



SOUTH AFRICAN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT TEACHERS UNITED

SAECDTU

"Advocating for the dignity of teachers - Justice for teachers by teachers"

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Minister Siviwe Gwarube

National Department of Basic Education

222 Struben Street

Tshwane

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Dear Honourable Minister Gwarube

**Re: Justice For ECD | Grade R Teachers - Dignity Memorandum
Hand-Over to Minister Siviwe Gwarube #ItsYourCall!**

A warm welcome to you Honourable Minister, to your new public office of South Africa's National Basic Education. A department in which the whole Economy & GDP of the country depends on. Unfortunately, practitioners of the Department of Education, particularly the Grade R / ECD are degradable, regressed unequally & inequitably so, as the state employed teachers.

It is high-time we treat the elementary Educators or Practitioners in dignity in South Africa, as they play a great role in the development of our children, at a very critical stage that needs a rare skill of an ECD | Grade R Practitioners/Teachers. The Law of Numeracy teaches us to value No. '0' as the beginning of the timeline; this can only be imparted from Gr R, as a build-up towards basic and higher education.

The performance and monitoring and evaluation in the Presidency, released a full thesis of *"The Impact of the Introduction of Grade R on learning outcomes"* comprised of the Department of Education, Gauteng Department of Education, Centre of Learning on Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) and the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, in which was approved by the the Steering Committee. The outcome was positive and overwhelmingly expanded between 2001 and 2012 in public and independent schools from 242 000 to 768 000. More classes were acquired per year. 1.

And a further 55 000 children were attend Grade R in ECD centres amounting to a total of 804 000 Grade Rs. It further stated, children attending preschool may perform better in school and returns on investment are greatest. It was advisable, that, Grade R should be aligned with ECD pedagogical practice and be a “watered-down” Grade 1. A review was organised around two themes that formed the basis of the arguments for increased public investment in early learning interventions:

1. **Educational efficiency:** Early learning programmes increase the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of school expenditures by improving test scores and the chance of school completion, and reducing drop-out syndrome, repetition and the need for remedial support. (**The question remains:** “*What about the ECD | Grade R Teachers, who are state employed partners for the execution of this National program.*”)
2. **Economic efficiency:** The early years are the most cost-effective period in the child’s life in which to invest. Events in the early years of a child’s life influence the child’s productivity and learning ability throughout life. (**The question remains:** “*What about the ECD | Grade R Teachers economic situation.*”)

Throughout the transition and integration of the Grade R since 1998 to-date; Grade R Teachers are experiencing a dyer, cruel and soulless Education system in a developing state which is subjected to changes timeously, in which enslaves the teachers as ‘*trial & error*’ or ‘*educational guinea pigs*’.

On the 22 July 2024, we lost an incredible woman Grade R teacher, in Ugu District, who succumbed to sickness and pass away, dishonoured and disgraced by the Department of Basic Education; have worked fir 30 years as a Grade R Teacher but not part of the system, was in yearly contract with no benefits and ultimately with no pension. It is a lesson the Department and The Minister should undertake and mitigate in order to avoid a massacre comprised of all teachers who pass on earth after serving donkey years but economically abused and neglected by the Department.

As SAECDTU, we hereby remind the Minister, you are the hope to all ECD | Grade R state employed teachers. Responsible to permanently employ them, those who came first for security and stability. 2.

ECD | Grade R Teachers Demand JUSTICE!

Why is this important?

Every South African is affected by an ECD | Grade R Teacher one way or the other; in a positive way of Education. These Practitioners | Teachers are very important and critical to the upbringing and grooming of our children with special skills imparted on infants at a preparatory stage on a clean slate, in which is a critical state in the life of a human being.

We always ask a similar question: “Why are teachers underpaid and with less benefits while they produce all careers such as Medical Doctors, Lawyers, Social Workers, Police, Public Servants, Surgeons, Scientists, Corporate Business, Politicians, and more.

It is well known that state employed servants such as teachers; must be well taken by the government even after adhering an state pension contribution, equal to 13% of their basic salary, and a thirteenth cheque. But it is not the case with most Grade R Teachers; the Ministry of Education is alleged to recompense or pay all pension fund to teachers at a once off payment for only two years of all the years they served South Africa and without a monthly government employee pension fund contribution.

