



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**To: All Media**

**Att: News Editors**

**For immediate release**

**14 January 2020**

### **MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF READINESS FOR GAUTENG SCHOOLS REOPENING**

Welcome ladies and gentlemen and thank you for attending the media briefing.

Our intention is to provide an update on the admissions in public schools; state of readiness for the 2020 academic year.

#### **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 2020**

Schools in Gauteng reopen tomorrow, 15 January 2020. We believe that all has been done to ensure a smooth start to the first day of school and that learning and teaching will commence without any disruptions accordingly. This is the first year, were we implement the newly gazetted Admissions Regulations as per the Constitutional Court ruling that, GDE is responsible for admissions of Learners at our Public Ordinary schools.

To mark the first day of school the Premier, Mr David Makhura, together with MEC for Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi and MEC for Infrastructure Development, Mr Tasneem Motara will hand over the newly constructed, Noorgisig Primary School, Johannesburg North District.

This is an important milestone, as the school is among our newly designed and constructed mega school infrastructure, aimed at improving the quality of education in township schools. The school is a green technology infrastructure, which boasts state of the art facilities such as 6 classrooms per grade (42), a Grade R block with 4 classrooms, 2 smart science labs, 2 smart multi-purpose rooms, dining hall and many more, at a cost of **R 110 307 607.30**

It is important to note that previous old building was built of asbestos and as such is one of a few Asbestos schools to be eradicated in the Province soon.

“This is indeed exciting moment for us as we undo, what apartheid did to our people, our community deserve better, this is to restore dignity of our people” said MEC Lesufi.

In due course we will also be launching, Golden Gardens Primary and Tshepong Primary School.

In addition, Members of the Executive Council (MECs) will be deployed to various schools across the province to oversee the smooth running of the first day of school. They will assess conditions in each of the schools to which they are deployed, as well as consult with communities on education related matters. In addition, for the first time, they will also assess Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres, as this function will now be a responsibility of the department of education.

The non-negotiables, namely:

All learners are in class, on time, learning with the necessary stationery and textbooks;

All educators are in class, on time, teaching with the correct resources.

## **ADMISSIONS PLACEMENT**

Our parents are accustomed to the online admission application process, during this period we received many applications on the first day more than all other years, which means that parents are getting used to the system.

We applaud parents who applied on time for Grade 1 and 8 online admissions for 2020.

We have received and processed about 700 appeals which were compounded by implementation of the new Admissions Regulations. All appellants should receive their responses by 14 January 2019. All appeals were carefully considered and fairly adjudicated. The outcome of each appeal is based on compliance with Admissions Regulations and availability of space at schools.

Our challenge is capacity than the system, parents are reluctant to accept offered spaces for different reasons.

Unfortunately, we can only accommodate a certain number of Learners at our schools and as such call upon parents to accept placement offers by the as these are the only spaces available at some schools.

### **Late Applications**

The department will tomorrow, 15 January 2020 open the system for late online applications, and close on the 24th January 2020. ONLY schools with capacity will be available in the system during this period. Applicants will provisionally be placed, until they submit documents to the school accordingly. No objections or appeals will be entertained.

Based on the stats on the System we have a total of **912** PRIMARY Schools and **374** HIGH schools with space available for LATE APPLICATIONS.

All Districts are operating as walk-in centres to assist parents with applications from 15– 24 January 2020.

Parents who have not submitted Documents are advised to visit Districts for placement, Districts are to place applicants and send parents to identified schools with available space to submit documents.

Parents who need assistance are encouraged to visit the district offices.

The most common challenges reported at District offices include the following:

- Follow-ups on appeal outcomes
- Applicants requesting transfers to schools that are no longer available in the system due to capacity.
- Relocations and placement in inner grades

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH CURRO SCHOOLS**

To mitigate to capacity challenges, we are administratively, finalising a partnership with Curro to accommodate our children at their schools. These were looked at in line with the fee structure of Curro Schools compared to that of public schools, which in principle will be a discounted fee. The distance between the Curro schools and the public schools, and the possibility of using scholar transport.

Parents should still be given an option through negotiations as some of the learners were placed in primary schools based on the parents work address in the previous dispensation of Regulations.

We, are however also interaction with other private schools, to assist us. Indeed, we are indebted to Curro for the willingness to assist us in this quagmire.

## **CAPACITY INTERVENTION**

We have serious capacity challenges in the following Districts: Tshwane West, Tshwane South, Johannesburg Central, Johannesburg East, Johannesburg North, Ekurhuleni South and as such we are finalizing the process of providing temporarily accommodation in a form of mobile units at some affected schools as a matter of urgency, this will also be extended to some schools that were vandalized or burned by the community.

As another method of Intervention, we had to negotiate with some schools to increase their capacity to accommodate more learners and such schools, will be prioritized in provisioning of mobile units.

It must be noted that, Unplanned financial implications of admitting late applicants are substantial. Additional funding will have to be found to finance educator salaries, additional classrooms, learning and teaching support materials and school furniture. Procurement processes are also not instant but can take weeks to complete.

We are aware that some parents have lost hope and angry at our officials at District offices. Some even resort to violence. This, is to assure parents that, the department is doing everything possible to accommodate all learners. We appeal for patience, calm and cooperation in the interest of learners.

## **PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

For the first time, this year 2020, we will announce Primary school performance for the period 2019, which will assist us to improve overall performance of our secondary schooling accordingly.

