

To: MEC for Education , Mr Sipho Hlomuka
Per Email: Nonkululeko.nembula@kzndoe.gov.za
Date: Monday, 01 July 2024
Subject: Urgent Inquiry Regarding Payment Delays to Service Providers for School Nutrition

Dear Hon. Hlomuka

As schools are expected to recommence next week, we as ActionSA are deeply concerned about the potential impact of recent payment delays to service providers on the availability of food for learners across the province.

It has come to our attention that some service providers have not received their payments for the past three months, which raises significant concerns about the continuity of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

In light of these concerns, we kindly request your prompt attention and detailed responses to the following questions:

1. Why were the service providers not paid? Understanding the reasons behind the payment delays is crucial to addressing the issue and preventing future occurrences.
2. Are there budget challenges faced by the department? If yes, what implications will be faced by learners? Clarity on the financial situation of the department will help us understand the broader context and potential impact on the learners who depend on these meals.
3. Can you assure us that we will not have a repeat of the NSNP collapse in April 2023 that left over 2 million children without nutrition, an unfortunate situation that ActionSA was successful in holding the Provincial government accountable for?
4. Considering that the Department of Education failed to be transparent about the developments or termination of the NSNP contractual agreement with Pacina Retail Pty (LTD), what was the Department's final decision regarding this matter?

Lastly, in their media statement the NSNP Services Providers Association highlighted that:

"The department's failure to address issues related to menu items and commodity price adjustments, particularly in light of the national food price crisis, is unacceptable"

What measures are the Department seeking to put in place to address this issue?



Ensuring the well-being of our learners is of utmost importance, and we hope that the province will take all necessary measures to guarantee that there are no disruptions in the provision of meals.

To this end, we will appreciate a response from you in this matter within 7 (seven) days of receipt of this email, and ensure that you prioritise this issue with utmost urgency.

We look forward to receiving a prompt response from you soon.

Yours Faithfully

(unsigned as electronically sent)

Zwakele Mncwango
ActionSA KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Chairperson