

# **Media Statement: A Teacher Arrested after locking gates on the first day of schooling**

19 January 2011

"I have laid a formal complaint with the South African Police Service at Osizweni, near Newcastle, where I found; at 11h30, teachers and school children standing outside classrooms," said Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo MEC for Health who was in the area as part of government's programme to check on the functioning of schools on the first day.

The MEC had not planned to visit the school, Khethokuhle Secondary School, but was called to the school by the Ward Inspector who could not join the MEC's entourage due to problems at this school. The school is located in the peri-urban area of Osizweni and is one of the poor performing schools in the province having had a 13% pass rate in 2010 matric results. It has a total student population of around 300 with only five classrooms and a handful of teachers.

"It appears that this teacher, who will be arrested today for unlawfully denying access into a government property, is an agent provocateur for all the troubles in the school" said MEC Dhlomo. "Government did not make a mistake in identifying education as one of the apex priorities. The people of this country share the view of government and have a responsibility to ensure that no child is denied the right to education. It is therefore unacceptable and a duty of everyone to ensure that what government has pronounced is not undermined by certain individuals' pursuing their personal interests."

Dr Dhlomo handed his formal complaint to the local police station and asked the principal to ensure that such disturbances do not happen again. The school, he said, has to do more to reach the district average of 90% in matric pass rates. Such incidents must be reported to appropriate authorities and the community must begin to take ownership of what is happening at the school.

Ends

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