

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT



REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ON ITS UNANNOUNCED OVERSIGHT VISITS TO TWO SCHOOLS IN THE METRO NORTH EDUCATION DISTRICT AREA

18 AUGUST 2020

REPORT

The Standing Committee on Education having conducted unannounced oversight visits to the Marconi Bean Primary School and Sinenjongo High School in Milnerton on 18 August 2020, reports as follows:

The delegation

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

Botha, LJ (DA) (Chairperson of the Committee and the delegation)

Allen, R (DA)

Bosman, G (DA)

Christians, F (ACDP)

Sayed, K (ANC)

Apologies

Apologies were rendered on behalf of Members: Kama, M (ANC) and Makamba-Botya, N (EFF)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:

Ms. W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer

1. Overview

The purpose of this visit was to allow members to assess how schools are dealing with the COVID-19 safety regulations and to check if all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was in place.

The Standing Committee on Education resolved to conduct the oversight visits to inspect the situation at schools in the Western Cape following the decision to open schools for other grades during the COVID 19 epidemic.

2. Visit to the Marconi Bean Primary School in Milnerton on Tuesday, 25 August 2020

Mrs. Plaatjies, the Principal of the school received the Committee.

2.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school

- 2.1.1. The school is situated in a residential area. There is only one entrance to the school that is remote controlled. Two security personnel are posted at the school on a 24/7 basis. There is an alarm system but there is no CCTV camera system. The school's perimeter consists of a 1.8m palisade fencing. There is adequate ablution facilities.
- 2.1.2. This school has 39 classrooms and approximately 20 teachers. All windows are fitted with burglar bars and all outside doors are fitted with reinforced steel gates.
- 2.1.3. The crime rate is very high in the area, with mainly housebreakings, theft, vandalism, domestic violence, and gangsterism.
- 2.1.4. The school also hosts a soup kitchen on its premises every day.
- 2.1.5. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic all security officials and visitors to the school wear cloth face masks.

- 2.1.6. All officials and visitors visiting the school sanitize their hands after each interaction with staff.
- 2.1.7. The practice of social distancing (being more than 1.5m apart) is applied by all entering the school grounds.
- 2.1.8. The body temperature of all staff members who enter the school is taken in a non-invasive manner by using an infra-red thermometer.
- 2.1.9. The school received Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which includes masks, hand sanitizers, and bleach. The school entrance displayed signs and posters indicating “No mask, No entry”. Learners received two face masks from the school as part of the PPE. The only item that the school did not receive is the plastic apron for the kitchen staff.
- 2.1.10. The school has transformed a classroom into an isolation area for those learners and staff who have a high temperature, do not feel well or tested positive for COVID-19.
- 2.1.11. In July 2020, the school was set alight during protest actions in the area. Two classrooms were damaged.
- 2.1.12. The school made provision for small classes in order to maintain social distance in its classrooms.
- 2.1.13. The school is in need of a school hall.
- 2.1.14. The school is registered as a Quintile 4 but is situated in a very poor community. There has been a request for the Quintile status to be changed to a no-fee school, but as yet, no feedback has been received. Given this status, the school cannot receive the National Feeding Scheme funds, but this has not hindered the school from feeding 450 of its 1800 learners daily. The school attempts to provide two meals a day but there are times when only one meal can be offered.
- 2.1.15. The school has a waiting list of more than 100 learners from Eastern Cape to start schooling in the new schooling year.
- 2.1.16. Two teachers tested positive for COVID-19 when the school reopened in August 2020.

2.2. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDS that:

- 2.2.1. The WCED investigates the possibility of changing the Quintile status of the school, which would allow more learners to be fed through the National Feeding Scheme.
- 2.2.2. The Department of Transport and Public Works must prioritise the rehabilitation of the classrooms that were damaged during the protests in the area.

2.3. Information requested

- 2.3.1. The Committee REQUESTED the WCED to provide it with a report on the reasons why the schools has not received its stock of plastic aprons.

3. Visit to the Sinenjongo High School in Milnerton on Tuesday, 25 August 2020

Mrs. OP Ponote, the Principal of the school, received the Committee.

3.1. Key aspects pertaining to the walkabout at the school

- 3.1.1. This school is opposite an informal settlement in an Industrial area. It is surrounded by palisade fencing and has one pedestrian gate and the main entrance gate. This school is fully enclosed. It is fitted with an alarm system which is dysfunctional due to vandalism.

- 3.1.2. There is one private security during the day and three at night. This school is in a very volatile area, the crime rate is very high in this area due to gangsterism, substance abuse, domestic violence, housebreaking, theft, vandalism, and high political interference.
- 3.1.3. The school has adequate demarcated parking and ablution facilities. All external windows and doors are fitted with steel burglar bars and steel gates.
- 3.1.4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all visitors to the school are required to wear cloth face masks.
- 3.1.5. The practice of social distancing (Being more than 1.5m apart) is applied by all entering the school grounds and classrooms.
- 3.1.6. The body temperature of all staff members who enter the school is taken in a non-invasive manner by using an infra-red thermometer.
- 3.1.7. The school has received its Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which includes masks, hand sanitizers, and bleach. The school entrance displayed signs and posters indicating “No mask, No entry”. Each learner received two face masks from the school as part of the PPE.
- 3.1.8. The school is newly built and was handed over in 2015.
- 3.1.9. The school has transformed one of its classrooms into an isolation area for those learners or staff who have a high temperature, do not feel well or test positive for COVID-19.
- 3.1.10. This school has a hall that can accommodate approximately 500 people. This hall was set alight during the protests in the area.
- 3.1.11. There are 192 learners enrolled for Matric, of which two have indicated that they will not be returning to school.
- 3.1.12. The school makes provision for smaller classrooms in order to maintain social distancing in its classrooms.
- 3.1.13. The school achieved a Matric pass rate of 78% and above over the past three years.
- 3.1.14. The school opens for study over the weekends and after school hours.

3.2. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the WCED and the Department of Transport and Public Works prioritises the rehabilitation of the school hall and the kitchen which were damaged during the protests in the area.

4. Conclusion

The Committee successfully concluded its unannounced oversight visits and took cognisance of the urgency of the challenges experienced by the schools that were visited. It was evident that the schools needed the Committee’s support to succeed against the challenges noted in this report. The Committee would also like to acknowledge the outstanding initiative taken to prepare staff, learners and parents for the reopening of the schools after the two months spent in Lockdown as part of the National Disaster.

5. Acknowledgments

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



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MS LJ BOTHA, MPP

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
 WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**

DATE: 17 November 2020

