
Media Statement

24 September 2017

Fastrack implementation of Drug Master Plan- learners say

Learners have called on government to fastrack the implementation of the National Drug Master Plan and other applicable school safety strategies and policies because that will have an impact on the overall school safety. They argued that the current strategies are good and if stakeholders and departments enhance implementation and monitoring of such plans, the challenge of drugs and substance abuse in schools will be eradicated.

They were speaking during the Provincial School Safety debates finals that were conducted at Middelburg in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality yesterday (23 September 2017). The topic for 15 learners was the impact of drugs and substance abuse towards youth and each of the three regions in the province was represented by five learners.

The department in partnership with its stakeholders has developed a plan aimed at supporting school safety structures in schools including the implementation of strategies to minimize and root out criminal activities within schools.

During the discussions some of the learners highlighted that drugs do not only make drug addicts behave violently in schools but it also lead to increased rate of drop outs. Substance abuse also affect the economy of the country because of increased number of people with chronic diseases and this requires that government to spend more money on health.

Leaners also urged government to establish more recreational facilities in order to encourage learners to stay away from destructive behavior such as crime and experimenting with drugs. They also pleaded for increased support to parents and families of current and former dug addicts. They believe that will assist in encouraging more drug addicts to be assisted.

Speaking on behalf of Mpumalanga SAPS, Brigadier Leonard Hlathi called for the harsher sentencing of people who are found guilty of dealing in drugs. According to Hlathi, successful convictions of drug pushers will not only assist in ridding communities of drugs but it will also impact on crime prevention. He has alo0s called on the learners to report anybody who tries to sell them drugs.

Meanwhile Shireen Marsh, Deputy Director for Partnerships in the Department urged learners to become ambassadors of school safety initiatives in their schools. She added: "Learners should become active agents of school safety strategy and initiatives in their schools and communities. They should also report crime suspects and those who are dealing with drugs without fear."

Marsh also acknowledged that learners who abuse drugs often threaten safety of both learners and educators. She explained that affect school negatively because educators are constantly leaving in fear while they are at school. She also said: “Drugs addicts sometimes steal from others learners and educators in order to get money to feed their addiction. When they are high they sometimes behave in a violent manner.”

Marsh hover acknowledged that there are various programmes that exist to address the school safety and debates programme is one of those programmes. Other programmes that DCSSL has include awareness campaigns on drugs and substance abuse, annual prison visits for secondary school learners at targeted secondary schools across the programme and random and seizures done in collaboration with SAPS.

Ehlanzeni was announced as best region while Gert Sibande region was named as runners up followed by Nkangala Region in the third place. The best overall speaker was Thandolwethu Magagula from Ehlanzeni Region. He walked away with a tablet and R2000, 00 Edgars voucher. All other 14 learners were presented with medals, tablets and certificates.

Enquiries

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