11 March 2025

**KwaZulu-Natal MEC: Education**

Hon. Sipho Hlomuka, MPL

KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government

Dear MEC Hlomuka,

**RE: Urgent Intervention Required for National School Nutrition Programme Disruptions**

I trust this letter finds you well.

I am writing to formally bring to your attention the critical disruptions to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in KwaZulu-Natal, particularly in uMngeni Municipality. These disruptions, caused by the financial instability resulting from the closure of Ithala Bank, have severely affected service providers responsible for delivering meals to schools. Consequently, thousands of vulnerable learners have been left without their daily meals, which are essential to their well-being and learning capacity.

Our recent oversight visits to uMngeni Municipality confirmed that the following five rural schools have been significantly impacted:

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* Lions River Primary – 200 learners
* Crystal Springs Primary – 422 learners
* Curry’s Post Primary – Approximately 400 learners
* Morton Primary – Approximately 350 learners
* Jabula Combined – Approximately 400-450 learners

In total, nearly 1,800 learners have been left without access to their meals due to the inability of service providers to continue food deliveries. Given the vital role that the NSNP plays in ensuring the health and education of these children, we find this situation wholly unacceptable.

The DA appreciates the swift intervention of uMngeni Municipality Mayor Chris Pappas, who has allocated disaster relief funds to support these five schools in the interim. However, this is not a sustainable long-term solution, and immediate intervention from your department is required to restore full functionality to the NSNP.

As such, we request the following from your office:

1. An urgent plan outlining the immediate steps the Department of Education will take to ensure that the affected schools receive the necessary meals without further delay.
2. A detailed report on the number of schools across the province that have been affected by this disruption.
3. A contingency plan to prevent similar disruptions in the future, particularly in light of the financial difficulties faced by service providers relying on Ithala Bank.

The Democratic Alliance believes that no child should go hungry due to administrative and financial challenges. We urge your office to act with the urgency and seriousness this crisis demands. We look forward to your response detailing the interventions being put in place to ensure that all affected learners receive their daily meals as a matter of priority.

*Yours Sincerely,*

**Hon. Sakhile Mngadi, MPL**

**DA KZN Spokesperson on Education**