

A GUIDE & TEMPLATE FOR FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE LAW - MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, is making changes to the Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure (school infrastructure law). The [document](#) that has the changes was quietly published in the Government Gazette in June and has been put on the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) website. The document is difficult to understand but the Minister is asking the public to comment on her proposed changes by 31 July 2022!

What is the school infrastructure law?

After years of campaigning by Equal Education (EE) and eventually going to court, the DBE introduced the school infrastructure law in 2013. The law says what basic facilities schools must have and when they must have them. For example, the law says:

- Plain pit toilets are banned in schools.
- All schools made of unsafe materials like mud, asbestos, metal or wood must be fixed and those without water, electricity and toilets must have these by 29 November 2016.
- All schools must have enough classrooms, electricity, water and toilets, and get internet and school fences by 29 November 2020.
- All schools must have libraries and laboratories by 29 November 2023, and
- All schools must have other facilities like halls and sports fields by 29 November 2030.

So, it is illegal for schools not to have the things that the law says they must have.

Changes to the school infrastructure law

In 2018, EE went back to court to get the DBE to fix some of the problems in the school infrastructure law. Some of these problems were –

- **Provincial reports:** the reports explaining how they are fixing schools were not made public.
- **Escape clause:** the law said that our schools could only be fixed if other parts of government (such as Eskom) helped the DBE, but this would allow the Minister to avoid fixing our schools.
- **Schools to be built:** the law said that government must only fix schools made “entirely” of unsafe materials (e.g: mud, wood, asbestos and zinc) but there are schools that are also partly made of inappropriate parts.

In June 2022, the Minister published the proposed changes she wants to make to the law to fix these problems. But she wants to make other changes that will lead to schools falling apart for many more years! Here are some of the bad changes –

- **Deadlines:** Minister Motshekga wants to remove all the deadlines that say when government must get rid of pit toilets and provide schools with water, electricity, classrooms, fences,

laboratories and libraries. Without deadlines, learners and teachers could be waiting another 10 or 20 years for their schools to be fixed and it will be difficult to make education departments do their jobs!

- **Reports:** Minister Motshekga wants to remove the part of the law that tells provinces what to put in their infrastructure planning and progress reports. This means that provinces can send her reports with unhelpful or very little information!
- **Escape clause:** Minister Motshekga is still trying to hide from failing to fix our schools because the law still says that the DBE must “as far as practicable” (which means as far as possible) make sure that the different parts of government play their part in delivering school infrastructure. This makes room for excuses!

How do these changes to this law affect you?

The school infrastructure law is very important for learners, teachers and parents across the country because safe and proper school facilities are needed for quality education. The changes that Minister Motshekga is proposing will make it difficult to achieve a proper environment for teaching and learning. If some of these changes happen, learners who are in schools today might have children in the future who are still using pit toilets and learning in classrooms that are falling apart!

What can you do?

The changes that Minister Motshekga wants to make to the school infrastructure law are not final.

The public (**YOU**, parents, teachers and learners) have the chance to tell Minister Motshekga what to change and what to keep in the law. You can write your ideas and feedback about the changes in any language. If you want your voice heard, you can write it down below.

COMMENT ON THE CHANGES TO THE UNIFORM MINIMUM NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Individual details:

My name and surname is _____

and my address is

My cellphone number is _____ and my email address is

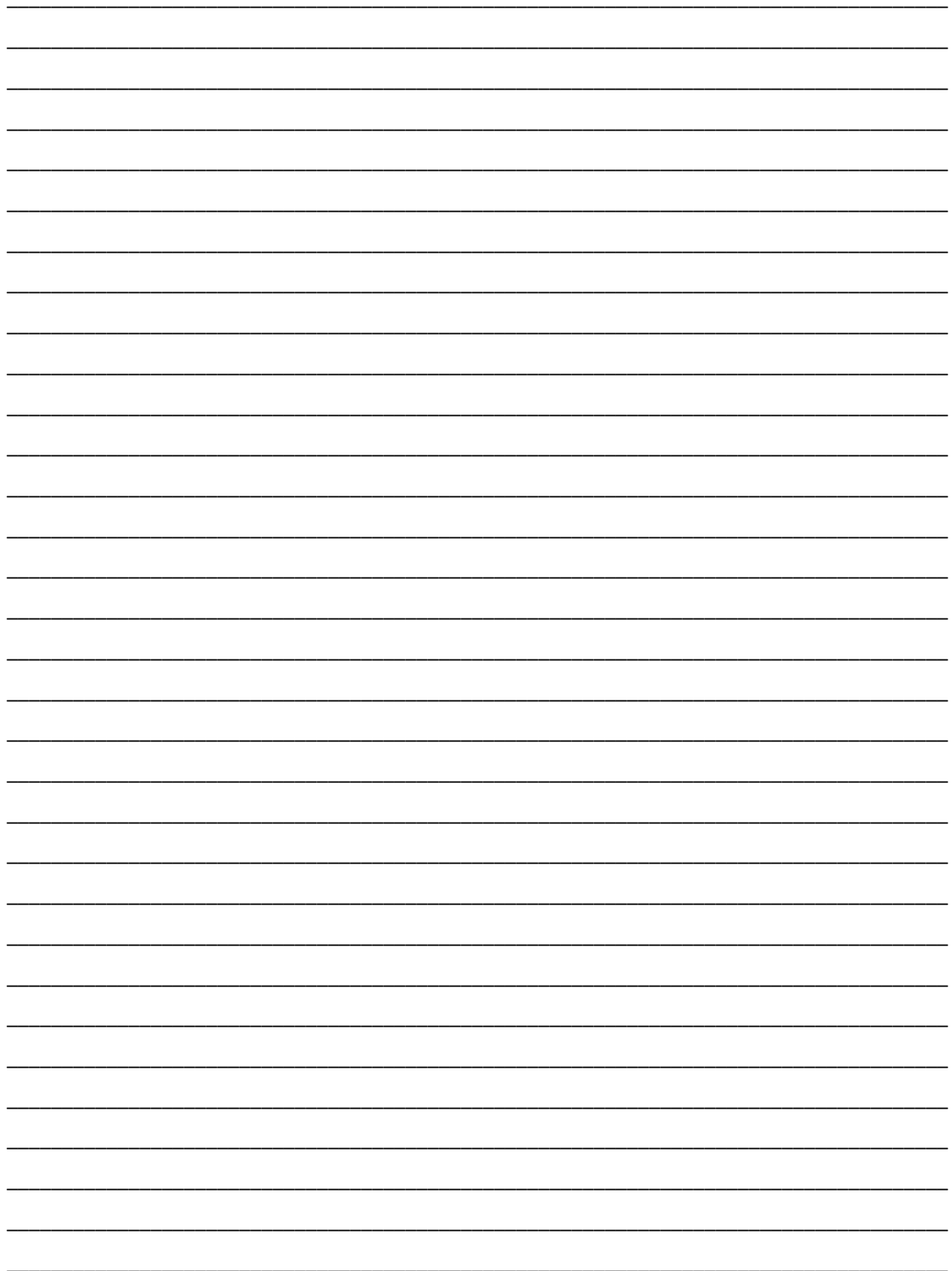
_____. I would prefer to be contacted via email /
cellphone / post (**please circle one**).

