



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
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MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE IN TERMS OF RULE 130 OF THE STANDING RULES OF THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

I hereby move in terms of Rule 130 of the Standing Rules that this House:

NOTING:

- That the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) remains one of the most vital interventions to address child hunger, poverty, and educational inequality in our country;
- That in the Eastern Cape, more than 1.6 million learners depend on the NSNP;
- That, despite the Department of Education being allocated over R1.8 billion for the NSNP in the 2025/26 financial year, and more than R5.6 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, the reality on the ground remains dire;
- That in 2023/24, several cases of food poisoning were reported at schools, including 340 pupils who were taken to St Barnabas Hospital after two food poisoning outbreaks at Ndamase Senior Secondary;
- That between 12 and 15 August 2025, a total of 169 cases of foodborne illness were reported at Gobizizwe Agricultural School;
- That symptoms among learners included abdominal pain or cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea, headache, dizziness, fever, weakness, and dehydration;
- That all affected learners reported consuming samp, chicken, carrots, beetroot, and gravy provided through the school's daily nutrition programme.

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FURTHER NOTING:

- That on 29 October 2024, the Eastern Cape Department of Education issued a memorandum to schools noting that a stance had been taken to ensure that schools implement the food safety policy guidelines as stipulated in the National School Nutrition Programme Revised Guidelines;
- That there is growing concern over the widespread non-compliance of school kitchens with basic health and safety standards across the Eastern Cape;
- That the Department has reportedly instructed schools to redirect savings from learner absenteeism towards kitchen infrastructure, effectively shifting the cost of critical infrastructure onto schools already struggling with severe resource constraints;
- That, in many schools, meals are still being prepared on bare floors, in makeshift structures, with no proper food storage, hygiene standards, or safety protocols in place;
- That out of 712 schools in Buffalo City and the Amathole West District, only four were found to be compliant with basic food safety regulations;
- That the above is now the subject of legal proceedings to close all non-compliant kitchens for which the Department is to file opposing papers by 3 September 2025;

THEREFORE, THIS HOUSE RESOLVES THAT:

1. The recent outbreak of foodborne illness at Gobizizwe Agricultural School be recognised as a warning of systemic failures within the National School Nutrition Programme.;
2. A full, province-wide audit of all school kitchen infrastructure and food preparation facilities must be commissioned by the Department, with clear timelines, public reporting, and an action plan to address non-compliance
3. The Eastern Cape Department of Education ring-fence dedicated funding within the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) budget for safe and compliant kitchen infrastructure, equipment, and food safety training;
4. The MEC for Education table a comprehensive report before this House outlining (i) the current state of kitchen infrastructure; (ii) the extent of non-compliance; (iii) plans to address kitchen infrastructure backlogs; and (iv) enforcement protocols and/or measures for evaluation of compliance;

5. Further calls for the development of enforceable provincial norms and standards for school kitchen safety and operations, in collaboration with the Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders.

I so move.



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Hon. Horatio Hendricks, MPL
Shadow MEC for Education
Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature