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IN THE EASTERN CAPE HIGH COURT, BHISHO
(REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA)

CASE NO. _____

In the matter between:

EQUAL EDUCATION AND THREE OTHERS

APPLICANTS

and

**THE MEC FOR EDUCATION: EASTERN CAPE
AND THIRTEEN OTHERS**

RESPONDENTS

SUPPLEMENTARY AFFIDAVIT

I, the undersigned,

MOGAMAD LABEEB GASANT

state under oath the following:

1. I am the principal at Lantana Primary School ("Lantana PS" or "the school").
2. I am 61 years old, and have 40 years of teaching experience. I started at the school in 1983 as the deputy principal and have been the principal since 1993. I have a masters degree from the University of Cape Town and am currently busy with my Doctorate.
3. The facts in this affidavit are true and correct and, unless otherwise stated are within my personal knowledge.

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- 4 This affidavit will address three issues:
 - 4.1 The poor state of infrastructure at Lantana Primary School;
 - 4.2 Its impact on teaching and learning;
 - 4.3 Efforts to obtain assistance from the Department of Education

LANTANA PRIMARY SCHOOL

5 The school is situated in Lentegour, Mitchells Plain. It was built in 1981-1982 and opened in 1983. It caters for Grade R to Grade 7. There are 1115 learners, 55% of whom are girls, and 45% of whom are boys. This number will increase next year to around 1200 learners which is beyond what the school should hold. There are 31 classrooms. These rooms are all used for teaching, despite the fact that they include the science laboratory, woodwork room, art room and other classes that are supposed to be used for specific purposes, not as general classrooms. However, because of the shortage of space we are forced to use of these rooms as for general teaching purposes. Originally the school had 1000 learners and 38 staff members. Now there are almost 1200 learners and only 27 staff members.

6 About 40% of the learners are black, and about 60% are coloured. The number of black learners increases every year. Most of them come from poor townships in surrounding areas. There is also a 40-45% unemployment rate in this

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community, and this comes with various social problems in the environment in which these learners are raised, including drug abuse and high levels of crime.

- 7 The school is a Section 21 school and is ranked as quintile 5 which is the highest/most well off quintile. This suggests that it is in a wealthier area, is well resourced and self-sustainable. The reality is that we are in a poor area and then are expected to compete with former Model C schools which also fall under quintile 5 but that are far better resourced than us. The entire budget of the school in 2011 was R1 225 000, but we were only given R220 000 by the Department of Education (DoE). The rest we are expected to raise on our own. Part of this we do through school fees, which are R250 per learner for the year. We receive fees from about 70% of the learners. Because the government does not help me enough, I have to try get as much as I can out of the community, although I do understand that some parents do not work and cannot pay.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AT THE SCHOOL

- 8 The architectural design of the school is problematic to begin with, which is a result of the way schools were designed and built during apartheid. We then have to use other means to make up for what is lacking, which we often cannot afford.

- 8.1 The way the school is built is not conducive to the safety of the learners, as it is built in rows of blocks with no enclosed spaces. This

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means that the school and learners are exposed and we require adequate security to keep it safe. The school was built with fencing but it doesn't last and has to be fixed and replaced regularly. The fencing is mostly not strong palisade fencing but flimsy fencing with barbed wire. There is a big problem with gangs in the area who cut the fencing and break-in easily. In October 2010 we had five burglaries at the school in one week. The thieves broke into the storeroom and the computer room and stole speakers used for our P.A system as well as the hard-drives from our computers.

8.2 The way the school is built is also not a conducive learning environment. The school was not designed with a library in mind – there is no library on the school's plans. There is a tiny space which we have been able to allocate for a library and reading room. This means that we are at least able to store books and use it as a reading room, ~~but it cannot really be called a library and cannot cater for the 1115~~ learners at the school. A library is meant to be a place where teachers can take their class to do research for projects, or where learners can come to do homework, research or leisurely reading, which is not possible in our small reading room. We also do not receive books from the DoE and are expected to use our allocated budget to buy books. However, we do not receive nearly enough money to be able to do this.

