

# EDUCATION SERIES

THURSDAY 04/2025

<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.



## REFLECTIONS ON WATER AND SANITATION IN SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL



It's 2026 and yet KwaZulu Natal scholars are still struggling with water and b

EqualEducation



Watch on  YouTube

## In this month's education series, we reflect about:

- Water and sanitation challenges facing learners in Kwazulu-Natal
- Writing feature: winners of the essay competition
- Equal Education Reading Revolution Campaign Survey
- Equal Education Reading Revolution Campaign Survey
- Law and policy

# ESSAY COMPETITION WINNERS

*Congratulations to our winners, Nhlanhla Minenhle Sibiyi, Equaliser from Ndlelanhle Secondary School, Grade 8, KwaZulu Natal and Asemable Mqondiso, Equaliser from Oscar Mpetha High School, Grade 12, Western Cape.*

## **The education challenges facing learners in South Africa.**

Being a South African learner is hard because we are in an undeveloped and an economically struggling country, that is why I am an equaliser. I want to fight for a better education for a black learner.

The most important struggle that we face in school is poor infrastructure. In South African schools we have broken windows and doors, we struggle the most in winter since it is a cold season. In schools we also have damaged chalkboards which affects learning negatively. We also do not have light bulbs at our classes, since matric attend night classes they struggle ending up bringing their own touch to school.

To resolve the issue of poor infrastructure the government can help us with the windows and doors and bring white boards or even boards that are controlled by remote so that learning can be easy with technology the teachers will have less work by writing endless notes on the chalkboard and learners will enjoy lessons because of visual learning.

It is heartbreaking to find out that some girls in South African schools still suffer from getting healthy sanitary pads. This is unacceptable because pads are the one thing that girls should get for free and in some South African schools' girls share the same toilets as boys. This can increase the pregnancy rate at schools which can decrease the pass rate of that school.

We can resolve the issue of sanitary pads by giving each South African school pads and stating a rule that says "Each and every girl should get a sanitary pack of pads every month" in that way girls would not suffer from not having pads. The toilets issue we can resolve by, that the government should ensure that each school has a divided toilet for girls and boys.

Language barrier is another obstacle that learners suffer from imagining being taught language that you cannot understand. You can feel like a fool and stay behind in your schoolwork. Many Schools in South Africa teach in English which most learners do not understand because their home language is IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sepedi etc. This confuses the learner and leads to failure.

If we can teach our learners in their own home language they can understand and the pass rate can increase to better. The subjects such as History, Physical Science, Mathematics, Agricultural Sciences, Life Sciences, etc. need to be taught in a language that you can understand because these subjects are complicated and hard, some other words are difficult for learners. An outdated curriculum is another obstacle that learners face. Learners want to learn in a new style that is not boring and which will make education fun and more enjoyable.

Learners get bored when a teacher comes to class with lots of notes that they cannot understand, let alone the notes that are hard to reach because they are too long with big words. Teachers need to invent something fun that can make education enjoyable. Teachers must come up with games or hobbies or even puzzles so that learners can solve having fun. Another thing that teachers can invent is songs that will make education fun. Let's take for example the processes that must be learnt in songs because it's hard to memorize them.

Overcrowding also affects learning, imagine a teacher is teaching a class with 90 learners in it, obviously it will be a noisy class with bad behaviour. Learners in that class will suffer from heat and suffocation. In a class of 50 learners it is hard to focus not only the learners but also the teachers. They will be too lazy to even enter that class and the class will fail.

We can resolve the issue of overcrowding by asking the government to build classes for learners. So that in a class learners can be 30 and learning would be easy, because teachers would enjoy teaching a cool class with few learners where noise is not available, only a class with learners that can listen to a teacher, and give some correct answers, the pass rate will increase.

Poverty is the crucial obstacle because in South Africa a lot of learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds, not that they are poor. Also, schools are poor. Some schools still have limited access to technology. I believe the government should stop authority and start locking out our country and invest in other country's businesses or build industries so that we can have a developed country like South Africans.

As an equaliser I think I have a right to better and equal Education. The government must give us the education that we need so that we can conquer and pursue our dreams.

**By Nhlanhla Minenhle Sibiyi**

## **The education challenges facing learners in South Africa.**

My name is Asemahle Mqondiso, I am a learner at Oscar Mpetha High School. I am part of the LC group. As I will be writing this essay sharing all the challenges we are facing at our schools in the whole of South Africa, and I will be sharing some possible solutions that may help resolve our challenges. As the South African youth, we are typically facing the same challenges in our schools, just that in some schools it's worse than the other schools. We believe schools are not just about books but about learning broader about our capabilities and talents thus involving arts and sports. As the youth we look deeper in getting more from schools and having school as a more interesting place to be.

