

Jeugkrag-learners protest

copy

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The sounds of 'amandla' and 'awethu' were heard early on Friday, 16 August when learners of Laerskool Jeugkrag were waving placards in front of the circuit office of the Department of Education in Burger Street.

Representatives of the School Governing Body (SGB) were in agreement that the staircases pose a danger to learners and staff.

"The steps on the staircases on the first and second floor are cracked," Mr Chris Ndlovu said.

"The staircases have been cracked for several years," Mr Louis Thabethe, deputy chairman of the SGB, confirmed.

According to Mr Thabethe, the staircases are moving away from the building and they began communicating with the department in 2006.

"We used to write letters and officials from the department arrived, took photos but nothing was done."

Their strong-worded petition cites chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa

The *Standerton Advertiser* is in possession of a copy of the petition, duly signed by a representative from the department and chairman of the SGB, witnessed by two people.

Their strong-worded petition cites chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa that refers to a safe and healthy environment, the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1983.

The tragedy in Vanderbijlpark at Hoërskool Driehoek in February during which learners lost their lives and some were injured was mentioned.

The demands are:

- The department prioritises the safety of the building and staircases at the school
- Qualified and accredited structural engineers be deployed to the school within seven days of the petition
- A comprehensive report be made



Learners of Laerskool Jeugkrag clearly demonstrate their feelings on Friday, 16 August.

available to the school before the end of August

- The department declares the safety of the school
- Temporary classrooms be made available should the upgrading of staircases begin
- The Department of Education and Department of Public Works prioritise the integrity of all building structures throughout the province and nationwide
- The department's database of accredited structural engineers be made available to schools should the need arise.

The petition, signed 16 August, makes no bones about the seven day given for positive action.

"The parents of the school will have no option but to shut the school down until its declared safe. We will not hesitate to escalate the action to an indefinite sit-in at the offices and to approach the Human Rights Commission to pursue the infringements of our rights."

The newspaper tried to contact Ms Sophia Bohata, circuit manager of Lekwa West on Friday, 16 August, but she was unavailable and a message was left. When talking to the provincial spokesman of the department, Mr Jasper Zwane, a request was made to send the information to him via WhatsApp.

"I will forward it to the infrastructure team," Mr Zwane said.



Chanting and protesting in front of the circuit office of the Department of Education on Friday, 16 August.