



PRESS RELEASE: SECTION27 welcomes the report of the Presidential Task Team into the non-delivery of textbooks to Limpopo schools and calls for urgent implementation of recommendations.

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SECTION27 welcomes the release yesterday of the report of the Presidential Task Team established to investigate non-delivery of textbooks to Limpopo schools. The report finds that the textbooks crisis arose from the failure of firstly, the Limpopo Department of Education and then the National Department of Basic Education (DBE) to procure and deliver CAPS textbooks.

We welcome the recommendations to hold the administrative Department heads on both national and provincial levels accountable for their failure to discharge their constitutional obligations to ensure sufficient textbooks in schools for all learners in grades R, 1, 2, 3 & 10. The President's decision to request that the Public Service Commission investigate the conduct of both the national and provincial departmental heads is fully justified. We hope that it sends a strong message to all senior officials in the education department that they will be held accountable for their failures.

We recognize however, that the crisis also occurred in the context of allegations of fraud and corruption. The report confirms these allegations and we maintain that it is essential that these allegations are fully investigated and that where necessary criminal proceedings are instituted and stolen monies recovered. In particular, the report confirms that there must be an investigation into the Limpopo Department of Education's contract with EduSolutions.

We support the recommendations relating to more clearly defining the Cabinet's responsibilities in the context of a Section 100 (1)(b) intervention. The report recommends that it should be "obligatory" (rather than discretionary) that the National government intervene in a province that has failed to discharge its statutory obligations. Currently, Section 100 (1)(b) is interpreted as conferring a discretionary power on National government to intervene.

We hope that all the recommendations of the Task Team will be implemented urgently and call on the President to report back to the country on progress before the end of the 2012 school year. This is the only way to ensure that the textbooks crisis is not repeated in future and that learners receive the education to which they are entitled by law.

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