



National Council: Sindisa Monakali (Chair), Lawrence Manaka, Yolanda Sewela, Tebogo Tsesane, Noncedo Madubedube, Nombulelo Mabaso, Ntsakiso Mbalati, Abner Thabang Serite, Lolita Mbongwa, Gcina Mtya, Sylvia Gadu, Thandile Maliti, Amanda Precious Buthulezi, Kopano Molekoa, Mmopane Betty Mothapo, Buhle Salman, Moyo Chumani, Roy Johane, Thembela Theo Jacobs.

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE ATTENTION OF:

Angie Motshekga

Minister of the Department of Basic Education

TO BE DELIVERED ON 08 JULY 2022

**WE DEMAND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
KEEP THE CURRENT NORMS AND STANDARDS DEADLINES!**

Dear Minister Motshekga,

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE MINIMUM UNIFORM NORMS
AND STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Memorandum of Demands

Equal Education (EE) is a democratic movement of learners, post-school youth, parents, and community members. EE organises in five provinces, namely the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape. We strive for quality and equality in South Africa's basic education system.

Safe and proper school infrastructure is important for quality education – along with other factors such as access to school meals, textbooks, learner transport and psycho-social support. The failure of national and provincial education departments to completely eradicate school infrastructure backlogs undermines learners' constitutional right to quality basic education.

In 2013, following years of tireless campaigning led by EE members, the DBE signed the Uniform Minimum Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure into law. This was a historic moment for our members and learners across the country because we now had a law that set out legally binding requirements for what the basic infrastructure of schools must be and by when such infrastructure must be provided.

In 2018 the Bhisho High Court ordered the DBE to review and fix gaps in the Norms and Standards after EE and the Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) brought these to light – a victory in the struggle for equal and quality education for all learners. Nearly four years after the court case, the DBE is finally ready to change the law in line with the court order but is also proposing drastic and unacceptable changes to the infrastructure law (draft amendments) that will result in schools falling apart for many more years, undermining learners' right to quality education.

We are concerned that the proposed changes completely remove the deadlines, which say when government must provide basic infrastructure like toilets, water, electricity, classrooms, fences and libraries to schools. Removing these deadlines from the Norms and Standards further compromises the urgency toward eradicating infrastructure backlogs. Without deadlines that are written into law, learners and teachers could wait for an indefinite period for their schools to be fixed! Without the legally binding deadlines, learners, teachers and parents cannot effectively hold education departments accountable for their legal and moral duty.

The deadline for when feedback on the proposed changes must be submitted by members of the public to the DBE is now 31 July 2022! Even with the extended time for public input, proper participation by school communities in a process that affects them so drastically is still stifled. This is because the way in which changes are phrased in the draft amendment is hard to understand, making it difficult for learners, parents, teachers and interested individuals to give their feedback on the proposed changes.

EQUAL EDUCATION MEMBERS DEMAND:

- That the DBE ensures there is proper and meaningful public participation on the draft changes by revising the wording of the draft changes to be more user-friendly to ensure that any member of the public is able to understand and comment on it.
- That the existing deadlines contained in the Norms and Standards be kept in order to ensure clarity and accountability.
- That **plain pit toilets are eradicated immediately!**
- Minister Motshekga and provincial MECs hold a public meeting for education stakeholders (including parents, teachers and learners) to discuss the progress of education departments in eradicating school infrastructure backlogs; and the reasons for failing to meet deadlines by no later than 29 November 2022!

Equal Education, Gauteng

Handed over by (name) _____ (signature) _____ on
(date) _____ in/at (place) _____.

Received by (name) _____ (signature) _____ on
(date) _____ in/at (place) _____.

Witness 1: _____ Witness 2: _____