

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

TUESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2016

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1. The Standing Committee on Education, having conducted an unannounced oversight visit to Athlone School for the Blind in Bellville South on 24 May 2016, reports as follows:**

The Delegation

The delegation comprised of the following Members:

Kivedo, BD (DA) (Chairperson and the leader of the delegation)

Botha, LJ (DA)

MacKenzie, RD (DA)

Olivier, RT (ANC)

The following Parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Committee Co-ordinator

1. Introduction

As part of its oversight mandate, the Committee requested to be kept updated regarding progress with the maintenance of infrastructure, broadband access, upgrades and the daily management of all schools in the Province.

This oversight visit emanated from a Standing Committee recommendation after a Broadband access presentation. The Committee envisaged to see how this broadband access will enhance the learning abilities learners at schools. The main focus of this oversight visit is understanding and observe how learners with special needs can adapt to technology and how it can enrich life of special needs learners.

This report discusses the Committee's findings and recommendations gathered during the oversight visit.

2. Overview

The Committee conducted an oversight visit to Athlone School for the Blind on Tuesday, 24 May 2016. The visit started with a meeting with the Principal and the Departmental officials at 14:00. During the oversight visit, the Principal, Mr F Fisher, briefed the Committee on the status of the school. After the meeting, the Committee conducted a walk about on the school premises.

3. Findings

- 3.1. The school is recognized as a leading educational, skills training and vocational institution for visually impaired and multiple handicapped young people. The ultimate aim of the school is to ensure that the child develops into an independent and fulfilled adult with a sense of self-worth, who can take his/her rightful place in society.
- 3.2. The school's primary goal is to meet the educational, vocational and therapeutic needs of the learners so as to ensure that they have the appropriate skills, education and competencies to effectively participate in the broader social and economic world.
- 3.3. The school is both a day and boarding school for children from pre-school to grade 12 and accommodates blind, visually impaired and multiple disabled learners. The academic programme followed at the school is the same as in mainstream schools, complying with the curricular standards assessment processes, procedures and promotion requirements. Athlone School for the Blind offers a vocational training programme for learners who have difficulty coping with the normal scholastic programme. At the end of their vocational training the School assists the learner in securing suitable employment in the open market.
- 3.4. Currently the School has 405 learners, 45 educators, 13 non-CS educator support staff and 60 non-CS non-educator staff members. Our multi-disciplinary medical support team is involved with the learners from admission date onwards to ensure that he receives the best educational support and interventions suited to his needs.
- 3.5. Programmes offered:
 - Early Childhood Development Programme
 - Grade 1-12
 - Multi-handicapped Class
 - Special Education Needs Class
- 3.6. Vocational Training:
 - Switchboard Training
 - Upholstery
 - Cane Work and Basketry
 - Metal Work
 - Hand Work
 - Wood Work
 - Arts and Crafts
 - Marimba Production
 - Home Economics
 - Maintenance of properties and grounds

- 3.7. Onsite Support Services:
- Psychological and Therapeutic Support
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Clinical and Medical Support
 - Parental Guidance and Counseling
 - Orientation and Mobility Training
 - Specialized Residential Care
 - Daily Transport
 - Hostels for Boys and Girls
- 3.8. Outreach Programmes:
- Public Awareness workshops & presentations
 - School Visits
 - Counseling and support for newly blinded adults and the Aged
- 3.9. The broadband infrastructure is linked to each classroom within the school and the wifi access is available within the school grounds.
- 3.10. One of the most recent technology to assist and enhance the life of a blind learner is the Apex Blind Note, which has a built-in options are at your fingertips to access Web pages, download e-mails or retrieve files from your network. It allows the convenience of wireless accessories and connectivity to keyboards. The device can be linked to printers, embossers, hard drives, flash drives and more. It is a snap to connect to one of the three available USB ports. Utilizing the Apex Blind Note's keyboard to navigate with a computer screen reader using the Braille Terminal Mode.
- 3.11. The school has smart classrooms which utilizes the interactive board to assist with those learners that are visually impaired. Not only assisting those visually impaired but also those learners to that they may interact with voice promotes via website access.

5. Conclusion

The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visit and took cognisance of the great achievements of the school and experienced how technology can improve the life of learners that is blind or who has visual impaired.

6. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the school for its willingness to share valuable information with the Standing Committee.

2. The Standing Committee on Education, having conducted an unannounced oversight visit to Jan Kriel School in Kuils River on 12 April 2016, reports as follows:

The Delegation

The delegation comprised of the following Members:

Kivedo, BD (DA) (Chairperson and the leader of the delegation)
 Botha, LJ (DA)
 MacKenzie, RD (DA)

Olivier, RT (ANC)

The following Parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:
Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Committee Co-ordinator

1. Introduction

As part of its oversight mandate, the Committee requested to be kept updated regarding progress with the maintenance of infrastructure, upgrades and the daily management of all schools in the Province.

