

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MTHATHA AREA)**

06-09-2024

Feedback: Meeting with Efata School for the Blind Management and members

Efata School for the Blind and Deaf has been targeted by extortionists, demanding a R50 000 ransom with threats of severe violence, abduction of learners living with albinism, and arson if the demand is not met by 6 September 2024. The PSA was called to intervene. The matter was escalated to the Office of the Premier, demanding urgent intervention.

In a letter addressed to the Premier, the PSA made the following inputs: Urgent *Imbizo* with all stakeholders, immediate deployment of security, temporary closure of the School, Department of Education support, and regular updates.

The PSA met with members on 5 September 2024. Whilst the meeting was ongoing, the School management requested a combined meeting with all unions and staff to pave a way forward. A meeting ensued and the lack of security, demanding a need for extra security, was emphasised. Management conceded to the demand and undertook to approach the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) for extended security functions. The PSA was informed telephonically that the EPWP program was overstretched with security demands and the Department is now in the process of 'beefing up' security. A meeting to discuss the matter with the School Governing Body (SGB) is planned for 9 September 2024. Regarding the temporary closure of the School, it was reported that the School cannot be closed as learners are still on the school premises writing Grade-12 trial examinations. Police visibility and patrolling were promised to enhance security measures.

The PSA expressed dismay regarding the compromised protection of employees and reminded the employer of its role to ensure a safe working environment for its employees. The PSA demanded to form part of the meeting with the SGB to put more emphasis on the matter. The request was declined with the undertaking that unions will be informed of the outcome of this meeting on 9 September 2024.

Members will be informed of developments

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER