

# Public Statement

## **Government breaches 1994 settlement with planned amendments to the Schools Act, targeting Afrikaans schools**

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*This is a public statement from stakeholder parties striving for sustainable Afrikaans education in public schools. It is addressed to Minister Angie Motshekga, as the political Head of the Department of Basic Education as a party to the amendment bill.*

We declare as follows:

1. A promise that language and culture would be protected in the new dispensation was made as part of the constitutional settlement in 1994. This would include tolerance and space for the preservation and development of Afrikaans and other indigenous languages. The preservation of Afrikaans as academic and scientific language was presented as an asset in this settlement, along with the development of other indigenous languages. It is also entrenched in section 6 of the Constitution.
2. During the 28 years of ANC government, no serious effort has been made to give effect to this constitutional mandate to retain and develop Afrikaans as an academic and scientific language, or to develop other indigenous languages in addition to Afrikaans.
3. Some of the proposed amendments to the Schools Act are a calculated attack on Afrikaans education and its speakers as a language community across the country. Afrikaans is the third most spoken language in the country with more than seven million

mother tongue speakers, most of whom come from the brown community. It will, through bureaucratic and ideological decisions, deprive current Afrikaans speakers of their constitutional right to education in a language of their choice. It will also constitute an irreparable and permanent breach by the government of the constitutional settlement reached in 1994.

4. A misrepresentation that Afrikaans education is a barrier to access to education in the country underlies certain BELA provisions. According to the ANC, broader access to education is only possible if Afrikaans education is thwarted by legislation.
5. In contrast to the ANC's continued efforts to cast suspicion on Afrikaans education, the Afrikaans language community strives for a positive, sustainable environment for Afrikaans education, and we are actively committed to multilingualism and non-racialism.
6. This bill stems from a superficial view of language and is aimed at disregarding the identity of Afrikaans speakers and at counteracting, through education, the linguistic diverse nature of the country and in so doing to enforce English hegemony.
7. Their continued efforts to cast suspicion on Afrikaans education also presuppose that its speakers are unworthy citizens who should not be allowed to let their language last in public educational institutions. It also assumes that the state and its bureaucrats solely have the wisdom to decide what is in the interest of Afrikaans speakers. It is unforgivable that future generations will be deprived of their right to mother tongue education in schools by a hostile government, eventually being forced into the ANC's majority view of Afrikaans as an unworthy educational language without having any choice in the matter.
8. A further consequence of the capturing of Afrikaans education is that it undermines the involvement and generosity of Afrikaans school communities nationwide and that Afrikaans communities' direct say in improving their communities through education is taken away from them by the state.
9. Finally, specific BELA provisions represent a breach of trust by a government that was co-responsible for the establishment of constitutional instruments to create room for Afrikaans and other indigenous languages to continue in the new dispensation, only to be using those very constitutional instruments to undo Afrikaans education.

**We hereby declare that should BELA succeed, it will be accepted as a unilateral breach by the government of the constitutional settlement of 1994, and that this breach of trust between the Afrikaans language community and the government would be irreparable and permanent.**

**Signatories:**



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**Solidarity Movement – Flip Buys**



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**Trust vir Afrikaanse Onderwys (TAO) – Dr Theuns Eloff**



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**Trust vir Afrikaanse Kuns, Kultuur en Erfenis – Dr. Theuns Eloff**



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**Cape Forum – Heindrich Wyngaard**



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**AfriForum – Kallie Kriel**



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**Dak-Network** – Danie van Wyk

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**South African Teachers' Union (SAOU)** – Chris Klopper



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**Solidarity** – Dr Dirk Hermann



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**Afrikaans Language Council (ATR)** – Conrad Steenkamp



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**Afrikaanse Onderwys Netwerk (AON)** – Daan Potgieter



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**Die MOS Inisiatief ( Moedertaal in Onafhanklike Skole)** – Roedolf van der Westhuizen



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**Solidarity Helping Hand** – Hannes Noëth



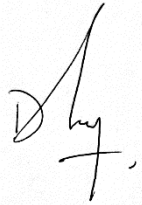
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**South African Academy for Science and Arts** – Prof. Anne-Marie Beukes



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**Solidarity Support Centre for Schools (SOS) – Leon Fourie**



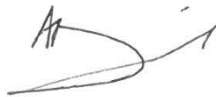
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**Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations (FAK) – Dr Danie Langner**



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**StudentePlein – Frederik van Dyk**



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**AfriForum publishers – Alana Bailey**



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**Leierskapsvereniging (Association for Leadership) – Hugo Vermeulen**



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**AfriForum Youth – Ronald Peters**



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**Solidarity Youth – Mareli Bothma**