During the Committee meeting of 16 February 2016, the Committee was informed about the Jan Kriel School's exceptional accomplishments. The Committee resolved to undertake an oversight visit to the school. The aim of the visit was to assess the infrastructure problems and the general challenges faced by the school.

This report discusses the Committee's findings and recommendations gathered during the oversight visit.

2. Overview

The Committee conducted an oversight visit to Jan Kriel School on Tuesday, 12 April 2016. The visit started with a meeting with the Principal and the Departmental officials at 14:00. During the oversight visit, the Principal, Mr G Odendaal, briefed the Committee on the status of the school. After the meeting, the Committee conducted a walk about on the school premises.

3. Findings

- 3.1. Jan Kriel School offers tuition to learners from the Readiness Grade up to Grade 12. The curriculum offered is according to the National Revised Curriculum Statement, the same as that of mainstream schools. At the end of Grade 12 learners write the external Senior Certificate Examination of the National Education Department.
- 3.2. Roughly two-thirds of the learner population of Jan Kriel School are Afrikaans speaking and about one third are English speaking. The School strives to unite English and Afrikaans speaking learners in a close community where the language and culture of both groups are respected and promoted.
- 3.3. Grades 1 to 9 learners are grouped according to their language medium of instruction. From Grades 10 to 12 Afrikaans and English speaking learners are grouped together for their subjects of choice.
- 3.4. Class groups are significantly smaller than in mainstream schools.
- 3.5. Teaching techniques are adapted to meet the special educational needs of learners.
- 3.6. An occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and a physiotherapist address perceptual, language and physical backlogs experienced by learners in close cooperation with the class educators.
- 3.7. Learners with serious reading deficiencies are assisted by providing reading and learning material on MP3 players and helping them to utilize this aid. Tests and examination material are also presented to those learners orally or on audio also when writing the external Senior Certificate examination in Grade 12.

- 3.8. Learners who have serious difficulties in communicating their knowledge in writing are assisted by educators and specially trained scribes to do oral tests or examinations, called amanuensis. Extra time is granted to learners with writing difficulties or slow writing speed.
- 3.9. Two nursing sisters are available to assist learners in need of medical care and supervision to help monitor the regular use and effectiveness of medication (e.g. for epilepsy and ADHD) and to liaise with educators, medical professionals and parents.
- 3.10. The services of an electroencephalogram (EEG) technician are available at the school, should EEG examinations be requested by a paediatrician, in order to assist with the effective control and stabilisation of epilepsy.
- 3.11. Three psychologists handle admissions and discharges of learners. They counsel learners regarding personal and scholastic problems, subject choices, job opportunities and study methods. They also offer guidance to parents and coordinate the functioning of the multi-disciplinary team at the school. A learner who needs regular or intensive therapy is usually referred to a private psychologist or psychiatrist.
- 3.12. A social worker gives guidance to parents on aspects outside the school environment that may affect the well-being of our learners. The social workers handle applications for subsidies as well.
- 3.13. The physiotherapist, together with an occupational therapist, offer therapy, job preparation (for senior learners) and specialised attention to their physically disabled learners, including those in wheelchairs. They are also involved as trainers and organisers of sport for the disabled at the school as well as on a national level.
- 3.14. Learners who benefit most from placement at Jan Kriel School are learners who, despite adequate cognitive abilities as to comprehension, reasoning, abstract thinking, verbal expression and retention, experience barriers to development and learning.

These specific barriers may manifest as:

- Significant lags in specific perceptual abilities needed for formal learning.
- Significant lags in language development (reading, spelling and/or written language).
- Significant lags in numeracy.
- The inability to maintain concentration and complete tasks due to attention deficit and/or hyperactivity.
- Whose specific learning needs could not be significantly met by inclusive mainstream education.
- With sensory impairments, e.g. visual or auditory, who could benefit in the school situation once the impairment has been satisfactorily addressed by appropriate apparatus.
- With medical and physical conditions like epilepsy and physical disabilities which can be accommodated within the infrastructure of Jan Kriel School.

4. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDED that Jan Kriels School's methodology and technic be utilised as a best practice for schools with special needs learners in the Province.

5. Conclusion

The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visit and took cognisance of the great achievements of the school.

6. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the school for its willingness to share valuable information with the Standing Committee.