9 We do not have a school hall. We were told around 10 years ago that we were on a list of 25 schools to have a hall built, but we have not heard anything, or even seen an architect. We hold assembly in the quad, and if it rains, we do not

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have assembly. It is less comfortable having assembly outside which then defies one of the main reasons that we have assembly – which is to get the whole school together so that the learners can feel part of something so that school is more than just coming to class. Learners must also write exams in their classrooms. We have to hire out a hall for things such as graduation or award ceremonies – which then happens in a way that is detached from the school.

10 We do have a science laboratory, but it is not stocked or equipped, and we cannot afford to fix this problem with the money allocated to us. The plumbing is also very old and broken which means that it is not adequately safe and functional. Therefore, it simply gets used another classroom, which would probably have to happen anyway since we have a shortage of classroom space.

11 We do have a computer lab, and in fact were one of the first schools in the country to have a computer lab set up. However, the DoE set the lab up and then failed to provide any kind of maintenance for it, and have cut funding for such purposes. It is very expensive to hire somebody who is an expert in IT and we cannot always afford the upkeep of the computers.

12 The school has no playground or sports grounds. The learners are forced to play sports at the municipal sports grounds, which we have to pay to use. We are fortunate that these fields are close by, although there is an area between the school and the fields that is very dangerous and I have to send a security

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guard with the learners when they go there otherwise they would be likely to be mugged or robbed by gangsters in the area.

- 13 We do have enough toilets, although they are very rudimentary and are dark and dingy. We manage to keep them fairly well maintained.

IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 14 The lack of proper fencing impacts both the learners and the teachers badly.

- 14.1 Flimsy fencing means that gangsters are able to enter the school and target the learners. We refer to the gangster intruders as "tax collectors" because they enter the school and threaten the learners with violence or even death if they do not give them money. Thus learners' lives are put at risk by this infrastructure deficiency.

- 14.2 In addition, when I had to get part of the fence fixed to prevent intruders entering, I used a welder who is a parent at the school because he gave us a very good deal and it was quick and convenient. However, because he is not on the official DoE system, I had to be corrupt, and to get another quote from an approved welder so that I could claim from the DoE. If I did not do this, it would have taken too long which would continue to pose a major threat to the school and the learners. Given my experience I have been made to feel like I cannot rely on official avenues to get what is required to be a functional school since it either

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takes too long or does not happen at all. Thus the DoE has forced me into a position where I have no option other than to use corrupt methods to ensure that the learners at my school are safe. If I have to use means other than what is required by the regulations of the department in order to ensure that the learners are safe then I must do so.

15 The biggest impact of not having a library is on literacy levels. It means that learners have no access to books to do research for assignments and also means that it is extremely difficult to instil a culture of reading or culture of using a library among the learners. From a young age learners are not learning the importance of reading. They cannot visit the public libraries because they are in areas with much crime and gang activity and it is too dangerous. Many of them also do not have access to books at home. A library should be a central part of the school where learners can be encouraged to explore and deepen their knowledge – which is the whole point of getting an education. Instead, without a library they are placed at a serious disadvantage, and so are the teachers who then do not have the tools they need to make learning interesting and exciting and to be able to ensure that the critical skill of literacy is developed amongst the children.

16 The lack of a school hall impacts upon us in different ways.

16.1 The absence of a regular assembly impacts on the discipline of the learners. The assembly should be the principal's class that he takes every week where learners are taught a sense of respect for the

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authority and the importance of being at school. It should be a time where I can set the tone for the week and where issues affecting the school can be shared with all at once. If that cannot happen, there can be a breakdown of discipline which is disruptive for both teachers and learners, and it also means that there is no sense of a school spirit or camaraderie amongst the learners. We cannot share any achievements of the school or particular learners regularly when we cannot have assembly regularly, when we are dependent on the weather, or even simply where having assemblies outside are very uncomfortable.

16.2 We are fortunate that our classes are not too cramped so it is not a huge problem that we cannot hold exam in a school hall. However, a learner is entitled to a certain amount of space around his/her desk when writing an exam, which we cannot provide in the environment of a classroom. The lack of space between learners also means that it is sometimes difficult to invigilate examinations properly and effectively.