We are currently facing issues like poor sanitation at schools. Where we have a problem with not having water in our toilets, not having toilet papers, dirty toilets, broken toilet doors and windows. It is very difficult to use such toilets especially being a female. It is a challenge having to use toilets that don't close properly because the doors and windows are broken and you don't have any sense of privacy. It is even a risk and a scary thing using dirty toilets where we are at risk of getting infections as girls due to germs. Another challenge we have is poor infrastructure, where we find it difficult to concentrate sitting on a broken chair and desk. Not feeling comfortable in class totally shifts one's attention from learning.

We also have broken windows, doors and leaking roofs. Which we find it very difficult to concentrate during rainy days because our classes tend to be very cold and wet. We have limited resources, where we have unfinished libraries and limited access to them. Sometimes it's not about having limited access to libraries but it's about not having resources that make it a Library. For example, not having enough books or computers to further our research or knowledge.

We go on with sports and arts (culture), our schools lack sport activities and arts. Some learners master arts and sports, not having those in our schools means their skills and abilities are not accommodated. Not just for those who master arts and sports but for those who seem to have interest in them and see themselves having to make a living out of them.

Unfair treatment, we get a lot of unfair treatment especially in black schools just because we are expected to be A+ learners. This is an unspoken truth, but it is experienced in learning areas. We get teachers that bully other kids due to the fact that they have low marks and consider them as learners that bring shame to them. Making learners find it difficult and uncomfortable to learn due to low self-esteem.

As I have broadly explained the challenges we are facing as learners in our schools. It is not easy to learn in such areas. We need full support as learners from our parents, community, and the government. Solving the issues we are facing as a nation in schools will require the government to step in fully and fund schools. Making sure that the standards of our education meet our requirements.

The government will have to make sure we have newly built toilets, classes, new chairs, desks, fixed roofs, doors, and finished libraries and excess resources to fill our knowledge and curiosity. Making it easy for learners to access sports and arts right in their schools. The government should monitor our schools making sure that development is in progress. There have to be monthly investigations done to check if learners are not facing any form of unfair treatment in schools.

Having student leadership is a power move we need as learners, standing firm enough not being afraid of stating our challenges as learners. It is most important that as learners we learn how to maintain our school properties. Educating learners on good, maintained schools will help increase the chances of having quality services lasting for years and years in our schools. Our biggest downfall as learners in our schools is ourselves, not being able to maintain things properly. Most learners destroy things on purpose and we as learners need to stop that. It would be a waste of money and time having the government building new facilities and yet destroying them.

It is such a great responsibility to make sure we learn in comfortable environments and we receive quality education. We have all the rights to good education and care, but we also have a huge responsibility which is to use our resources wisely. As the youth we have to learn to be responsible and value education. We really need to be honest with ourselves. We are given free education while others pay for it, all we need to do is to take education seriously and stop making excuses.

I am grateful to have been given a chance to express our needs as learners. I hope all I have said will be taken into consideration.

**By Asemahle Mqondiso,**

# Equal Education Reading Revolution Campaign Survey

## Love to Read? We Need Your Inputs



**Your input is requested regarding your preferences on and access to reading materials as well as any challenges to reading you have experienced in your school or campus and in your local community. Help us understand how a culture of a love for reading can be better nurtured and supported by government and other role players in the reading ecosystem by sharing your thoughts in our organisational survey. We'll keep your personal data and inputs totally confidential!**

**Ask your Equal Education Organising Team for a copy of the survey!**

**The due date for submission is Tuesday, 19 May 2026.**

# Law and policy monitoring

## Parliament

The Department of Basic Education has published Draft Regulations on management of learner pregnancy in school. The Regulations are published in terms of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, seeking to offer consistency among the school community on the management of learner pregnancies. The submission is due on 24 April 2026. Read the Draft Regulations [here](#).

The Department of Basic Education has also published the Draft New History Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for public comments. The call for comments invites the members of the public to make submissions on the amendment of history curriculum for Grades 4 – 12. Access the Draft [here](#).

## Court

### **RA and Another v Head of Department: Western Cape Education Department**

On 09 March 2026, the Western Cape High Court ordered an urgent review of school placements for Grade 1 twins whose parents refused a placement, after their parents rejected a placement, citing safety and transportation concerns and pushing for a school closer to their home. Read the full judgment [here](#)

### **Swartruggens Gekombineerde Skool and Others and Head of Department, North West Department of Education & Others**

On 08 April 2026, the North West High Court ordered an urgent structural interdict compelling the North West Education Department to remedy unsafe school infrastructure while learners remain in Swartruggens Gekombineerde Skool. Refer to our last series, and read the full judgment [here](#).

