

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA concerned about state of Limpopo Department of Education**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the state of the Limpopo Department of Education, where a lack leadership and management opens a window for financial mismanagement and maladministration.

Recent public hearings have revealed the rot in the Department without accountability and consequence management. It was uncovered that officials signed off tenders without the approval of the Head of Department (HoD) and Chief Financial Officer, therefore violating *the Public Finance Management Act*. For instance, the scholar-transport tender was not advertised for 21 days in line with public finance rules.

The Department is in a shambled state, with allegations of the abuse of power, favouritism, and incompetence. This dysfunction creates fertile ground for corruption. It is alleged that three officials are behind these shenanigans at the Department, but they could not be charged as the Chief Director forgot to initiate the disciplinary process, despite the HoD signing the letters to be handed to them. It is reported that an official at Sekhukhune District also took a cue from Head Office when he issued a tender for R500 000 without following procedure and was not charged even as the Department acknowledged that he did not follow due process. It is questionable how those responsible for supply chain and procurement cannot understand the policy and legislative framework applicable for their jobs. Ignorance of the law cannot be justified.

The Department seems oblivious to the impact of its lacklustre performance and disregard of supply-chain processes. It seems to see nothing wrong with reporting to SCOPA that the Chief Director forgot to initiate disciplinary processes against employees for failures to observe procurement processes. It is thus not surprising that some school governing bodies are taking advantage of the inefficiency of the Department at some schools where they unfairly and unduly chase principals.

The PSA urges the Limpopo MEC of Education to implement accountability and consequence management to prevent further wasting of taxpayers' money.

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