

Empowering educators to reposition  
SADTU for peoples' education and  
working class power

14 May 2009 • Edition 09

Contact: Jon Lewis 011 334 4830  
jlewis@sadtu.org.za

**SADTU**

**e-VOICE**

Online Voice of the South African Democratic Teachers Union



*SADTU NGC 2008 was one of the first forums to raise the debate about two education ministries. Our voice has been heard. As we welcome the two new education ministers, we also need to focus on unfinished business – particularly the outstanding OSD issues – so that we can clear the decks for the 2009 salary negotiations to begin.*

### **SADTU welcomes the new Ministers**

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) congratulates the newly appointed ministers and deputies, and in particular welcomes the appointment of Comrade Angie Motshekga – a former member of SADTU - for Basic Education, and Comrade Blade Nzimande for Higher Education and Training.

Splitting the education portfolio makes good sense. The former department was just too big – one department accounting for 40% of all public service employees. The separate ministries will allow for greater focus on the very real challenges faced in both sectors.

The challenges faced by comrade Blade are immense:

- In Higher Education: lack of access for the poor and working class, entrenched privilege and racism, and the slow pace of transformation of governance to develop truly South African curricula which respect indigenous knowledge and cultures;
- For those outside of Higher Education, there are some 3 million unemployed in the age group 18 to 24. Offering hope and training opportunities to these youngsters is a priority. This means mobilizing the resources of the SETAs and addressing the chaos in the FET (Further Education and Training) sector.

In Basic Education, the challenges facing Comrade Angie are similarly daunting. Above all else we have to raise the quality of learning and

teaching in the classroom. To this end we would like to highlight the following:

- The need to put resources and training into ECD (Early Childhood Development) to ensure that all our children receive a good grounding, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The need to develop a national strategy and plan for teacher training, development and support remains critical. We take the view that well-motivated, well-trained teachers are key to improving the quality of education.
- As SADTU we pledge to continue to work with the Department of Education in the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign, in which all stakeholders identify their roles and responsibilities and commit to carry these out. As teachers we have said that we must be on time, on task, well-prepared and behave professionally at all times.

There is also outstanding business between the teacher unions and the Department which needs to be finalized as soon as possible:

- Negotiations over OSD (Occupation Specific Dispensation) have dragged on, effectively undermining the spirit of the Polokwane resolution..
- There is also growing unease in SADTU at proposals to change funding norms to the advantage of the private sector and to entrench divisions within the public sector.

In addressing these and other challenges, open democratic and meaningful consultative processes are crucial. SADTU will continue to reject any unilateral “declaration of policy” which affects our members.

## **Labour Update**

### *OSD*

The ELRC will meet on 18<sup>th</sup> May to finalise issues around the OSD. SADTU will use this time to consult and secure mandates on outstanding

issues. Members will be informed as soon as further developments take place.

### *VARIATION OF SCOPE TO INCLUDE FETC SECTOR WITHIN THE ELRC*

SADTU is seeking to expand the scope of the ELRC to include employees of FET colleges to protect their conditions of employment. Negotiations are continuing in this respect.

### *SALARY NEGOTIATIONS*

The JMC (Joint Management Committee) of COSATU public service unions is sitting on the 12<sup>th</sup> May to finalise a common position and to give direction.

SADTU is calling for:

- Salary adjustment of 12% + real wage increment (subject to final mandate collection)
- Implementation date: 1 April
- Single term agreement
- Benefits
  - Universal housing allowance for all, based on the current cost of houses
  - Speedy conclusion of national health insurance system
  - Danger allowance must be extended to educators
- Speedy conclusion on all outstanding matters of OSD - long service, recognition of qualifications, pension payouts etc.

Again, members will be informed immediately of any developments on this front.

### **Strike Fund (SAFE)**

The SADTU Savings and Assistance Foundation (SAFE) is a SADTU initiative that has been designed to provide members with a vehicle for long term savings as well as to supplement income during a protracted strike.

National Congress and NGCs have repeatedly called for such a Fund which is based on the following principles:

- Monthly deductions similar to a savings account
- Professional management (by Alexander Forbes) – ie not to be managed by SADTU itself to ensure security and maximum earnings for members
- Members would access their funds either during a strike or upon resigning from SADTU or leaving the profession.

As a union we now have to take a decision on the level of the minimum deduction. Ballots will be held at branch and regional general meetings to determine the minimum deduction.

### **Combating Learner Abuse**

It is with a heavy heart that we have to raise this issue. Recently the KZN education department suspended 5 male teachers at a Durban high school who allegedly provided money and alcohol to female learners in exchange for sex. As SADTU we said we welcomed this action by the Department. Further to this, the Union called for the following urgent action to be taken:

- Speedy investigation and disciplinary action by the Department of Education which has the power to dismiss teachers found guilty of sexual abuse;
- Prompt action by the police to investigate and charge any individuals where there is evidence of statutory rape (what this means is that even if the learner consents to sex, if she is under age it is still statutory rape.);
- The South African Council for Educators (SACE) must also investigate the individuals concerned. SACE has the statutory powers to strike teachers off the roll so that they can never teach in South Africa again.

As a Union, SADTU has taken the following actions:

- We have instructed the SADTU structures to investigate the facts of the case, as a preliminary step towards establishing a disciplinary committee;
- We have called on all SADTU members who have evidence of sexual abuse – in this or any other case – to come forward and blow the whistle. This is the moral and legal duty of every teacher.

Every effort needs to be made to protect our learners from the predatory activity of a minority of teachers who bring the profession into disrepute.