Teachers who have a Relative Equivalent Qualification Value (REQV) 10-14, are still not permanent, having worked for 16 years, with a slavery tactic salary incomparable to the Grade 1 to 12.

In 2001, the South African government introduced Grade R as a year of schooling for all children turning six years old by 30 June of that year, making it compulsory for all public schools. **This was based on belief that Early Childhood Development is the foundation of a child’s future education and success.**

SAECDTU advocates for Justice & demands the positive responses **immediately**, some in **7 Days**, some in **14 working days** and some **within the first 100 days** of the Minister in office.

All grievances were compressed for its commonality, and personal cases would be attended by advocates for a thorough demand through a class action, only when the Apex court could agree to hear us and settle this matter once and for all. We say “*Enough-is-enough!*” 3.

The ECD | Grade R injustices are a ‘pandemic’ in South Africa, declared as of this day by SAECDTU.

Grievances & Demands for Grade R | ECD

1. Since 2001, most of the Grade R Teachers are on a fixed-term contract, on a year basis, without compensation of benefits and in which results to no pension.
2. Fundamental to the recognition of qualifications, most Grade R teachers are holders of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) or National N3 Certificate in Educare and with the National Certificate N4 Educare for Primary education. N4 is equivalent to NQF Level 5, a Higher Certificate qualification which comprise to REQV 10-12 (120 Credits): (M+0=REQV10), (M+1=REQV11) & (M+2=REQV12).
3. Most of the Grade R Teachers have done N4 to N6 which is equivalent to a National Diploma (180 Credits).
4. In accordance to the salary notch, Grade R teachers are supposed to be compensated according to their qualifications & experience including benefits, in which it is not the case. Most of them have been earning ‘stipend’ to-date; for example: in Free State, teachers are still paid stipend. SAECDTU advocates for an equitable deal for the Grade R teachers, to be paid accordingly with all benefits such as permanent positions, housing or rent allowance, 13th cheque, medical aid subsidy and a dignified retirement payout. The state must shun away from the shenanigans of maladministration and day light heist alleged.
5. In the case of national absorption of the ECD | Grade R to the National Basic Education; the transition is biased and frustrating. Most of our teachers who served for years (i.e. 16 years), are to be paid only for two(2) without a monthly payment by the government employee pension fund (GEPPF).
6. Since 1998, for the past 26 years, in Dr Nelson Mandela’s tenure, the integration into mainstream schooling has been a nightmare and all Ministers of Basic Education have failed to implement such a simplistic major of national importance. We hope that you Hon. Minister shall seize this opportunity to truly restore the dignity of our Grade R teachers all over South Africa, IT’S YOUR CALL NOW!

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7. Most of the Grade R Teachers are not permanently employed and were promised by the Department since 2012, nothing has been done to-date.
8. In 2019, MEC Panyaza Lesufi invited all Grade R Teachers to Rhema Bible Church in Randburg, encouraging the teachers to study, not knowing that most of Grade R Teachers are equally qualified to the ones at Grade 1 - 7.
9. Our women teachers are facing ruthlessness from the Department, they do not have maternity leave, must bring a substitute teacher or assistant when on maternity.
10. Most of the Grade R Teachers who are deceased, their children are not paid out pension fund and a monthly contribution by the government employee pension fund, only because they are not included in the system while they teach our children daily.
11. Grade R Teachers were told to work for ten (10) years before earning a monthly basic salary and pension fund. Who does that in our country? It's an ongoing maltreatment and degradation of our state employed teachers by officials. (*Affidavit and testimonial of the declaration is at hand*)
12. New initiatives such as *amapanyaza* are better comparing to the Grade R Teachers with the NSC, undergraduate & postgraduate qualifications.
13. Thousands of Unemployed Grade R Diploma graduates are rooming the streets of South Africa, struggling and seeking for jobs though capped. It is now public knowledge, Grade R Teachers Diploma must be phased out.
14. Provinces are defying fixed-term contracts, for example: In KwaZulu Natal Grade R Teachers are subjected to contracts, though qualified and stipends for years. All Diploma holder are unable to get a job.
15. In Western Cape, thousands of Grade R Teachers are still not in the system, contracted by SGB, and paid by the school.
16. In Gauteng, thousands of Grade R Teachers are earning stipends and do not have benefits.