To improve poor performance at primary schools, we will introduce support programmes to ensure an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning:

Supporting schools to ensure implementation of the Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Strategy to improve performance and outcomes in Numeracy and Literacy.

- The programme has a focused intervention for the Senior Phase
- The focus on Mathematics and Literacy is geared to address poor performance
- Strengthening and implementing the LITNUM Strategy ensures targeted intervention and support

In addition, we will enhance Management training to build capacity of SMT's and training of district officials to support schools and educators accordingly.

## **LTSM/ FURNITURE**

The department can confirm that the delivery of Volume 1 Workbooks is at 100%, we must also note that, some of our schools are migrating to using e-Books and as such they don't order text books any longer. FULL ICT schools Uses e-books. Some schools have sufficient has sufficient textbooks, in some instances Parents buy textbooks.

Furniture deliveries are prioritised as follows: new schools, additional classrooms and backlogs at existing schools.

Allocated budget for 2019/20 is R138 719 000,00 - R9 678 734,50 (Accruals) = R129 040 265,50

Orders to the value of R73.026 million has been placed for procuring learner and educator furniture.

During December holidays, Tokelo Secondary School's classes and admin block were burnt down. Subsequently, the following school furniture had to be delivered to ensure readiness for the first day of school:

1200 secondary chairs, 400 secondary desks, 6 Educator desks, 3 Oak desks and 3 high back chairs for principal and deputies, 36 chairs for staff room.

However, we have identified a school in the neighbouring area to in the interim accommodate some of Tokelo Secondary learners. It is encouraging that, our engineers confirmed that, there were no structural damages to the building and as such we will refurbish accordingly.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

School based posts were procured as follows:

Vacancy Circular 01 of 2019 was published on 28 January 2019 with 1055 posts advertised, 868 posts filled, 88 withdrawn, 8 Grievances pending, 49 posts outstanding and 42 in process, A success rate of 91%. (Educator PL2-4 & Chief/Education Therapist)

Vacancy Circular 03 of 2019 was published on 9 July 2019 with 601 posts advertised, 304 posts filled, 36 withdrawn, 38 Grievances pending, 67 outstanding and in 156 processes, 57% success rate (Educator PL2-4 & Chief/Education Therapist)

Vacancy Circular 04 of 2019 was published on 4 October 2019 with total of 78 Principal posts – recruitment processes are unfolding. (Principal posts)

Filling Of Public Servants (PS):

The office based Public Servants posts are advertised in line with the approved Recruitment plan. Vacancy circular 2/2019 (PS) was published on 29 April 2019 with a 35 posts advertised, 19 post filled, 12 withdrawn, 2 post outstanding and 2 in process, A success rate of 89% (Types of posts:- Prof. Nurse; Driver; Admin Assistant; General Assistant; Nurse; Hostel Manager; House Keeper)

Funza Lushaka graduates for 2019

Total allocated graduates for Gauteng amounted to 1060, of which a total 802 qualified and were placeable. Gauteng managed to place total of 710 out of 802 graduates. The remaining 92 unplaced graduates will be placed when the posts become available as the process is ongoing. The placement rate stands at 89%.

## **SCHOLAR TRANSPORT READINESS**

The Department is ready for the Transportation of Learners in the Last Quarter of the Financial Year (January 2020 – March 2020). The number of learners are expected to grow by around 8% (average annual increase in learners benefitting from the Programme). The expected increase will move the number of learners from 139 855 to 151 400 learners across the Province in academic year 2020.

## **SCHOOL NUTRITION**

Approximately 1 501 736 Learners in 1 621 schools across the province will receive a meal as part of our School Nutrition Programme. The number is likely to increase to an estimated 1 531 771 due to in – migration in line with Admissions.

## **MATRIC RESULTS 2019**

The department once again congratulates the Class of 2019 for their outstanding quality performance by achieving 88. % pass rate and recording National majority bachelor passes.

We appeal to learners who were unsuccessful this time, to never lose hope, as there are available options to obtain the NSC Certificate.

## **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

The grade 12 results for the period 2019, at some Independent schools are shocking and as such we will launch an enquiry to establish on what led to such poor performance. We, subsidise some of these schools due to their good governance and financial accountability. But clear evidence of educational benefit for learners to increase access is a strong indicator. Parents cannot be short changed an excellent learner performance is paramount.

Finally, we want to take this time to welcome all Grade R and our Grade 1 learners to the schooling system, and wish them everything of the best on this important journey of their lives. We are excited that Grade R is migrating from the Department of Social Development to Education and that all ECD Centres will now have a formal programme and curriculum. This will assist to consolidate our efforts to improve learning in the foundation phase.

“We, really engaged in thorough preparations to ensure that Schools are ready to commence with teaching and learning activities on Day1 of 2020 Academic Year, our senior management also conducted visits throughout the Province making sure schools are ready for teaching and learning accordingly” Said MEC Lesufi.

We anticipate high volumes of late applications, and officials are making every effort to ensure that applicants are assisted, and that placement is facilitated without delay.

“I have personally received overwhelming messages from frustrated parents, and indeed the pain is unbearable, on behalf of Gauteng government, I wish to convey our sincere apology for putting parents through this unbearable pain, I am so sorry” Said MEC Lesufi.

**For more information, contact the Gauteng Department of Education’s Spokesperson, Steve Mabona on 072 574 3860.**

**Issued by the Gauteng Department of Education**

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