



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

**Speaking Remarks by Minister of Basic Education, Ms Siviwe
Gwarube, MP**

**Government Acts to Resolve Payment Delays and Restore Trust
as Education Assistant Payments Resume**

08 October 2025

NOTE TO EDITORS

*The following remarks were delivered by the Minister of Basic Education, **Ms Siviwe Gwarube MP**, during a joint media briefing on Wednesday, 8 October 2025, held at the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Auditorium in Pretoria.*

*The briefing was convened jointly by the **Department of Basic Education**, the **Department of Employment and Labour**, the **Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF)**, and the **Industrial Development Corporation (IDC)** to announce the resolution of payment delays affecting Education Assistants and General School Assistants employed under the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI).*

Please note that the text below should be checked against delivery.

Good Morning colleagues;
members of the media; and
the many South Africans who are following these proceedings —
especially the thousands of young people serving our schools through
the **Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI)**.



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

Over the past week, the Department of Basic Education has been confronted with a deeply concerning situation: the delay in paying stipends to Education Assistants for the month of September, which were due on the last day of the month.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the hardship this delay has caused to our Education Assistants.

Many of these young people depend on their stipends to support themselves and their families. When payments are delayed, it affects people's ability to meet their most basic needs, food, transport, accommodation and toiletries. It affects their dignity.

How the Problem Has Been Resolved

Following intensive engagements that continued late into the night over the past two days, the Department of Basic Education, together with our partners in the Department of Employment and Labour, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and the Industrial Development Corporation, have reached a final resolution.

I can confirm that as of 10h00 am this morning, payments have started flowing from the Industrial Development Corporation to Education Assistants.

This is a massive relief to the thousands of young people who have been waiting for what is due to them.

This delay should have never happened, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that this is avoided in the future.



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

How the Problem Arose

I know many have questioned how we found ourselves in this situation, and so I would like to take the public into my confidence for a moment.

The Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI) is a partnership between:

- the Department of Basic Education, which is responsible for oversight of the Provincial Education Departments and public schools participating in the BEEI;
- the Department of Employment and Labour, through the Unemployment Insurance Fund, which is one of the funders for the BEEI;
- The Presidency, which is the strategic lead for the employment initiative; and
- The Industrial Development Corporation, which serves as the implementing agent responsible for disbursing stipends to Education Assistants.

This partnership is governed by a multi-party arrangement designed to ensure accountability, transparency and compliance with the Public Finance Management Act.

However, in the most recent payment cycle, administrative delays occurred during the uploading and verification of attendance registers of Education Assistants. This verification is a mandatory step to ensure that government funds are not paid to ghost workers or even to people who were no longer showing up for work to provide the services that they are paid for.



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

We know all too well how well-meaning projects are often infiltrated and compromised by corrupt elements who wish to fleece the state. To avoid any form of corruption, the necessary measures have to be in place to ensure that each and every Rand dispersed through the BEEI can be accounted for.

Schools and Provincial Education Departments were required to upload attendance registers, coupled with biometric confirmations, as proof that the Education Assistants concerned were indeed present and carrying out their duties.

After internal investigation, I was informed by the Departmental officials the captured attendance registers were not uploaded in full by the relevant deadline and this led to the funder, namely the Unemployment Insurance Fund, being unable to approve the release of the stipend funding to the Industrial Development Corporation (as the implementing agent) for onward disbursement to Education Assistants.

A system of administrative checks and balances, which was meant to safeguard public funds, buckled under pressure and failed to ensure the timeous payment of stipends to Education Assistants.

When the system failed, contingency plans were not activated by the responsible departmental officials swiftly enough. Attendance data for September was not submitted on time, leading to thousands of Education Assistants not getting paid on time.

It's important to point out that this only affected Education Assistants who are paid by the Industrial Development Corporation. Those



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

Education Assistants who are paid through the National Treasury received their stipends on time.

While the Department of Basic Education was not the sole actor in this process, I must acknowledge, with deep regret, the hardship that this administrative failure has caused. As government, we have moved with urgency to resolve this matter.

Accountability and Consequence Management

While I am relieved that the immediate crisis has been resolved, we cannot — and will not — treat this as a routine administrative matter.

I have instructed both the Director-General and the Acting Director-General to immediately institute appropriate consequence management and hold accountable any officials who are found to have failed to discharge their responsibilities in the management and implementation of the BEEI.

This is not about scapegoating. It is about ensuring that accountability is real — and that every official entrusted with public responsibilities understands the weight of that trust.

At the same time, it is about strengthening capacity within the Basic Education Employment Initiative team. The Department, together with our partners, is reviewing the programme's internal governance to ensure that the programme is adequately resourced, properly supervised, and supported by reliable systems.



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

Going forward the BEEI programme will be a standing item in the meetings of the Director-General and the provincial HODs. We will fast-track the finalisation of a Service Level Agreement between the Department of Basic Education and the Industrial Development Corporation to further clarify roles and responsibilities. A timeous reminder will be sent to schools to remind them to upload their attendance registers on time.

Furthermore, the BEEI steering committee (comprising representatives from the Department of Employment and Labour, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Industrial Development Corporation, the Department of Basic Education and the Presidency) will meet on a regular basis to assess compliance. Furthermore, schools that do not comply will face serious consequences.

Restoring Trust and Moving Forward

This initiative is one of the government's flagship youth employment programmes. It provides not only income but also work experience, training, and a pathway into the world of work for over 150,000 young South Africans.

We owe it to these young people — and to the schools and learners who depend on their contribution — to manage this programme with diligence, excellence, integrity and compassion.

We dare not fail again.



**MINISTER
BASIC EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X603, Pretoria, 0001 Tel • (012) 357 300 • Fax (012) 323 5989
Private Bag X9034, Cape Town, 8000 • Tel (012) 465 7350 • Fax (021) 461 4788
Website: <http://www.education.gov.za>

I want to reassure every Education Assistant:

- You will receive what is due to you.
- We will not allow this situation to happen again.
- We are building stronger systems to ensure that payments are reliable, timely, and transparent.

Closing

I also wish to thank our partners in the Department of Employment and Labour, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and the Industrial Development Corporation for their cooperation in resolving this matter.

In closing, I would also like to thank all the Education Assistants for their patience and professionalism during this challenging time. Your dedication in our schools continues to make a difference in the lives of learners across South Africa.

The lesson from this experience is clear: we must be faster, better coordinated, and more vigilant. As Minister, I am committed to ensuring that my Department meets that standard.

Thank you.