

DEBATE ON THE 2008/2009 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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(UCDP)

Let me hasten to congratulate the department for having attained an unqualified audit report for the year under review though there are still some matters to be attended to.

Without taking anything from this feat it has to be pointed out that when 245 schools (14%) failed to submit financial statements by 30 June as stipulated in the South African Schools Act we have to hold our breath. One wonders where district, circuit and school officials are.

It is also unpardonable that invoices amounting to R31 148 788, 00 were not processed within the stipulated 30 days. This practice impacts on the service providers whose businesses eventually fold. It should not be allowed to recur.

We in the UCDP would like that the qualifications of all officials from the Head of Department to those in the circuit offices be shown in the departmental annual report. This serves to allay the fears of the public that those entrusted with the education of their children have themselves gone through the mill. This is one department in which cadre deployment should not be countenanced.

The gradual drop in the budget of the department over the past nine years is cause for concern. This legislature should stand up and speak out against this minuscule budget as it impacts negatively on the quality of education in the province. One wonders where the free education that was bandied around pre- 1994 is.

The annual report has brought to light that the once multiracial schools in most areas such as Mmabatho and Mogwase have ceased to exist. Nowadays pupils with the lighter hue are nowhere to be seen. The department and government in general should wake up to this unfortunate situation as it militates against social cohesion and the transformation of society.

It is gratifying to note that the products of our schools are being recruited by prestige universities such as Rhodes in Grahamstown. This happens notwithstanding that there are very few schools of the North West province among the top 100 schools in the country. The quality of the results is worth the while.

We have noted the breakdown according to race among managers in the department. We in the UCDP maintain that the same should be done to the teaching staff and the learners themselves. We should not be fooled that we live in a non-racial society when in fact that is only a slogan at political gatherings. We insist on this as we did it in the past and the demographics of the area were clearly depicted. It cannot be difficult to do if we maintain our quarterly and annual returns.

All races, black and white, seem to be represented in management positions; but the question is why there are few or no white learners in our neighbourhood. Have these managers and technocrats come to suck the juice from this fallen African cow and will leave once they have had their fill?

The schools nutrition programme should be closely monitored to ensure that schools in the remote and rural areas where poverty is manifested receive their rations on time.

Finally it does not help to continue complaining about less money when posts at the head office are in some instances duplicated. We should guard against a top heavy structure that will leave us with more chiefs than Indians.