17 The impact of not having a science lab is that we cannot provide the learners with adequate practical science lessons. We are expected to compete on this basis with other schools in the same quintile that would have fully equipped laboratories - which is unfair on our learners. Learners are thus not prepared to go on to university, particularly if they want to study science. There are many concepts and lessons in the science curriculum which require practical demonstrations and which are supposed to involve direct participation from the learners. Instead, our learners are forced to try and understand some difficult concepts in a very abstract and theoretical way. This places them at a serious

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disadvantage and means that they are ultimately not being taught science exactly in the way that it should because we lack the necessary tools to do so.

- 18 Not having sports grounds of our own means that we are putting our learners at risk by having to use the municipal grounds. It means that there is no safe environment to allow the learners to play and practice sports on the school property, and I have to take on extra responsibility to make sure they are safe beyond the school premises. With a school that is so large, this is often a very difficult task. It means that many learners that would otherwise be interested and engaged in sports would not get this opportunity. Participation in sports is also a critical part of schooling and for learning. Physical education and activity, as well as the lessons learned from participating in team sports are also important for providing learners with a well rounded educational experience. It should not be sole preserve of the privilege of learners who attend well resources schools where most of the learners already come from a privileged background.

ATTEMPTS TO SECURE ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT [IF ANY]

- 19 I have not made many attempts to secure assistance from the DoE of late because my experience over all the years has shown that I will not receive any help. We have slipped back into the apartheid syndrome of, "I never get it, so I won't ask".

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20 Although I do have occasional communication with the District office of the Department of Education this only occurs when they need information from me about the school – but which does not related to our school infrastructure problems. As far as I am aware, it is ultimately the provincial Department's responsibility to provide support to the school with respect to upgrading the schools facilities. I has been years since I have had any visit from a Department official to inspect our building to see for themselves the physical challenges we are facing. It has been so long ago that I can't even remember.

20.1 We were in contact about 10 years ago with the DoE about providing us with a school hall. In 2003 after I wrote to the then Premier of the Western Cape wrote to us acknowledging this, but we did not hear anything further and I gave up trying since then since we feel that it is up to us to survive on our own.

21 We have set up Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes and run them like a business, to raise money. The DoE provides R2000 per year per ECD learner, and we charge R1200 per month per learner. I have been put in a position where I have no choice but to subvert the system to make money so that I can keep the school running at even a basic level of functionality.

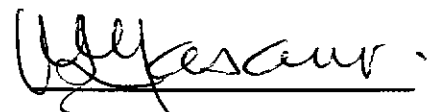
22 There is a Vodacom tower in the area, and Vodacom pays us R70 000 to R80 000 per year, as well as helping to pay for the electricity that both they and we use.

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23 We also have various other fundraising methods, such as a tuckshop and a civvies day.


CONCLUSION

I believe it is the government's responsibility to put norms and standards for school infrastructure into law and then to make sure that they are implemented. Our teachers try their best to say motivated and to provide our learners with the best possible education that they can, but they are debilitated because of the environment that they work in. We know that we cannot be provided with everything immediately, but the conditions at our schools have been persisting for decades and it seems we will never get the assistance that we need from the Department.

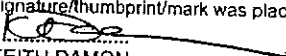


MOGAMAD LABEEB GASANT

I certify that on the 13TH DECEMBER 2011 and at LENTEGEUR / Mogamad Labeeb Gasant appeared before me and that he acknowledged to me that he knows and understands the contents of the above Affidavit, which Affidavit was signed and sworn to in my presence in accordance with the requirements of Regulation No. R1428 dated 16 November 1984, as amended, which have been fulfilled.



COMMISSIONER OF OATHS

Commissioner of Oaths (Ex Officio)
Western Cape Education Department
 I certify that the deponent has acknowledged that he/she knows and understands the contents of this declaration, which was sworn to/affirmed before me and the deponent's signature/thumbprint/mark was place thereon in my presence

 KEITH DAMON
 Designation: *Principal ex officio: Republic of South Africa*
 Date: 13/12/2011
 Place: Aloe High School, Aloe Road, Lentegeur, Mitchell's Plain

