

Tragic deaths as concrete slab falls on Driehoek learners

Lazarus Dithagiso

VANDEBIJLPARK . - Four learners of the 45-year-old Driehoek High School in Vanderbijlpark lost their lives when a concrete slab collapsed as they walked from assembly to their classrooms on Friday morning.

The incident happened a few minutes after 8:00.

The concrete slab above a corridor linked two blocks of buildings.

It came crushing down on 26 learners.

Gauteng MEC for Education, Panyaza Lesufi, immediately rushed to the scene.

The names of the deceased have been released as Rydon Olckers (17), Jandre Loot Steyn (13), Marli Currie (13) and Marnus Nagel (16). Nagel passed away at the hospital over the weekend while the other three passed away at the scene on Friday.

After the incident, Lesufi issued an instruction that no learner should be unattended in hospital because of a lack of medical aid or lack of funds.

He said that those injured must receive the same quality of care from all hospitals. After visiting the scene at the school and meeting with the affected families at the school, Lesufi declared classes suspended until further notice.

“We will wait until we receive a certificate from the Public Works Department.”

Hein Knoetze, Principal of the school, was both touched and traumatised by the incident. He told a Sunday newspaper that maintenance has been going on right through the year.

The Head of Gauteng Department of Education, Edward Mosuwe, said his department never received a request from the school relating to the state of the building before the incident.

Messages of heartfelt sympathy, condolences and wishes for speedy recovery to the learners, families and relatives of the deceased and those who were injured have been pouring in from the Gauteng Education Department, the Executive Mayor of the Emfuleni Local Municipality, Gift Moerane, the Sedibeng School Governing Bodies and Cosas Sedibeng.



Sorrow is written all over the face of Gauteng MEC for Education Panyaza Lesufi following the deaths of three learners at the Driehoek High School in Vanderbijlpark on Friday morning. Right: The concrete slab at Driehoek High School, that collapsed as the learners walked from assembly to their classrooms. Three learners were reported dead on the scene on Friday and another died over the weekend. Photos: Lazarus Dithagiso