3. Annual Report of the Standing Committee on Education for the 2015/2016 financial year ended 31 March 2016, as follows:

Members

The Committee comprise of the following members:

Kivedo, BD (Chairperson) (DA)
 Botha, LJ (DA)
 MacKenzie, RD (DA)
 Olivier, RT (ANC)
 Christians, FC (ACDP)

Alternate members:

Dugmore, CM (DA)
 Mitchell, DG (DA)
 Wenger, MM (DA)
 Wiley, MGE (DA) (Chief Whip)

1. Introduction

The mandate of the Committee is to:

- 1.1 Maintain oversight over the Western Cape Education Department, the way in which the Department perform their responsibilities including the implementation of legislation and to hold the Executive Authority accountable.
- 1.2 To consider and report on legislation, other matters and the Annual Reports and matters referred to it by the Speaker.
- 1.3 In fulfilment of its mandate the Committee must:
 - 1.3.1 Facilitate public participation and involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Committee.
 - 1.3.2 Conduct its business in a fair, open and transparent manner.
 - 1.3.3 Promote co-operative governance.
 - 1.3.4 Report regularly to the House.

2 Reporting Department

- 2.1 Western Cape Education Department

3 Overview of Committees Activities

No of Committee activities	9
No of Public Hearings	4
No of International study tours	0
No of Oversight visits	5
No of Cluster visits	1
No of Provincial bills considered	3
No of NCOP bills considered	0
Workshops/conferences attended	0

4 Oversight activities

- 4.1 In its second year of the 5th Parliament the Committee strived to focus on the linkages between the respective Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, Quarterly Performance Reports and Annual Reports of the Western Cape Education Department (hereafter referred to as the Department).
- 4.2 The Committee commenced 2015/2016 by examining the budget of the Department with a special focus on safer schools. The Committee also focused on the Department's indicator to developing and implementing a five year teacher development plan and improve administration and other support to schools. This gave the Committee an insight of the five year plan set out by the Department.
- 4.3 The Committee continued its programme by inviting African Voices, an external Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), to brief the Committee on the inclusion of isiXhosa as an additional language at schools.
- 4.4 As part of the Committee's oversight function, the Committee conducted an insightful visit to the Safer School Call Centre in Cape Town. The visit provided a comprehensive plan of the Safer School Call Centre which responds to the learners, parents and teachers in need of immediate, online communication regarding safety, crime, abuse, and a variety of school-related issues. The Committee also undertook an oversight visit to Cedar Primary School in Bonteheuwel.
- 4.5 In the third quarter of the Financial Year the Committee, together with five other standing committees, undertook a Social Cluster Visit Week from 2 to 5 June 2015. The visit week focused on various social matters related to Education, Community Safety, Social Development, Health, as well as Cultural Affairs and Sport. One of the most pertinent oversight visits which emanated from a recommendation taken on the Social Cluster Visit Week in June 2016, was to revisit the Nuwe Hoop Sentrum in Worcester. This school required a more in-depth visit and the Committee provided recommendations to improve the quality of living in the school's hostel. These oversight visits assisted the Committee in getting a better understanding of activities in the various districts with regards to school and structures within the Department.
- 4.6 During engagements with the Department, the Committee examined various relevant matters ranging from truancy, absenteeism of learners to issues linked to technical schools. The Committee attended the unveiling of the E-Portal launch which aims to revolutionise teaching, learning, school governance and

administration. This E-Portal will give learners and parents the guidance, assistance and knowledge to deal with the curriculum.

- 4.7 The Committee examined the Annual Report of the Western Cape Education Department 2014/2015. This discussion provided the Committee with a better understanding of the 2015/2016 Annual Performance Plan targets set.
- 4.8 The Committee ended the 2015/2016 financial year with the annual debriefing on the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination results for 2015. The Committee then resolved to regularly monitor schools that achieved a pass rate of less than 60% and to monitor the Improvement Plans for those schools.

5. Legislation

The Committee deliberated and reported on its consideration of the following pieces of legislation referred to it:

- 5.1 Vote 5 in the Schedule to the *Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill* [B 4–2015]
- 5.2 Vote 5 in the Schedule to the *Western Cape Appropriation Bill* [B 2–2016]
- 5.3 Vote 5 in the Schedule to the *Western Cape Additional Adjustments Appropriation Bill* (2015/16 Financial Year) [B 3–2016]

6 Facilitation of public involvement and participation

In line with its mandate to facilitate public participation as part of the legislative process, the Committee held three public hearings on the consideration of the *Western Cape Adjustment Appropriation Bill* [B 4–2015]; the *Western Cape Appropriation Bill* [B 2–2016]; and the *Western Cape Additional Adjustments Appropriation Bill* (2015/16 Financial Year) [B 3–2016] and one public hearing on the Annual Report of the Department. The dates for the hearings were advertised in mainstream newspapers in the Western Cape.

7 Financial particulars

The Standing Committee on Education was allocated an amount of R129 000 for the Financial Year 2015/2016.

At the close of the 2015/2016 Financial Year, expenditure attributed to the activities of the Standing Committee on Education accumulated to an amount of R77 223.85.

PARLEMENT VAN DIE PROVINSIE WES-KAAP

AANKONDIGINGS, TERTAFELLEGGINGS EN KOMITEEVERSLAE

DINSDAG, 31 AUGUSTUS 2016

KOMITEEVERSLAE