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Western Cape Provincial Parliament
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Media Alert

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11 MARCH 2024

MEDIA ALERT: STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION TO HOST TWO HYBRID PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE BASIC EDUCATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL IN CAPE TOWN

The Standing Committee on Education is considering the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill [B 2B–2022] (NCOP). Written and oral submissions are invited from stakeholders. Besides the public hearings scheduled in Paarl and Saldanha Bay this month, the committee will also be holding two hybrid public hearings on 4 April, in Cape Town, providing participants with the option to participate either in-person or by virtual platform.

The public hearings are arranged as follows:

- Friday, 15 March, at the Huguenot Community Hall, 2 Abattoir Road, Paarl, from 18:00;
- Friday, 22 March, at the White City Multi-Purpose Community Centre, 40 Trichardt Street, Saldanha Bay, from 18:00;
- Thursday, 4 April, at the Western Cape Provincial Parliament Chamber, 7 Wale Street, Cape Town, from 15:00; and
- Thursday, 4 April, at the Western Cape Provincial Parliament Chamber, 7 Wale Street, Cape Town, from 18:00.

“The Standing Committee added the extra public hearing on 4 April to afford those observing the holy month of Ramadan an opportunity to attend. Both public hearings taking place on 4 April will be hosted as hybrid events, in other words providing the opportunity for stakeholders to attend in-person or online”, says Hon Deidré Baartman, chairperson of the Standing Committee on Education.

The amendment bill proposes to amend the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), and the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998), to align them with developments in the education landscape. It also proposes to ensure that systems of learning are put in place in a manner that gives effect to the right to basic education enshrined in section 29(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

Among others, the amendment bill seeks to amend certain definitions, provide that attendance of Grade R is compulsory, and to provide for system improvements in terms of admission of learners to public schools. It also provides for financial and public accountability frameworks for governing bodies and provincial departments.

The amendment bill further provides for additional regulatory powers of the Minister and enhancing decision-making and oversight powers of heads of departments and members of executive councils. The amendment bill also proposes technical and substantive adjustments to clarify certain existing provisions, insert provisions that are not provided for in existing legislation and strengthen enforcement mechanisms for offences and penalties; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Input or requests to brief the Standing Committee on Education on the bill should be sent to the Procedural Officer, Ms Wasiema Hassen-Moosa, via Email: wasiema.hassenmoosa@wcpp.gov.za or as voice notes and messages on WhatsApp, Cell no: 081 498 6075. Written submissions must reach the Standing Committee on Education before or on Thursday, 4 April 2024.

More information and links to an online submission form, to attend and view the hearings via virtual platform and to download a copy of the bill, is available on the website of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament at:

<https://www.wcpp.gov.za/?q=node/16822>

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