



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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29 April 2026

Hon. Minister Barbara Creecy
Minister for Transport
National Parliament of South Africa
Parliament Street, Cape Town

Re: Call for Immediate Intervention- Section 100(1)(a) - Collapsing Scholar Transport- Eastern Cape:

Dear Hon. Minister Creecy

I hope this finds you in good spirits

It is with profound concern that I write the following to bring to your attention the imminent humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Eastern Cape as the provincial scholar transport system teeters on the brink of collapse. Thousands of Eastern Cape learners face being stranded as scholar transport operators prepare to strike over unpaid invoices and the growing instability of the provincial scholar transport system.

In response to parliamentary questions from the Democratic Alliance, Transport MEC Xolile Nqatha revealed that 115 379 learners are currently being transported across six districts. However, the Eastern Cape Department of Education's 2026 database identifies 159 361 qualifying learners, leaving 43 982 deserving learners without transport. The Department's response shows that transporting the 115 379 learners already on the system will cost R1.204 billion in the 2026/27 financial year. A further 47 661 learners must still be added following the Makhanda High Court order, at an additional cost of R387.7 million. This brings the total required budget for scholar transport to R1.592 billion to transport 163 040 learners.

The current allocation of R871.9 million falls far short of what is needed, placing both learners and operators in an impossible position. The crisis has already reached the point of non-payment. MEC Nqatha confirmed that R67.46 million in invoices from August to November 2025 remain unpaid, while January 2026 invoices were still being quantified by districts at the time of the reply.

With accruals and outstanding invoices of over R340 million, inclusive of the R270 million from an excess facility payable on 1 April 2026, this leaves the Department with an estimated R400 million available, barely a third of what is required to transport all qualifying learners in 2026 and the consequences are devastating.

There are currently 2 371 registered scholar transport operators across the province. If these operators are not paid, routes will collapse, learners will be stranded, and the poorest communities will suffer first. This failure strikes at the heart of the state's constitutional and statutory obligations. It disproportionately affects poor and rural learners who depend on government to provide safe, reliable access to school.

Subsequently, we request your consideration for a Section 100(1)(a) intervention, as outlined by the Constitution of South Africa, which allows the National Executive to intervene in provincial administration if a province fails to fulfil its executive obligations. The consequences of the potential suspension of the scholar transport are dire, particularly with the incoming winter months which pose significant threats of devastating cold fronts and floods.

Your urgent intervention into this impending crisis is tantamount.

I trust the above is in order and await further correspondence.

Kind regards,



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