

For attention:

Mr Lebogang Maile

Gauteng: MEC for Education, Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation

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and

Head of Department: Gauteng Department of Education

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CC:

Minister of Basic Education, Me Siviwe Gwarube minister@dbe.gov.za

Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Basic Education (Gauteng Legislature)

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URGENT LETTER: NON-PAYMENT OF SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS AND THE DIRECT IMPACT ON TEACHERS, SCHOOLS AND LEARNERS

Honourable MEC and Head of Department,

The Solidarity Teachers' Network represents teachers across South Africa who are committed, on a daily basis, to delivering quality education under increasingly difficult circumstances. We address this letter to you out of serious concern regarding the Gauteng Department of Education's failure to pay the required school allocations to public schools timeously and in full.

This failure is not merely an administrative matter. It has a direct and disruptive impact on the work of teachers, the functioning of schools, and the quality of education that learners receive every day.

1. Legal and statutory framework

The State's duty to fund public schools is not optional. In terms of section 34(1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the State must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis. In addition, section 35 provides that norms and standards for school funding must regulate the equitable distribution of state funding.

Although governing bodies may, in terms of section 36(1), take reasonable measures within their means to supplement school resources, this supplementary role cannot replace the Department's primary responsibility. When the Department fails to pay school allocations timeously and in full, it directly undermines the statutory funding framework applicable to public schools.

2. The non-payment of funds does not affect schools alone — it affects teachers' ability to do their work

When schools do not receive the funding to which they are entitled, immediate pressure arises in relation to their daily operations. In many schools, staffing structures, support services, resources and basic operating costs are partially sustained through these allocations.

Where funding is not available, schools are forced to make impossible choices:

- contract posts and support staff cannot be funded sustainably;
- payment to staff employed by the school comes under pressure;
- essential academic support and administrative capacity are weakened; and
- teachers are expected to take on more responsibilities without adequate support or resources.

The practical result is that teachers are expected to do more with less, while the system on which they depend fails them.

3. Teachers already carry an excessive burden

Teachers are already under severe pressure: overcrowded classrooms, administrative demands, behavioural challenges, curriculum responsibilities and increasing emotional strain. When a department fails to fund schools timeously, this pressure is intensified further.

Schools that cannot meet their financial obligations cannot:

- purchase sufficient learning and teaching support material;
- attend to maintenance timeously;
- manage municipal accounts and basic services with certainty; or
- retain the personnel necessary for the school to function effectively.

This means that the burden ultimately falls on the teacher in the classroom, who is still expected to maintain stability, discipline and academic progress despite structural shortcomings.

4. Learners ultimately pay the price

When schools are financially weakened, teaching and learning are inevitably affected. Fewer resources, less support and increased uncertainty within the school environment lead to a diminished educational experience for learners.

Learners have a constitutional right to basic education. This right is threatened not only when schools cannot keep their doors open, but also when the quality of teaching is systematically undermined by the State's failure to meet its funding obligations.

Every delayed payment:

- undermines the quality of education;
- increases pressure on teachers;
- impedes school management; and
- prejudices learners' educational outcomes.

5. Schools cannot meet staffing obligations without timeous funding

It is of particular concern that, in many cases, schools depend on additional staff funded from their own resources or budgets in order to offer a sustainable educational programme. When school allocations are not paid, the ability to retain such staff is seriously threatened.

Schools cannot plan responsibly, manage contracts or remunerate staff if the Department does not fulfil its legal and financial obligations timeously.

This uncertainty:

- destabilises schools' staffing plans;
- places employees in a vulnerable position; and
- threatens the continuity of teaching and learning.

6. The Department's responsibility must be fulfilled urgently

The State's duty to fund public schools equitably is a fundamental condition for the proper functioning of the public education system. When this responsibility is neglected, it becomes not merely a budgetary issue, but a workplace, education and rights issue.

The Solidarity Teachers' Network therefore makes a serious appeal to the Department to address this situation with the urgency it requires.

7. Our requests

We call on the Gauteng Department of Education to:

1. immediately pay all outstanding school allocations to the affected schools;
2. confirm in writing within 7 days when the outstanding payments will be made;
3. provide clarity on the steps that will be taken to prevent further delays;
4. acknowledge the direct impact that this non-payment has on teachers' working conditions and learners' education; and
5. ensure that schools are placed in a position to meet their staffing, resource and teaching obligations on a sustainable basis.

8. Conclusion

Teachers cannot be expected to carry the burden of a system that fails to fund schools properly. When schools do not receive the necessary financial support, the consequences affect staff, teaching, stability and ultimately every learner in the classroom.

The Department's failure to pay timeously and in full is therefore not merely an administrative shortcoming — it is a direct threat to the quality and sustainability of public education in Gauteng.

We trust that this matter will receive the urgent attention it deserves.

Yours faithfully,



Johan Botha

Head of Solidarity Teachers' Network