

**MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
MEC, MR KWAZI MSHENGU, ON THE RELEASE OF THE INVESTIGATION  
REPORT RELATING TO THE GRADE 12 BOOT CAMP IN HARRY GWALA  
DISTRICT.**

**13 April 2021**

Good morning to all of you members of the media and thank you so much for gracing us with your presence to this media briefing.

We have convened this briefing to communicate to the public the outcomes of two reports on matters that were also a subject of discussion in the public domain. At that time, we committed to the people of KwaZulu Natal that we will do thorough investigations and report back on the outcomes of such.

**ON HARRY GWALA MATRIC BOOT CAMP**

During the course of the Grade 12 Boot Camps last year, in preparation for Grade 12 NSC Examinations, disturbing photos of learners cramped in a tent with no masks and toilets that were overflowing with human waste emerged from one of the camps called Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre under Harry Gwala District.

On the same day, the department ordered that the camp be closed down and learners moved to another suitable venue. I also directed that Head of Department institutes an investigation on the circumstances that led to the complete violation of Covid19 regulations and the non-negotiables as agreed to in the sector. The investigation also had to look into the internal processes that led to the use of an unsuitable venue for learners.

The investigation conducted revealed the following:

1. That the Department Head Office obtained the necessary approval from the Provincial Treasury to use its schools with Boarding Facilities as camps and there not to be subjected to SCM processes in relation to hiring of venues. This was the most cost-effective position since schools belong to DoE.

2. Where there were no schools available for use, guidelines were provided to use privately owned facilities based on agreed rates and to comply with all SCM requirements.
3. That Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre was not tax compliant and there was no evidence for tax clearance certificate.
4. That the District Director as the Chairperson of the Adjudication Committee flouted the procurement processes in the appointment of Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre to host the Spring Camp and Li Africa PTY LTD and Zinolwazi PTY LTD to transport learners.
5. That the District Director invited service providers to quote and suggested the amounts per each learner and this amounts to cover quoting.
6. That the service providers in question were issues with multiple orders for the same service within the same period in order to keep the amount below the threshold of R500 000 and therefore avoiding to go on tender as required.
7. That Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre quoted the total amount of R1 260 000.00 and the District Director acted beyond her delegated authority to approve Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre and therefore splitting of quotation was done intentionally.
8. That Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre was appointed before submitting quotations. The District Director made a submission to the HOD to appoint Boniwe Rehabilitation Centre on the 23 September 2020 and the quotation was received on the 14 October 2020.
9. There is evidence that the Matric Intervention Programme Team conducted the assessment and found the facility not suitable to host the Spring Camp.
10. It is evident that Ixopo High School facility was available but the District had no intentions to utilize it which was in fatal conflict with the position of the department to use available schools as part of curbing costs.

Based on these findings, the report recommended that disciplinary processes be preferred against the District Director, the Acting CES in question and the Assistant Director SCM.

I am satisfied that the report presents a case to be answered by the implicated officials and have since referred the report to the HoD for immediate implementation.

### **ON THE AUDIT BY ON THE PROCUREMENT OF PPEs**

We welcome the finding of the Audit Report issued by KZN Provincial Treasury into the expenditure on Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE's) for the period March to June 2020. The audit conducted by the Provincial Treasury was against the background of a public narrative propagated by some who thrive and probably make a living based on dishonesty and telling lies, that the Department of Education had procured the Covid-19 essentials at the maximum and even higher prices in breach of Treasury Note 5. The Department stood accused of having failed to negotiate down the prices and this narrative continued in spite of the available evidence to the contrary.

In its report, Provincial Treasury found that the KZN Department of Education was able to achieve significant saving during the procurement process through price negotiations with PPE suppliers.

The findings indicate that the department spent R487, 447, 611. 63 in procuring and delivering PPE's to schools and other offices; had the department not negotiated prices and paid the maximum prices prescribed by National Treasury, the expenditure would have increased to R873, 711, 267. This indicates savings of approximately R386, 263, 555. 65. This is a significant achievement on the side of the department. These savings have ensured that the department is able to extract maximum value from every Rand spent thereby ensuring that sufficient PPE's are made available to Schools.

This finding will put to rest earlier reports which had accused the department of over-spending on PPE's.

## **CONCLUSION**

I wish to commit the department yet again on striving for clean governance. I call upon all officials to work according to book and avoid any temptation to be in conflict with the law and use misuse public funds. There shall be no protection for any official who commits wrong.

The audit outcome by the Provincial Treasury constitutes a necessary relief for all the good meaning and hardworking officials who have unfortunately been tried and convicted in the court of public opinions. These officials have been under severe strain for the alleged wrong they never committed. The strain has also been suffered by their families who have to contend with a public narrative that their loved ones have participated in corrupt activities.

It is important that the society protects those officials who work diligently and with utmost honesty.

My message to all the DoE officials is that those who work according to the prescripts of the law have a reliable partner in me. We will weather the storm together and we shall always be vindicated. To those who participate in transgressions, we will treat you as enemies of the people and we will not hesitate to act decisively against wrong doings.

End.