



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo IeNtshona Koloni

REPORT OF THE SAFER SCHOOLS CALL CENTRE

Report of the Standing Committee on Education, having conducted an oversight visit to the Safer School Call Centre on 21 July 2015, 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)
Christians, FC (ACDP)
MacKenzie, RD (DA)
Olivier, RT (ANC)

The following Parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa; Committee Co-ordinator

1. Introduction

The Committee resolved to undertake an oversight visit to Safer Schools Call Centre in Cape Town. During the Committee's meeting of 17 February 2015, whereby the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) briefed the Committee on their Safer School's Programme for 2015/2016. During this meeting the Committee resolved to embark on an oversight visit to the Department's Safer School Call Centre, which was highlighted by the Department as "a well effective project" which assists all schools across the Western Cape.

As part of its oversight mandate, the Committee requested to be constantly informed of the progress of the Department's programmes and projects.

In addition to the above mandate the committee furthermore investigates and conducts oversight over the Western Cape Education Department's programmes. The Committee envisages that these oversight visits will assist the Committee in getting a clear picture of activities in the various areas, with regards to schools and programmes pertaining to the WCED.

3. Overview

The Committee conducted an oversight visit to the Safer School Call Centre on Tuesday, 21 July 2015. The visit started with a meeting at 14:00 in the Safer School Call Centre in Cape Town, with the Department officials. (Please see attached list of persons who were in attendance). During the oversight visit, officials from the Department briefed the Committee on the status of the Call Centre and accompanied the Committee on a walk-about informing the Committee about the various issues and emergency the Call Centre handles on daily bases.

4 Findings

- 4.1. The WCED's opened its Call Centre on the 9 March 2000 in response to the learners', parents' and teachers' need for immediate, online communication regarding safety, crime and abuse, and a variety of school-related issues.
- 4.2. The Safer Schools Call Centre operates a toll free number.
- 4.3. The Call Centre provides immediate, free, online communications to learners, parents and teachers needing help, guidance or information regarding education-related issues.
- 4.4. The Centre opens from Monday to Friday, from 07:30 to 16:00.
- 4.5. The Centre provides a service in the three official languages of the Western Province namely English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.
- 4.6. The Centre serves as a coordinating Centre from which referrals are made to appropriate agencies and from which vital information is disseminated to the relevant.
- 4.7. The current operations provide callers with online defusing debriefing in crisis calls and, in non-crisis calls, are directed, where necessary, to the counseling agencies of the Western Cape Education Department, non-governmental agencies and community-based organisations. The following are a few of what the calls pertain to:
 - 4.7.1. Gang violence, which includes the incidence of gang violence and the subsequent disruption of normal teaching and learning have reached alarming proportions in some of the areas in the Western Cape. The Call Centre will ensure that schools receive support with regards to gang presence on school premises.
 - 4.7.2. Trauma, which the Call Centre will provide assistance in the event of any traumatic incidents.
 - 4.7.3. School crime response to all incidents of school crime by offering advice on the procedures that need to be followed and informing the relevant authorities.
 - 4.7.4. Abuse, which includes child abuse in communities and in educational institutions, is a serious problem. All abuse calls are handled sensitively.
- 3.1.8. The Call Centre has a monitoring and evaluation system in place to evaluate the working being done and to follow up on the calls and matters registered by callers.

4. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDED that acknowledgement be sent in writing on the sterling work that is being done by the Safer Schools Call Centre of the WCED, which is operated by only five staff members.

5. Conclusion

The Committee successfully concluded its oversight visit and took cognisance of the excellent work being conducted by this initiative of Western Cape Education Department.

6. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the Western Cape Education Department for their willingness to share valuable information with the Standing Committee.

