



## **TO NEWS EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS**

### **FROM THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**19 APRIL 2025**

#### **FOR THE RECORD**

The Mpumalanga Department of Education acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the procurement of high-specifications and high cost laptops.

It is important to clarify that these laptops were acquired for the Department's Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) teams and other related officials whose operational responsibilities require high-performance computing equipment.

It is true that these devices came at a high cost. However, this procurement was driven by technical requirements rather than preference or extravagance.

It must be emphasized that the MEC was not involved in the procurement process at any stage, nor did she receive any of the laptops in question.

The fact is by law the MEC is not involved in any procurement processes.

To implicate her or her office in this matter is both misleading and unjust and undermines the principles of fair and transparent administration.

The high-performance laptops were specifically purchased for the EMIS and ICT teams due to the nature of their work, which involves managing complex and resource-intensive systems essential to the Department's functioning.

Their key responsibilities include but not limited to :

Managing Office 365 accounts and supporting schools, districts, and circuits,

Troubleshooting network issues and providing real-time technical support,

Running SQL systems for data analysis and uploading large datasets to platforms such as the Provincial Data Warehouse, eCares, the Post Provisioning System, and LURITS,

Temporarily storing and managing SA-SAMS databases and

Supporting the ongoing modernisation of SA-SAMS to enable real-time, online access.

The EMIS team is also responsible for handling data related to Early Childhood Development (ECD) and will be using the new eCares system, which requires advanced data collection, analysis, and reporting capabilities.

They manage Post Provisioning data to ensure accurate staff allocations across schools in the province and assist in the implementation of the enhanced DDD system.

The ICT team supports MDoE officials and schools through various Office 365-related services, particularly during the migration to cloud-based email systems.

Their duties include but not limited to :

Resetting user passwords via Active Directory Manager,

Assisting users with email connectivity issues,

Rebuilding user accounts and configuring Multi-Factor Authentication and

Repairing mailboxes via Exchange Server or the Office 365 portal.

Given the nature of these tasks, the teams are often required to operate multiple advanced applications simultaneously, manage large datasets, and provide real-time support to users.

This makes high-performance laptops, with powerful processors, ample RAM, and fast storage, not only justified, but essential for effective service delivery.

The procurement of these laptops was therefore based on operational necessity, not luxury.

To this end, the Department welcomes the ongoing investigation into this matter, as it offers an opportunity to present the facts and clarify any misconceptions.

The Department remains committed to cooperate fully with the investigating authorities to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Department will henceforth not make any public comment regarding this matter until the investigation is concluded.

Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Education.

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