



SADTU WESTERN CAPE PRESS STATEMENT

SUBJECT: Systemic Evaluation testing in the Western Cape Education Department

DATE: 27 February 2017

EMBARGO: For immediate release

Between October and December 2016, the Western Cape Education Department administered systemic evaluation testing in its schools.

SADTU had resolved at its provincial conference to enter into discussions with the Department to abandon the annual tests.

After months of failed discussions, the union called on its members to boycott the tests. The boycotting of the tests included protests and in some instances there were disturbances at schools, in front of school gates by our members, members of the school communities including learners.

We must clarify that the call to boycott the tests was not a directive to cause disruptions at school. It was a call for peaceful protest to highlight our displeasure with the over testing of our learners.

This led to the WCED seeking a Court interdict against the said conduct.

The Court stated that our members should not act in a violent or unlawful way in exercising our legal right to protest against policies of the employer when we view them not to be in the interest of improved education outcomes in the province.

The court order granted by the High Court of Cape Town, instructs the union not to disrupt the tests by preventing access to the test administrators, intimidation and inciting others to conduct unlawful activities.

As a result, the WCED also charged 123 of our members, as its first phase, in dealing with the misconduct during the systemic testing.

In the interest of education, labour peace, improving relations and stability of schools we entered into negotiations with the WCED and requested the ELRC to facilitate such negotiations in order to mitigate the adverse effects which resulted from the protest action. As a resolution, we agreed with the WCED as follows:

1. SADTU recognizes and respects the WCED's right to conduct systematic evaluations at its schools;
2. The WCED also recognizes and respects employees right to protected protest action;
3. SADTU condemns the disruptions and does not condone any unlawful action of its members, the community and learners in relation to the WCED's 2016 systemic evaluation testing;
4. SADTU recognizes that it's the right of the Head of Education to administer systemic evaluation tests in the Western Cape;
5. SADTU acknowledges that its call and actions to their members to boycott the systemic tests, in some instances, led to the disruptions of the Systemic Tests in 2016, which was never our intention;
6. SADTU has always advocated for peaceful demonstrations as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;

7. SADTU agrees that the WCED has the right to continue setting and administering Systemic Tests in future and SADTU undertakes to desist to any calls or actions that will lead to disruption in future in this regard;
8. SADTU and the WCED agrees that further discussion will be embarked on to address the concerns parties have raised in relation to the test; and
9. SADTU and the WCED agrees that the outstanding 81 schools of 2016 will continue their systemic test as per the principles of this agreement and as outlined in the court order.

ISSUED BY: SADTU WESTERN CAPE SECRETARIAT

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