

Gauteng Education working to place remaining 1,394 learners

Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane says the department is working as quickly as possible to place Grade 1 and 8 learners who have yet to be assigned a school.



Image source: Getty Images

He was speaking at a media briefing to provide an update on learner placements and the department's readiness for the new academic year.

The department has already placed at least 290,751 learners with some 1,394 remaining.

Chiloane urged parents – especially those in “pressure areas” – to be patient as the department works through the applications.

“We are working around the clock; we are engaging our schools. We are continuing to place our learners. When we started we had 292,145 complete applications. These are the parents who were able to provide all the necessary

documentation and also met the deadline. We also had incomplete applications.

“To those parents [whose children have not been placed]...I am assuring you that your children will be in class. We know that patience is not endless but allow us, work with us and be patient with us. It’s a very delicate process but just know that we are aggressive in ensuring that we get these learners in classrooms,” he said at Tuesday’s briefing.

Unplaced learners

Chiloane explained that the majority of unplaced learners are from the Olifantsfontein and Kempton Park area.

“In Olifant, we have engaged a church where they have given us space to ensure that we close off the remaining 236 Grade 1 applicants and also there’s an additional three mobile units that will be provided to increase school capacities so that we can place all the learners.

“In Grade 8, Kempton Park area...we are still left with 501 unplaced learners. We are continuing to speak to our schools...to work together to ensure that we close off things,” he said.

The Tshwane West district is another pressure area with some 223 Grade 8 learners unplaced with a further 434 Grade 8 learners unplaced in the Johannesburg West District.

According to the department, a satellite high school is being built to accommodate those learners in Tshwane and in Johannesburg, the department is negotiating to occupy some 10 classrooms at the Robinhood College.

The right to education

Chiloane said the department is aware that some schools have reached capacity but emphasised that children’s right to education will not be compromised.

“This is a double edged sword. We are left with a situation where some of our schools will be overcrowded or we are going to have a situation where some of our learners...will be at home, not being in school.

“So we have to make a choice there and we are making a choice that every child must be in a school. We will deal with everything else when a child is wearing a uniform in school. That is a priority...we are determined that we deliver on that,” he said.

Other placement interventions by the department include:

- The procurement of 419 mobiles to address pressure of unplaced applications across the province
- The procurement of self-build classrooms to increase school capacity
- Establishing satellite schools in high pressure areas
- Working with sister departments to acquire more land to increase the number of schools in high pressure areas