

SADTU Update

South African Democratic Teachers' Union December 2008

Coping with the splinter group

SADTU seeks to organize all workers in the education sector – irrespective of their political views. We do this in the belief that unity is strength and that our interests as workers gives us a common bond. This is the cornerstone of trade unionism the world over.

That is why anti-working class groupings – like the DA and the Shikotas try by all means to divide and weaken the labour movement. Thus we now see Madisha employed to recruit disgruntled elements into rival unions. The employers must be laughing all the way to the bank. All the signs are that the funds for this are coming from sections of the BEE capitalists.

Let us remember where we come from. As SADTU we are a Union which defends the interests of its members as workers and as educators. But we have always been much more than that. We were born out of the struggle against Bantu education and the apartheid regime. After 1994 we also said that as SADTU we have an important role to play in transforming the apartheid education system, and changing a society that was based on racism and exploitation.

It was for this reason that we welcomed the outcomes of the Polokwane Conference of the ANC. There can be no doubt that the election results in Polokwane and the progressive policies adopted represent a decisive shift in favour of the working class and the poor.

However there were those who did not share our joy at the outcome of Polokwane. Those who had grown rich by access to state resources, who wielded power and patronage, saw their positions under threat and started to organize a breakaway from the ANC.

To counter this threat, we need to unite as SADTU and the Alliance. We must recognise our differences and these we deal with through robust and open debate. And once we have all made an input, then the organisation takes a decision and as disciplined members we unite to implement that decision. That is how we build strong and united organisation. This is the only way we can defend the conditions of our members and begin to improve the lives of our people.

As the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), we have been greatly encouraged by the ANC's powerful recommitment to the cause of education since the Polokwane Conference at the end of 2008. This was clearly expressed by ANC President, Comrade Jacob Zuma in the January 8th annual ANC statement:

"Education must be elevated from being a departmental issue, or even a government issue, to a societal issue – one that occupies the attention and energy of all our people."

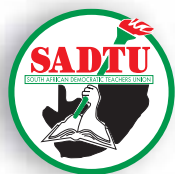
Five reasons for Educators to vote for the ANC

As the largest trade union in the public service, representing 240,000 teachers and education employees, SADTU has no hesitation in endorsing the programme of the African National Congress, and calls on all members to vote for the ANC for the following reasons:

- The ANC has declared education and health national priorities for the next five years
- The ANC's Education Campaign calls for teachers, learners, parents, the community and the department of education to commit themselves to delivering quality public education
- The Education Campaign commits to providing training and support for teachers

to fulfill the objective of 'quality teachers for quality education', and to reinvigorate the school feeding programme so that every child studies on a full stomach

- The ANC's economic strategy prioritizes employment and poverty alleviation through industrial policy, job creation schemes and widening access to social grants for the unemployed.
- The Tripartite Alliance, led by the ANC, ended Apartheid and brought political freedom. This same mighty alliance is the only vehicle capable of taking forward our national democratic revolution and bringing economic freedom and security for the masses of our people.





Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign

In August 2008, the ANC launched its health and education campaign in Kliptown, on the very site where the Freedom Charter was adopted. The heart of the education campaign is commitment to a *Code for Quality Education*. The campaign has been popularised by the Minister of Education and teacher unions, and is based on pledges made by the stakeholders themselves, with the objective of improving the quality of public education.

As a **DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL, I promise to:**

- ensure all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence;
- ensure all schools have their full staff allocation, and that any vacancies are filled without delay;
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers;
- respond to requests or concerns of education stakeholders;
- visit all schools within the district on a regular basis;
- monitor teacher and student attendance, ensure no child is out of school;
- assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring regular tests are conducted, and results are reported to parents.

As a **TEACHER**, in line with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, **I promise to:**

- teach, to advance the education and development of learners as individuals;
- respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice;
- develop loyalty and respect for the profession;
- be punctual, enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons and of sober mind and body;
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- maintain good communication between teachers and students, among teachers themselves; and between teachers and parents;
- provide regular information to parents on their children's progress;
- eliminate unprofessional behaviour such as teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, drug use,

assault, sexual harassment and others;

- make myself available to provide extra-mural activities.

As a **LEARNER, I promise to:**

- accept the main reason for being in school is to learn and develop academically, socially and culturally;
- adhere to school rules;
- respect the legitimacy and authority of teachers;
- participate in Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) to safeguard my interests;
- show respect to other learners and not to discriminate;
- avoid anti-social behaviour like theft, vandalism, assault, sexual harassment, alcohol and drug use, and other activities that disrupt the learning process.

As a **PARENT, I promise to:**

- involve myself actively in school governance structures;
- have regular discussions with my children about general school matters;
- cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with my children's teachers;
- create a home environment conducive to study;
- assist in the protection of educational resources such as textbooks, chairs, tables and others.

As a **COMMUNITY, we promise to:**

- ensure that every school-going child is at school;
- ensure a safe and crime-free environment for schooling, and to protect the school and its assets from vandalism;
- monitor the performance of schools, and report problems to relevant authorities.

We pledge to undertake these responsibilities to ensure quality education for all.