17. In Free State, thousands of Grade R Teachers are earning stipends for more than 16 years, without a proper contract and absorption to the system.
 18. In North West, thousands of Grade R Diploma graduates are left stranded and struggling after the MEC announced a phase out without a proper consultation.
 19. In Eastern Cape, thousands of Grade R Teachers are not yet absorbed in the system as practitioners, resorts to a fixed-term contract on a year basis, with no benefits e.g. UIF, Medical Aid, House allowance, 13th cheque and pension fund.
 20. ECD Teachers are abused by Principals, financially, threatened at all times to be sacked in no base, just pure illicit control.
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Demands Categorically:

We demand,

Timeframe: Immediately

1. The Minister to sign a stakeholder agreement with the ECD | Grade R in South Africa -
 2. The Minister must absorb and capacitate all Grade R | ECD Teachers, not phase them out.
 3. The Minister must afford all Grade R | ECD teachers a permanent position.
 4. The Minister must increase the salaries across-board, Grade R according to the Grade R salary notch.
 5. The Minister must reconsider, as overhauling the curriculum, to endorse teachers training and short courses for capacity.
 6. The Minister must scrap fixed-term contracts throughout all Provinces.
 7. The Minister must grant all women, Grade R Teachers a fully paid maternity leave by the Department of Basic Education.
 8. The Minister must deal away with stipends and afford teachers their worth.
 9. The Minister has the power to roll-out an accountability campaign in schools, pertaining budgets and funds.
 10. The Minister must hire new Grade R Diploma graduates immediately.
 11. The Minister must immediate absorption all qualified teachers (in Diploma in Grade R / BEd / NPDE) for Grade R teachers in KZN who are already in the system.
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We Demand,

Timeframe: Seven (7) to Fourteen (14) Days

1. The Minister should increase the Budget for ECD | Grade R.
 2. The Minister through proper consultation, should visit all provinces, in companied by our Grade R Teachers in their respective provinces, for stock taking and heart-to-heart engagement with the alleged Grade R Teachers. This act shall change your life indefinitely.
 3. The Minister to have a meeting with SAECDTU leadership for further deliberations and understanding.
 4. The Minister to identify all teachers who die or died without a pension fund have been working for donkey years.
 5. The Minister to deliver a bill on Grade R | ECD in the parliament to enhance its Employability, Budget and partnerships to attend to the Grade R | ECD once an for all in South Africa.
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We Demand,

Timeframe: Hundred (100) Days

- The Minister to commit in a vision statement to transform the Basic of Education to betterment and supersede all administrations before her.
 - The Minister should have dealt with the above grievances with dignity and respect, notwithstanding that most of our elderly teacher are without pension fund. The Minister should assist all Grade R Teachers who are about to exit the system without pensions.
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SAECDTU advocates for Justice and demands a positive response in **14 working days**, within the **first 100 days** of the **Minister in office**.

All lies of enticement that Grade R is a fundamental and elementary phase but yet mistreated by the Ministry of Education for donkey years. With some alleged propagandised plans to rob Grade R Teachers and families their hard earned monies in the name of a prolonged false promised permanency and absorption in the system, while we age daily and some resorts to retirement with no benefits after serving the country earnestly and producing careers and affecting the economy positively but still degraded, regressed and forgotten.

The Hon. Minister has a prerogative to officialise all Grade R Teachers with relevant permanent posts, benefits and retirement funds. As the system failed us since the Former President Nelson Mandela tenure in 1998, when Grade R was supposed to be integrated and absorbed by the Department of Education to-date; **IT IS YOUR CALL MINISTER TO BREAK THE CURSE AND BLESS OUR GRADE R TEACHERS!**

The whole world must know how South Africa treats her own public servants, state employed teachers in respect and dignity.

#JusticeForECDGradeRTeachers
#MinisterSiviweGwarube_IT'S YOUR CALL!
#InjusticetoOneInjusticetoAll

Signature(s):

SAECDTU Representative: Dr BJ Langa

Signature: _____ 24 July 2024 Tshwane.

National Department of Basic Education: **Office of the Minister:**

Representative: Surname _____ Name(s) _____

Designation: _____

Signature: _____ 24 July 2024 Tshwane .