

Fix our Schools!

A Community Campaign for a Safe and Functional School Environment

Memorandum for: Ms. Sindi Lingela

Deputy Director-General

Institutional Development and Coordination

Secretary: Sybil Birtles

Tel: 021 467 2530

Fax: 021 467 2198

Private Bag 9114, Cape Town 8000

10 October 2008

Dear Ms. Lingela

Equal Education is a community organisation working for educational quality and equality in South African public schools. Equal Education has been working with learners, teachers and parents in Khayelitsha schools over the last 8 months.

Equal Education has identified areas where we can help improve the environment in which young people learn and teachers teach. One of these is the school premises, which includes school buildings as well as surrounding grounds. This is key to enabling the delivery of education and upholding the morale of learners and teachers.

There are many aspects of our schools which are unacceptable. Some schools have overcrowding, with over 50 learners per class, which requires the building of additional schools. In some schools there is a lack of textbooks, library and multi-media facilities. Many schools lack sports and extra-mural facilities. Equal Education has proposals to improve these and other areas.

One school with which we work closely, Luhlaza High School, has over 500 broken windows. According to learners and teachers at the school, these windows have remained broken for the last 4 years. It is demoralising, unsafe and extremely cold and difficult for both learners and teachers to concentrate in such an environment.

Learners often do not have channels to raise their concerns about the conditions under which they have to attend school. For this reason, the members and supporters of Equal Education are gathered to present this memorandum today.

Equal Education acknowledges the work being carried out by the Western Cape Education Department. We recognise that there are many schools in the Western Cape that require attention. We have appreciated the Department's willingness to meet with us and work with us to address these problems.

The Department has scheduled routine maintenance at the school for September 2010. This means two more winters in those cold and windy classrooms. To wait until 2010 is unreasonable. 500 broken windows is an urgent situation. Between Luhlaza High

School and Equal Education, we have secured and raised R10,000 to fix these windows with safety glass. We are here to ask the Department for an additional R7,000. We have received competitive quotations from four companies and can confirm the costs of this job.

We would like to thank MEC Yusuf Gabru and Director Lindela Sopotela for the productive meeting we held with them on 29 September and for their determination to assist with this issue. We would also like to thank you, Ms Sindy Lingela, for being with us today. We appreciate the accessible approach of government in regard to this issue, and we expect nothing less than this in the future.

Adequate and functional school facilities enable the realisation of the Constitutional right to education. Communities everywhere realise it is their children's education, which offers a way out of poverty and illiteracy. Equal Education pledges to do everything possible to involve communities in building a culture of learning, in rebuilding the education system, and in assisting Government, teachers, unions, business and civil society to redress inequality in education.

Signed by:

Yoliswa Dwane
Director: Policy, Communications & Research
EQUAL EDUCATION

Zukiswa Vuka
Gr 12 learner Luhlaza High School, Khayelitsha
Member of EQUAL EDUCATION

Nokubonga Ralayo
Gr 12 learner Chris Hani High School, Khayelitsha

Received on 10 Oct 2008 by:

Ms. Sindi Lingela
Deputy Director-General
Institutional Development and Coordination
Western Cape Education Department