Governing Body (SGB) appointed a disciplinary committee and implemented class rules to manage discipline.

The school has bi-weekly data meetings, item analysis, and monitoring of learner performance. To encourage learners, there is recognition of top achievers in assemblies. As a proactive approach, the school engages early with Grade 9 learners to inform them about Grade 12 outcomes.

The school has implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, aiming to improve NSC results. Through various strategies, including psychosocial support, the school is striving to achieve 76% passing on the National Senior Matric results.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, oversight visits to the Kuilsrivier Technical School and Northpine Technical High School demonstrated a commitment to enhancing learner outcomes through a range of instructional strategies and assessment practices. Addressing the issues highlighted above while continuing to invest in the development of the learners will be key to ensuring a positive and supportive learning environment for all learners at both schools.

5. Acknowledgments

The Committee thanked the WCED, principals and teachers at the technical schools visited.

The Standing Committee on Education (hereafter the Committee), having conducted oversight visits to the Springdale Primary School and Summerdale High School in Mitchells Plain on 18 April 2023, reports as follows:

The delegation

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

Baartman, DM (Chairperson of the Committee)
Fry, C (DA)

Plato, D (DA)
Sayed, MK (ANC)

Apologies

Christians, FC (ACDP)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the committee:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

1. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Committee's oversight visit to two Rapid Build sites in Mitchells Plain. The visit was aimed to review the Rapid Build projects and the classroom expansion projects at the schools.

In November 2023, the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) MEC, Mr Maynier, announced that the WCED would be investing over R830 million in the construction of 842 new classrooms.

The construction of those new schools is the first time that the department has undertaken such a massive project, with 654 new classrooms built in various districts of the province. The projects that were carried out during the Rapid School Build program included the construction of 101 new classrooms at Atlantis, Delft, Lwandle, Hout Bay, and Century City. In November 2022, Mr Maynier revealed that the WCED had finish 164 classrooms for next year. He also said that a further 510 classrooms would be completed by January 2023.

The number of classrooms that the WCED had completed during the 2023 academic year reached 662 by January 31. Out of the total, 180 classrooms are currently in the process of being completed.

2. Visit to the Springdale Primary School in Mitchells Plain

The officials who attended the inspection were Ms J Brown, the school's Principal.

Ms W Horn, the Director for the Education District's Metro North, Mr R Andrews, the school's Circuit Manager, and Mr G Coetzee, the Director: Physical Resource Planning and Property Management accompanied the group.

2.1. Key aspects discussed at the school

During a recent visit, Ms Brown provided the Committee with a comprehensive update on the recent classroom expansion project at Springdale Primary School. This report outlines the key details and achievements of the project, highlighting the collaborative efforts that made it possible.

Springdale Primary School currently boasts an enrolment of 1 234 learners. To address the need for additional classroom space, the school embarked on a classroom expansion project. This initiative involved the creation of seven new classrooms and an ablution block, utilizing

the sustainable Moladi method of construction. The successful completion of these projects within the planned timelines demonstrates the school's commitment to providing enhanced facilities for its students. The site construction concluded on 29 September 2022, and the handover was completed on 6 May 2022. The cost of the build was R9,7 million.

The new classrooms are not only a testament to the commitment of the school but also represent a high standard of quality. These classrooms have been designed to provide adequate and comfortable spaces, capable of accommodating a significant number of learners. This development reflects the school's dedication to creating a conducive and effective learning environment.

Ms Brown emphasized that the success of the additional classrooms was made possible through the combined efforts of various stakeholders. The School Governing Body (SGB), contractors, community members, and officials of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) all played crucial roles in bringing this expansion to fruition. This collaborative spirit demonstrates a shared commitment to the well-being and education of the learners.

The new classrooms are primarily an extension of Springdale Primary School's facilities to accommodate Grade 7 learners. This strategic decision aims to create more available space for learners across the school. The cooperation between Springdale Primary School and Summerdale High School further exemplifies the community's dedication to providing quality education. As a result of this initiative, a total of 153 additional learners are now able to access education within the expanded facilities.

Out of the seven newly constructed classrooms, four are currently being used to accommodate Grade 7 learners. The remaining three classrooms have been assigned for specific purposes:

- Word Works Classroom: A dedicated space for enhancing language and literacy skills among students.
- Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) Classroom: A specialised classroom for learners with special educational needs, promoting inclusive education.
- LAY Councillors Classroom (This is psychosocial support provided by staff or volunteers who do not have a mental health background): A designated area for counselling and support services, emphasizing the holistic development of learners.

2. Visit to the Summerdale High Primary School in Mitchells Plain

The officials who attended the inspection were Mr R Rooi, the school's Deputy Principal.

Ms W Horn, the Director for the Education District's Metro North, Mr R Andrews, the school's Circuit Manager, and Mr G Coetzee, the Director: Physical Resource Planning and Property Management accompanied the group.

2.1. Key aspects discussed at the school

During a recent inspection, Mr Rooi provided the Committee with an overview of the ongoing developments and improvements at Summerdale High School. This report outlines the progress made in expanding the school's infrastructure, including classroom additions and other related activities.

Summerdale High School currently has an enrolment of 1171 learners. To address the growing learner population, a classroom expansion project was undertaken. This project encompassed the construction of five new classrooms and an ablution block, using the Moladi construction method. The additional classrooms were officially handed over on 6 May 2022, and the project was completed on 14 September 2022. Each of these new classrooms has the capacity to accommodate up to 50 learners, thereby contributing to the school's enhanced capacity.

In addition to the new classrooms, the school also received the necessary furniture to equip the expanded facilities. This step ensures that the learning environment is conducive and adequately equipped to support effective teaching and learning.

Despite the expansion efforts, the school faced challenges in accommodating a growing number of learners, particularly external learners. With more than 200 learners placed this academic year, the school plans to accommodate Grade 12 learners next year. However, limited available space raises concerns about the feasibility of this plan, given that Grade 11 classes are already at full capacity.

The construction of the new facilities commenced on 3 October 2022, and concluded on 16 January 2023. The entire construction process took 65 working days to complete. The total project cost amounted to R7,2 million, a budget that was successfully adhered to without exceeding its limits, as reported by Mr Coetzee.

Considering the restructuring, the school has generously donated its Grade 7 textbooks to Springdale Primary School. Summerdale High School no longer offers Grade 7 classes and has transitioned to accommodating learners from Grade 8 to Grade 11.

3. Concerns raised

During the inspection, several concerns were raised regarding the new facilities. Blockages in drainage systems were noted, requiring immediate attention. Settling cracks were observed above classroom entrances and within the classrooms themselves, indicating the need for these issues to be addressed and included in a snag list for the contractor to rectify. Furthermore, there were reports of some textbooks that were not received for Grade 11 learners. In the established facilities, the committee found a non-functional disabled toilet, loose taps in the boy's ablution block, and a need for regular cleaning and upkeep of the ablution blocks. The additional gate behind the new classrooms, the consumer lab and CAT lab are still urgent needed by the school and has been escalated to the Department by the committee.

4. Conclusion

The expansion of Springdale Primary School and Summerdale High School's infrastructure through the addition of new classrooms and facilities demonstrates both schools' commitment to meeting the needs of their growing learners' populations. The school's efforts signify its dedication to providing a conducive learning environment for its learners. Ongoing support will be vital to ensuring that the new facilities continue to serve their intended purpose effectively. The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visits.

5. Acknowledgments

The Committee thanked the WCED, principals and teachers of all the schools visited.