



ECD practitioners hand over demands

BENIDA PHILLIPS
STAFF REPORTER

EARLY Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners, affiliated to the ECD Progressive Movement, have given Northern Cape Premier Zamani Saul three days to respond to their demands listed in a memorandum handed over yesterday.

A group of practitioners marched to the Office of the Premier where they handed over the memorandum to Special Adviser, Norman Shushu.

The chairperson of the movement, Clive Tswaile, said they were calling for the intervention of the Premier after the MEC of Social Development, Martha Bartlett, failed to address their grievances.

“The ECD practitioners are often taken for granted. The department has neglected the areas of accountability and transparency. We demand that the Premier confront the true challenges, especially that of financial accountability. We demand a commitment to seriously explore allegations of fraudulent misuse of funds in the department. An investigation must also be conducted into the conditional grants and the equitable shares meant to assist ECDs,” said Tswaile.

He said they were also calling for an investigation into the Ex-

panded Public Works Programme (EPWP) funding within the department.

“We need to know who is paying the stipends to practitioners – is it SITA or EPWP? It also needs to be established why SITA is not issuing Level 4 and Level 5 certificates. The Premier needs to look into the EPWP funding within the department regarding the stipends of practitioners and learnerships. We need an immediate review of the minimum wage for those working in ECD centres,” he said.

Tswaile said ECD practitioners also felt the brunt of the shortage of land for the development of ECD centres.

“The municipality should allocate free land for ECD centres. We will not be compelled to land-grabs. We therefore demand the removal of the red tape in order for ECDs to have access to old or unused buildings which can be transformed into ECD centres,” he said.

Tswaile said they also wanted to be removed from under the umbrella of the Department of Social Development.

“We demand that ECDs should operate under the Department of Education without any interference from the Department of Social Development. A salary increase should also be given to Grade R teachers.”