



TO: ALL MEDIA
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URGENT UPDATE: DUDUZANI PRIMARY SCHOOL

The MEC for Education Mr. Senzo Mchunu and the Superintendent-General, Dr Cassius Lubisi, yesterday evening met with the members of the Duduzani Primary School Governing Body, this after the school was illegally closed on Thursday (11 February 2010) by parents and learners who were demanding that a new school be built urgently.

The protest brought teaching and learning to a halt with parents and learners going on a rampage despite numerous reports and updates by the Department informing them that construction of a new school would start before the end of February 2010. The prefabricated classrooms at the school were vandalised and window panes were broken during last weeks' protest.

MEC Mchunu and senior Infrastructure Development officials from the Department briefed the SGB which was representing parents that it was premature and dangerous for them to assume that the Department was not serious about the construction of a new school in Duduzani, "We are in the middle of February and we have repeatedly inform you every step of the way on what has been happening about the project to build a new school. February has not ended and a school is vandalized and closed because you are demanding a new school...this is irresponsible and illegal. The only person who is allowed by law to declare a school closed is the Superintendent-General of the Department and no one else," said Mchunu addressing the SGB.

"The tender for the construction of the new school was authorized on the 17th of February 2010 but taking into account the recent series of events at the school we have instructed the contractor not to proceed with project until certain issues have been cleared out at the school," Mchunu said. MEC Mchunu said the construction of a new school which was due to start anytime after the approval of the contractor, has been jeopardized by the irresponsible actions of parents and learners. Any consideration to build the school may only take place after the following has been done:

- The person(s) who locked the school gates unlocks them and informs the Department that he or she has re-opened the school gates.
- The parents must commit that they carry the costs and actually repair windows and all that was damaged during the protest.
- That the safety of educators is guaranteed, for the time being educators will report at the Circuit Office.
- The SGB on behalf of parents must make a formal public announcement they are now willing that the school can be re-opened and request the department to re-open the school.
- The parents will have to instruct their children to return to school as were they the ones who had instructed them to boycott schooling in the first instance.

Issued by MEC for Education, Mr. Senzo Mchunu