



MEDIA STATEMENT

**To: All Media
Att: News Editors
For immediate release**

6 May 2024

MEC CHILOANE ALARMED BY FOUR LEARNER SUICIDES FROM SAME SCHOOL

Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane is extremely shocked by a series of devastating incidents where four learners from Eqinisweni Secondary School in Ivory Park allegedly committed suicide between 26 April 2024 and 5 May 2024.

According to information at our disposal, the first incident occurred on Friday, 26 April 2024. It is alleged that a Grade 10 girl learner drank poison at home. She was rushed to a local clinic, where she was unfortunately declared dead. On Thursday, 2 May 2024, a Grade 11 girl learner was found dead at home by her parents. It is alleged she also tragically took her own life by consuming poison.

Subsequently, on Friday, 3 May 2024, a Grade 11 boy learner was hospitalised due to having allegedly consumed poison. Regrettably, he passed away while receiving medical treatment. On Sunday, 5 May 2024, a Grade 12 girl learner also allegedly drank poison at home and sadly passed away while being transported to a nearby clinic.

Our Psycho-Social Support Unit has been dispatched to Eqinisweni Secondary School to provide necessary counselling to the school community. The team will also extend its counselling services to the respective bereaved families.

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) urges learners to reach out to support structures and resources we have made available in instances where they might be facing any challenges. Such structures include Childline, which can be contacted by dialing 116. Learners can also contact the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) on 0800 567 567 or 0800 456 789.

"It is indeed heart-wrenching to witness the loss of young lives. We extend our deepest condolences to the families affected their loss. Mental health support services will be bolstered in schools to ensure our learners receive the necessary assistance and guidance during difficult times. It should be noted that our partnership with SADAG has yielded positive results in Tsakane where we previously had a similar slew of unfortunate learner suicides. As such, the Department commits to continuing with this partnership and conduct learner mental health roadshows to affected schools," said MEC Chiloane.

ANOTHER FEMALE EDUCATOR FROM THUTO-LORE SECONDARY SCHOOL GRUESOMELY KILLED

In another sad incident, a female educator from Thuto-Lore Secondary School in Sharpeville was found dead on Saturday, 4 May 2024.

According to information at our disposal, the educator did not report to work on Thursday, 2 May 2024. Subsequently, a missing persons case was filed at a local police station on Friday, 3 May 2024.

Sadly, her lifeless body was allegedly found Saturday, 4 May 2024, at Dlomo Dam near her home. Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding this incident. Our Psycho-Social Support Unit will also be deployed to the school to provide necessary trauma support and counselling.

"It is truly heartbreaking that another female educator from same school was brutally murdered. This raises serious concerns around the safety of female educators in the community. We plead with law enforcement agencies to act swiftly in apprehending the suspects, and we also convey our sincerest condolences to the school and bereaved family," said MEC Chiloane.

For more information, contact the Gauteng Department of Education's Spokesperson, Steve Mabona on 072 574 3860 or Spokesperson for Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane, Xolani Mkhwemte on 084 513 9285

For more updates regarding GDE related news and information, follow us on our website and social media platforms:

f Facebook: [The Gauteng Department of Education](https://www.facebook.com/TheGautengDepartmentofEducation)

X X: [@EducationGP1](https://twitter.com/EducationGP1)

Instagram: [@gautengdepartmentofeducation](https://www.instagram.com/gautengdepartmentofeducation)

For media releases, speech and news visit the Gauteng Department of Education's portal: education.gauteng.gov.za

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Education