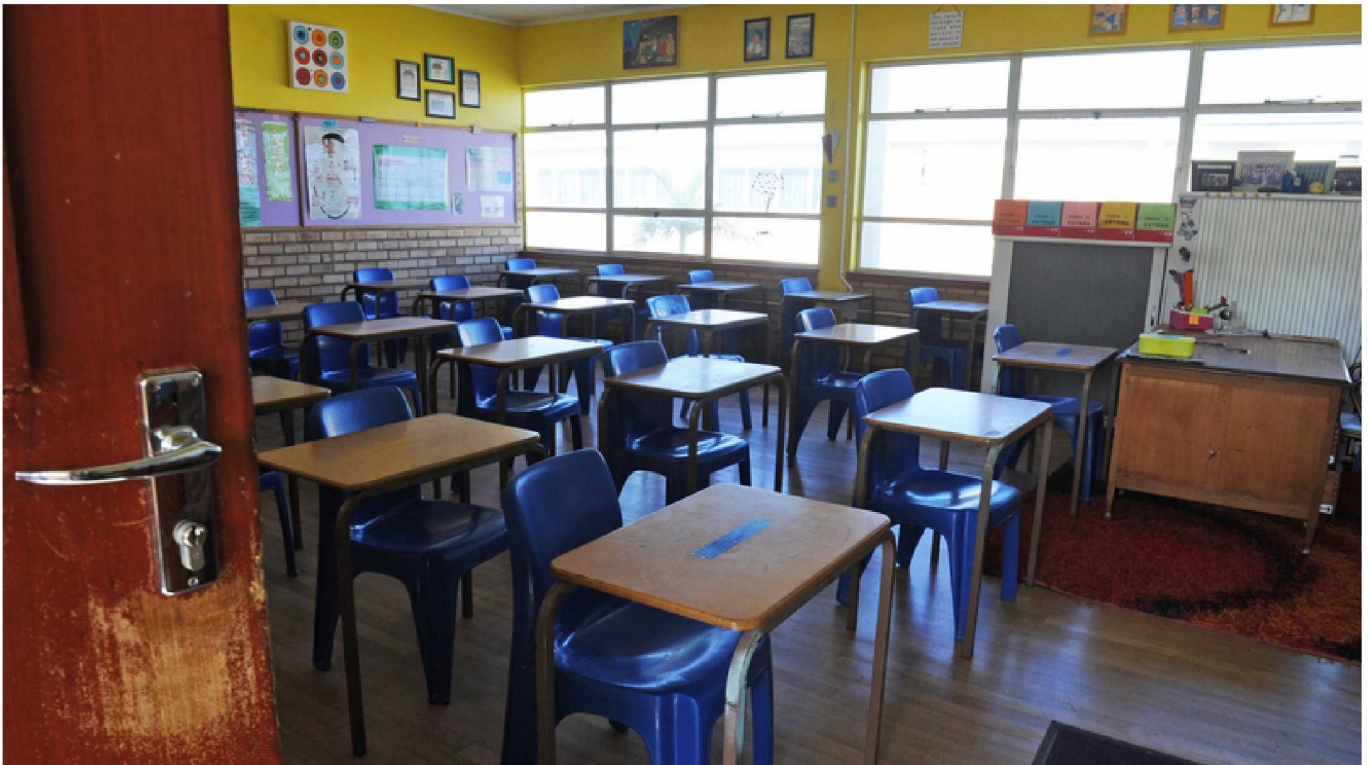


## Parents urged to choose SGB members with integrity amid concerns of corruption in schools



*Parents urged to choose SGB members with integrity amid concerns of corruption in schools.  
Picture: Courtney Africa/African News Agency (ANA)*

| Published 22h ago

**Revelations by non-profit organisation Corruption Watch of more than 3 500 cases of maladministration and abuse of resources by school governing bodies (SGB) should signal a need for parents to take the future of education more seriously.**

Following the announcement by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga on February 12 that schools were scheduled to elect fresh SGBs between March 1 to 31, this year, the focus has once more returned to the state of the education sector.

Corruption Watch stakeholder coordinator Melusi Ncala said unfortunately the recent news was nothing new and, in fact, they had picked up such challenges within the sector for a number of years.

Ncala said during a recent interview that the crux of the problems stemmed from the fact that many SGBs struggled with financial literacy, did not understand issues of corruption and anti-corruption, and in other cases were found to have been manipulated by principals serving their own agendas.

He said despite being brought to the attention of the Basic Education Department, in Gauteng in particular, nothing had been done to put mechanisms in place to prevent these challenges.

“We’re still receiving significant reports of bribery, sextortion and employment corruption issues as well, and that tells you that the problem persists and there is no real tangible intervention that will go a long way in sorting out the problems schools are experiencing.”

The Public Servants Association (PSA) raised concerns over the persistence of corruption of SGBs, stressing how while this has been taking place, learners have had to suffer the consequences and been forced to study under very trying circumstances, including poor infrastructure and a lack of resources.

“Leaders chosen to run schools must have integrity and be committed to improving the quality of education for learners. Government should implement strict vetting processes to prevent the appointment of individuals with criminal records. The country cannot afford to have SGBs that prioritise tender processes over the well-being of learners and educators. They must prioritise maintaining safety and discipline in schools.

“We recommend the implementation of strict rules and regulations for the consideration of nominated public officials. There should be clear criteria that guide the nomination of individuals who are suitable to be entrusted to serve in public offices,” the association said.

He highlighted how it appeared that the disciplinary measures taken in the past against people who have abused resources meant for schools have not yielded the desired results.

“What we need is the political will from the heads of schools to make sure they take people to task whenever there is any wrongdoing. Unfortunately, in some instances you find that even the authorities are implicated, so it is crucial for districts to leave no stone unturned in ensuring that they take practical steps to address the issue of corruption.

“At this point, parents have a duty and a responsibility to elect people of integrity that can represent them fairly and those who will not mismanage the schools resources. The unfortunate reality is that some parents do not take these things very seriously,” he said.

Makaneta said in most instances parents did not attend meetings, when called, or the annual general meetings or elections, which was of great concern to the sector.

“Parents should really take the education of our children very seriously by ensuring that they participate in all activities meant to elect representatives.

“Things have gotten worse as many public schools are experiencing this issue. The worst still is that corruption doesn't just affect resources but you find that learners are suffering because the authorities at the school choose to protect the teachers involved. We have a duty, collectively, to ensure that teaching and learning takes place and to protect resources,” he concluded.

## **Saturday Star**

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