

## MEC Dugmore briefs Joint Refugee Leadership Committee

Western Cape Education MEC Cameron Dugmore today (Thursday 24 July) welcomed an opportunity to meet with the Joint Refugee Leadership Committee of the Western Cape as the representatives of communities displaced by attacks on foreign nationals.

MEC Dugmore, together with Deputy Director-General for Institutional Development and Coordination Sindi Lingela and Communications Director Paddy Attwell briefed the leadership representatives on the department's strategy to support learners and provide education.

MEC Dugmore explained that the department deployed senior managers and district officials to more than 50 sites to identify children of school-going age needing special support. "The WCED worked with local schools, volunteers and donors to provide this support. The support was generally short-term and ad hoc, given immediate needs and the uncertain future of the sites.

"The WCED found very few children of school-going age in the sites. Most of the displaced children were pre-schoolers. There were about 99 children of school-going age in the sites at the end of June."

However the group informed the MEC that there are still some learners not receiving schooling, and the department will follow this up. They have also requested information on adult education and bursaries, which the department will provide.

The Joint Refugee Leadership Committee expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the senior leadership of WCED, and said they looked forward to continuing this relationship.

\* Attached is the presentation made to the meeting by MEC Dugmore.

# Western Cape Education Department

## Displaced learners – update Wednesday, 23 July 2008

### 1. Background

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) developed and implemented a strategy in June to support learners displaced by attacks on foreign nationals in late May 2008.

The department deployed senior managers and district officials to more than 50 sites to identify children of school-going age needing special support.

The WCED worked with local schools, volunteers and donors to provide this support. The support was generally short-term and ad hoc, given immediate needs and the uncertain future of the sites.

The WCED found very few children of school-going age in the sites. Most of the displaced children were pre-schoolers. There were about 99 children of school-going age in the sites at the end of June, before the start of the July school holiday.

The WCED planned for four scenarios:

- Providing access to learning in sites
- Reintegrating learners in their former schools
- Integrating learners in schools close to relevant sites, and
- Using existing schools to accommodate displaced learners after school hours.

### 2. WCED approach

In addition to visiting sites, the WCED used its computer-based learner tracking system to identify more than 3 000 immigrant learners in Western Cape schools from other African countries.

Officials contacted schools to monitor absenteeism of these learners to obtain an idea of how many may have been affected by the attacks. The results showed that most of these learners were attending school as usual.

Sites with children of school-going age in June included camps at Silverstream, Soetwater, Blue Waters and Youngsfield; community halls in Bothasig, Richmond and Summer Greens; and His People and Lighthouse churches.

By the end of June, displaced learners at some sites were making their own way to school. In some cases, schools provided transport and food to learners in nearby sites so that they can attend school. In other cases, teachers from nearby schools or volunteers provided support at sites.

### 3. Third term

The WCED has identified 172 learners of school-going age at sites for IDPs since 14 July, the start of the third term. Almost all are primary school learners. The sites are the following:

District	Site	Learners	Teachers	Comment
North	Silwerstroom resort, Atlantis	13	0	Parents want teacher to teach in camp, do not want transport
	Bothasig Community Hall	7	0	Attending Bosmandam Primary
	Richwood Community Hall	18	0	Were attending Wolraad Woltemade, IDPs hostile, school has withdrawn support
	Parow Methodist Church	7	0	Former Mitchells Plain schools. IDPs given notice – interventions depend on outcome
	Norwood Methodist Church	11	0	As per above
East	Harmony Park	To be assessed	0	Learners have been placed/are attending school
	Sarepta Sports Hall	2	0	Transported daily to Kalkfontein PS
South	Youngsfield	40	1	Classes provided on site
	Blue Waters	59	0	WCED to provide two teachers
	Soetwater	15	0	WCED/Kommetjie Primary to provide contract teacher

Summary: The WCED is working with 10 sites that are accommodating displaced learners. The total of 172 learners tends to corroborate the 200 given by civil society organisations, in that the WCED still requires a figure from Harmony Park.

Learners from three sites are attending school (Harmony Park, and halls in Bothasig and Sarepta).

Learners were attending school at a fourth site (Richwood), until the IDPs chased away a liaison officer working with the community, and the school involved withdrew support (Wolraad Woltemade).

The WCED has appointed a teacher at one site (Youngsfield), and is appointing or is considering teachers at three others (Silwerstroom, Soetwater and Blue Waters).

Interventions at two other sites (Parow and Norwood Methodist Churches) depend on the outcome of notices given to IDPs staying at these churches.

The WCED regards all of these interventions as short-term, given plans to consolidate key sites in two camps at Retreat and Milnerton to accommodate the remaining IDPs who have not yet reintegrated or integrated into broader society.

The WCED understands that it may take up to four weeks to establish these sites. The department will make appropriate arrangements to meet the education needs of learners in these sites once they are established.

## **5. Curriculum and special education support**

The WCED's Curriculum Directorate has developed resource materials to support teaching and learning on the issue of xenophobia at schools in general.

The materials include lesson plans and leaflets and cover all levels within the schooling system.

The WCED's Metro North District has developed a programme on diversity with a school with an immigrant population of about 50%, which provides a use model for schools with similar enrolments.

Schools will have an important role to play to facilitate reintegration in the medium to long term and the WCED will continue to work with schools to ensure successful reintegration.

Many schools have responded positively to the situation in a variety of ways. The WCED is aware of these initiatives, thanks to an appeal to schools to report "acts of kindness" by schools or other initiatives that they may be aware of in their communities.