

EDUCATION SERIES

JUN-JUL 2026<https://equaleducation.org.za>

ABOUT OUR ORGANISATION

Equal Education (EE) is a youth-led mass democratic movement of learners, post-school youth, parents, teachers and community members who use mobilisation and public action, supported by research, to empower young activists and ensure equality in South African education.

50 YEARS AFTER 1976, BLACK LEARNERS FROM WORKING CLASS FAMILIES AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES ARE STILL FIGHTING FOR ACCESS TO EDUCATION



In this month's education series, we reflect on:

- Equal Education marched to the Western Cape premier's and education MEC's offices, demanding access to education for unplaced learners.
- Memorandum of demands reflecting on 1976 lessons and demanding the Western Cape Education Department address systemic challenges that continue to exclude learners from marginalised communities.
- Youth-Led Accountability Convening
- Law and policy

Equal Education marched to the Western Cape premier's and education MEC's offices, demanding access to education for unplaced learners



Members of Equal Education marching to the offices of the Western Cape Premier and the Western Cape Education MEC on 15 June 2026 in Cape Town.

Read more, as covered by:

DAILY MAVERICK

TheCitizen

EWN EYEWITNESS NEWS

The Star

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eNCA

Memorandum of demand reflecting on 1976 lessons and demanding the Western Cape Education Department address systemic challenges that continue to exclude learners from marginalised communities

TO: Premier of the Western Cape, Mr. Alan Winde TO: MEC for Education, Western Cape, Mr. David Maynier
FROM: Equal Education (EE) DATE: 15 June 2026

Political statement

Tomorrow marks 50 years since the Soweto uprising. In 1976, over 2000 learners from Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu marched through the streets of Cape Town, demanding better education for Black learners. 50 years later, the chickens have come home to roost, and learners from the same marginalised communities are still marching for the same cause.

Even worse, 50 years later, Black learners are not only fighting for better resourcing and learning conditions in Western Cape schools but also for access to them. We are here. Still marching. We are still demanding. We are still burying the same dream and digging it up again, year after year, with bloodied hands and unbowed hearts. In 2026, Black learners are fighting for equitable and meaningful access to education, classrooms, and safe school environments. Over the years, Black learners have been left behind. At the beginning of every school year, it has become a norm in the Western Cape that Black learners are kept out of school.

Today is not accidental. This is a pattern. Black learners have been subjected to this pattern of events. It has become a norm that Black learners are to miss the first term, the second term or even the entire school year because of the lack of available school places.

Parents are continuously sent from pillar to post with no clear direction from schools, education districts, or the provincial department, hopelessly searching for school places for their children in the Western Cape. As we stand here today, half-way through the school year, Black learners are without school places. It is Black learners who are kept out of school by the Western Cape government. Today, we are putting a stop to that. Today, we are calling on the Western Cape government to take the life of a Black child seriously; the future of a Black child must be taken seriously by the Western Cape Government. Equal Education, since its existence, has been at odds with the Western Cape government for ensuring the realisation of the right to basic education and ensuring that every learner in the province is not left out.

Equal Education has been fighting in courts, in the streets, in parliament and in communities to ensure that no one is left behind. One learner left out of school is a future destroyed. Black learners can no longer bear the cost of their futures being squandered by a government that deprioritises their education.

When you deny a child a school place, you do not merely delay their education. You send a message, a message written in silence and in closed doors that their lives matter less. That their dreams are negotiable. That they were born into the wrong community, the wrong skin, the wrong side of the Western Cape and a province with a painful history for Black people.

We march today so that in another 50 years, our children will not be standing in these same streets, fighting the same fight, and weeping the same tears.

“I am 16 years old, and I used to study science subjects in school, and I have applied to 6 or 7 schools by myself—I am now being told that I should get a job. I want to learn, I do not want a job!” an unplaced learner

“Thato has been continuously failed by the schooling system. We have been sent from pillar to post after seeing that she has special education needs—we made the decision to move from Khayelitsha to Kerkriever to try to get her a school, but we were told by the school that she is now 15 and would therefore badly influence the younger learners in her class. She is now sitting back at home.” grandmother of an unplaced learner

“Asake migrated from Gauteng to the Western Cape. I applied and was placed at a school. However, when I went to the school, I was asked for the original copy of his documents—I went back to the school with those documents and was told that I must hand over his report card as well. After this, I was told his marks were not good enough, and the school was full. The district also said there is nothing they can do” mother of an unplaced learner

My child is 7 years old and sitting in school. I did not have an ID because of issues with Home Affairs, but I finally have it. However, my child still does not have a birth certificate. When I went to apply at a school, I was told by the principal that he does not accept foreigners at the school. My child has never been in a classroom” mother of unplaced learner

Continue reading the memorandum here

Youth-Led Accountability Convening hosted by the Equal Education



On 20 June 2026, Equal Education along with the Equal Education Law Centre and National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB) led a Youth Accountability Convening at Constitution Hill.

This event brought together youth formations, learner movements, civil society organisations, unions, and community activists to reflect on education accountability and democratic participation in our schools, 50 years on from the 1976 youth uprising.

The programme included a political grounding panel tying our collective work to the legacy of 1976, reflections from learners and organisers on the ground, and a critical panel discussion on anti-corruption tools and tactics available to schooling communities in this political moment.

Law and policy monitoring

Parliament

Portfolio on Basic Education

On 02 June 2026, the Portfolio Committee convened to engage with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), Equal Education, and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) on issues relating to learner admissions and the placement of learners not attending school, with particular focus on reports of unplaced learners in the Western Cape. Access the meeting report [here](#).

Portfolio Committee on Finance in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature

Equal Education made a submission to the Finance Portfolio Committee in response to a call for public comment on the 2026 KZN Appropriations Bill (the KZN Budget). EE raised concerns relating to the mismanagement and severe shortage of funds for water and sanitation infrastructure in schools, maintenance and furniture, learner transport, and salaries. The submission can be viewed [here](#).

Call for comments

Water and Sanitation Bill

The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation invites you to submit written comments on the National Water Amendment Bill by 30 July 2026. Access the draft Bill [here](#).

Court

Tafelberg case

Adonisi and Others v Minister for Transport and Public Works, Western Cape and Others

On 02 July 2026, after a decade of litigation, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of Ndifuna Ukwazi, Reclaim the City and others. The Constitutional Court declared the Western Cape Government's 2015 sale of the Tafelberg School site in Sea Point to a private school unlawful. The court ruled that the government failed to consider the land for affordable housing and consult the public. The judgment affirms the state's duty to redress spatial apartheid and use well-located public land for housing. Read the judgment [here](#).

BlindSA case

Ex parte President of the Republic of South Africa: In re Constitutionality of the Copyright Amendment Bill (CAB) and the Performers' Protection Amendment Bill

On Friday, 26 June 2026, the Constitutional Court found the Copyright Act unconstitutional for lacking an accessible-format exception, and read a temporary exception, section 13A, into the Act, with a 24-month deadline for Parliament to legislate permanently. Read the judgment [here](#).

