



GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: All Media

Att: News Editors

For immediate release

03 February 2021

Gauteng Department of Education incurred R14 million for the 2019/20 year

The Gauteng Department of Education incurred irregular expenditure of R14 million for the financial year 2019/20 as disclosed in its financial statements. Further, the 2020/21 financial statements have not been audited. As such, there is no audit finding that the R431 million on cleaning and decontamination of schools was irregular. In addition, this is still a subject of an investigation.

Against, this background, the Department of Education notes with concern the Democratic Alliance media statement claiming that the Department incurred over R1 billion in irregular expenditure in the 2019/20 financial year. Further, the DA asserts that the Department failed to take remedial action or ensure 'consequence management.

The Department welcomes public scrutiny of all aspects of its work from anyone. Public scrutiny is crucial to reveal and address maladministration. This feedback can only help the Department to improve its processes and plan.

That said, it is important for critique to be measured, substantiated and avoid slander of reputation through use of emotive terms that obfuscates rather than clarify the issues.

The DA's statement is replete with a few errors and deliberately mislead the public.

The first error is to lump together audit outcomes for different years to reach this alarming figure of R1 billion. The second error is to contend that the Department has failed to take remedial action against irregular expenditure. Far from it, the Department has progressively improved management of public funds and to substantially reduce irregular

expenditure. The Department is proud of the steady improvement towards a clean audit.

For the 2019/20 financial year, there was irregular expenditure of R14 million. Irregular in this respect means failure to adequately follow procurement procedure. This is of course not acceptable and the Department is determining whether there was untoward behaviour by any of its officials.

The rest of the irregular expenditures refers to historical or legacy issues. It should be noted that irregular expenditure resulted from procurement procedural issues.

An amount of R125 million relates to irregular expenditure incurred by the implementing agency of the GDE. The Department did not participate in the procurement process of the implementing agency.

The second item relates to the school nutrition tender for 2017/2018 financial years. This contract has since ended but could not be cancelled during its life as this would be detrimental to the learners. Cancellation would have resulted in learners not receiving meals until new service providers were appointed. This matter was also a subject of forensic investigation and remedial steps taken.

The school furniture tender was declared irregular in 2018/19 and the department cleared all audit findings except one in 2019/20. The matter was referred for legal advice which was shared with the Auditor-General. The Department is still waiting for the response from Auditor-General.

It is unfortunate and reckless for the DA to lump together historical issues and mislead the public by not providing a disaggregated report. 'The alarmist and sensational figure of R1 billion can only serve to tarnish the image of the Department and represent a basic misreading of Audit Reports. This is nothing other than political grandstanding and opportunism' said MEC for Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi. The DA has rushed to release its statement before the Department has responded to the portfolio committee on Education in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Education.

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

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