

School Ruined by Heavy Flooding

By Sinalo Peyi

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In the Eastern Cape, under Ndlambe Municipality – Bathurst Location, a high school, Velile Senior Secondary, school has been badly damaged by the heavy rains that ruined almost everything in the small location. The high school that was built with timber over 40 years ago has been in the process of being rebuilt, but the process did not interfere with the school's academic system as students continued to use the school while waiting. But this was before it flooded badly. The school and Department notified parents to keep students at home as they are waiting until the buildings can be used again.

The school yard has turned to being a swimming pool as the whole yard is under water and classrooms are floating on the water. Some wooden walls have collapsed from being old and from the effects of the rain as well. The school is currently under process of being rebuilt as it is very old, and it is the only high school in Bathurst community. The community has been under confusion as they are told that the construction company will first build toilets and then the classes as they argue which is a more urgent matter between building toilets that are already there but need to be cleaned properly, or building classes as they are collapsing and are becoming dangerous for students and teachers.

For some time now the Department Of Education has been promising both the community and students that the school has been on the priority list for a while and because of the pressure from political leaders, community stakeholders, students as well as the community at large, everything will be shut down until the school is built.

Thembakazi Gaga, a parent of a grade 11 student, commented that the school has been putting students under a lot of danger as they are expected to bring the students to school even under such scary circumstances. "We were told to keep our children at home due to bad weather because the school is not strong enough to continue under these horrible weather conditions. But now we have to let the children go back to school and resume their studies even when the school has a dam in the yard instead of classes." She concluded that she will never take her child to school if the school still looks like this on 9 April 2026, as they are asked to keep their children from 6 April 2026 and bring them back on the 9th to resume with their education.

Thozama Peyi, a community stakeholder, a parent and an Isikhalo Women's Movement representative said it's bad enough that they have been fighting for this school to be built afresh because it has no sport field, laboratory or kitchen for students, but now they have to push harder for it to be rebuilt because of the weather that made it hard for academics to continue. "It is very impossible for any human to be around such conditions and will not advise any parent to take their children to school for health's sake."

Velile Senior Secondary School has shaped a lot of people who are now role models to the community, such as past councillors, doctors, nurses, teachers, police and principals, under its roof, but now can no longer be able to produce any success if the school looks this bad and destroyed.

The Community is crying and concerned that the school can no longer be able to function under this situation but prefers to keep their children at school to avoid health hazards caused by the school's condition.

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