

13 September 2024

## STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

### Minister Gwarube Responds to Anticipated Signing of BELA BILL

I have taken note of President Cyril Ramaphosa's anticipated signing of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill (the Bill).

I have always and remain opposed to the Bill in its current form and have requested the President to refer it back to Parliament for reconsideration in terms of section 79 of the Constitution.

I have also provided inputs on why this should be done. To this end, I have raised the following issues -

- The constitutionality of provisions on the implementation of admissions and language policies determined by the governing bodies of public schools; and
- The need for a phased approach to implementing Grade R as a compulsory and permanent feature of the basic education system based on the capacity of provincial education departments, public schools, and early childhood development centres to offer access to Grade R to all learners who require it.

Parliament must be allowed to fix what is currently wrong with the Bill so that millions of learners across the country can access and receive quality education for a better South Africa.

In the context of a Government of National Unity, it is essential that compromises reflect the people's will. That is why I have been engaged with the President on this matter. We must consider the objections to the Bill and ensure that it is rectified to avoid protracted and costly legal action.

I have thus written to the President and notified him that, in the present circumstance, I cannot attend today's signing ceremony until concerns regarding the Bill are rectified. I remain ready to serve South Africa and ensure that millions of learners across the country can access quality education.

#### Media Enquiries

Lukhanyo Vangqa - 066 302 1533  
Ministerial Spokesperson

**ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

Lukhanyo Vangqa: Media Liaison Officer – 066 302 1533



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Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