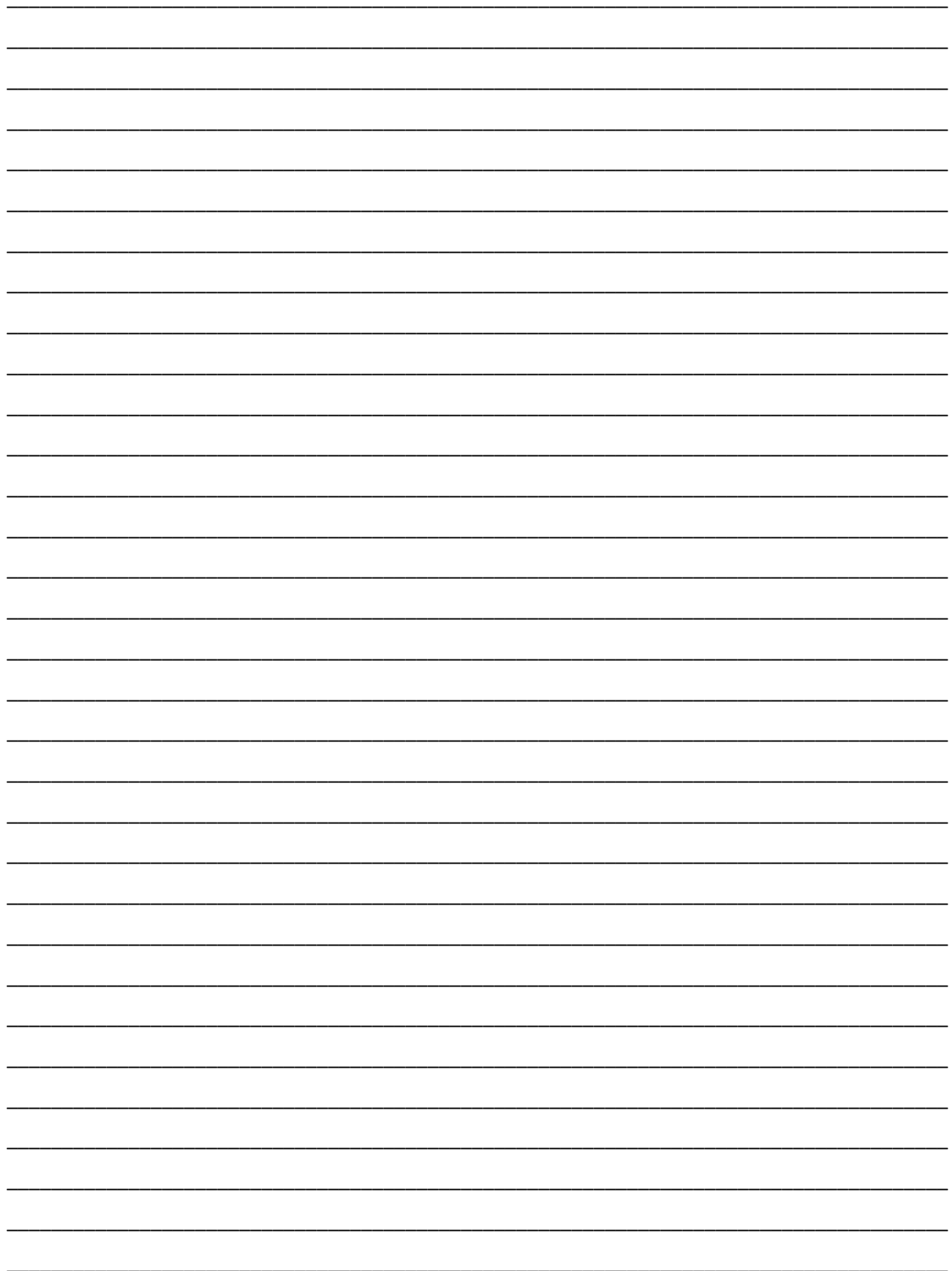
I am a learner / teacher / community member / parent (**please circle one**) and I am from (your school, your community, which province are you in):

Comment:

[illegible]

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To submit to the Department of Basic Education (DBE), please send to:

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Date: _____

Signature: _____

