

Second Edition
8 March 2024

ED WATCHDOG



*Keeping an eye on the
Educational horizon.*





Welcome

In this Edition:

PG

- **Which BELA Bill?** 2
- **Let the Child Speak!** 3
- **A Muslim ECD Educator's Insights and Concerns regarding the BELA Bill** 6
- **What About Clause 40?** 11
- **Who are SCI AEC** 13
- **Written Submissions still open** 14
- **Public Hearings still ongoing** 15
- **BELA Bill Abuse Hotline Pestalozzi Trust** 16

Education is my passion but it's not the only one I have. You'll notice the dog in my logo. It's a rottweiler. Our family is blessed to have three.

Rottweilers are calm, courageous, confident, loyal, intelligent, and protective dogs. They are friendly and loving with their families, and tolerant of other animals - not easily excited or stressed, and they remain calm even in challenging situations. Rottweilers are not afraid to stand up for themselves or their family and are naturally protective of their family and of their property. In many ways I have the heart of a rottweiler.

Ed Watchdog is my property and I'm rather protective of it. In this respect I am picky of who is allowed to use my name and logo and especially what it is attached to. I have done many things anonymously as a person and not as Ed Watchdog. Only on some things I've allowed my logo to be attached to. There have been recent occurrences where some have taken someone else's work and claim affiliation or use it for their own gain. If the name Ed Watchdog doesn't get my personal thumbs up it is not used with my blessing.

...and by the way... Welcome back. In the last edition my voice was the loudest. In this edition there is opinion pieces from others and some news on an event at a public hearing. Ed Watchdog is for everyone and not a select few. Unedited and uncut. If you also want your voice to be heard on matters concerning the BELA Bill, please email me at edwatchdoghs@gmail.com

Disclaimer: The publication maintains editorial independence, allowing contributors to express diverse opinions. However, inclusion of an article does not imply endorsement or validation of its content. For specific legal matters consult qualified professionals. The information provided here does not replace personalized advice. Readers are encouraged to verify facts independently and seek professional advice when necessary.

WHICH BELA BILL??

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Old videos, messages, and sentiments have come back to the forefront as momentum grows against the BELA Bill. They are sometimes good, heartfelt, passionate and from a space of the best of intentions. But they carry incorrect information. This should not be held against anyone and to be noted that even some experts are still getting it wrong. They are all referring to B 2-2022 and not the latest which is B 2B-2022.

When the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education (PCBE), at the National Assembly (NA) level, started their rounds of public hearings last year it was on the older version (B 2-2022). After the public hearings were concluded they began a process of clause-by-clause deliberations. During these deliberations some clauses were changed, and some removed. The new version (B 2B-2022) was presented to the NA, and they adopted the BELA Bill. This new version was then sent to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), and we are currently in the process of public hearings for this next phase.

[B 2B—2022]

NEW BELA

So how do you know the difference? The first tell-tale give away is the front page. On the bottom left corner will be the document name. If it says "B 2-2022" it is the older version. If it says "B 2B-2022" it is the latest version. But not everyone has the document in front of them when discussing the BELA Bill or are able to quickly look up the clause if they did. So how do you know someone is referring to the wrong version? The biggest give away is when mention is made of alcohol being allowed on school premises.

In the previous BELA Bill (B 2-2022) there were 56 Clauses in total. The alcohol on school premises was Clause 8(a). In the latest BELA Bill (B 2B-2022), that has only 54 Clauses in total, Clause 8(a) is about prohibiting drugs, liquor, and dangerous objects on school premises unless for educational purposes. There was even an earlier BELA Bill (B-2015) that was presented in 2017 for comment. In that version there were only 53 clauses.

There have been a few changes since the first BELA Bill was presented in 2017 to the current one we have today. It's not easy trying to keep up especially trying to understand why the changes were made and what new impact it will have. If even the experts can get it wrong, it is understandable when others get it wrong as well. However, do take note of any dates or mentions on clauses, such as allowing alcohol on school premises, when receiving, and especially, when sharing BELA Bill related information on social media platforms.

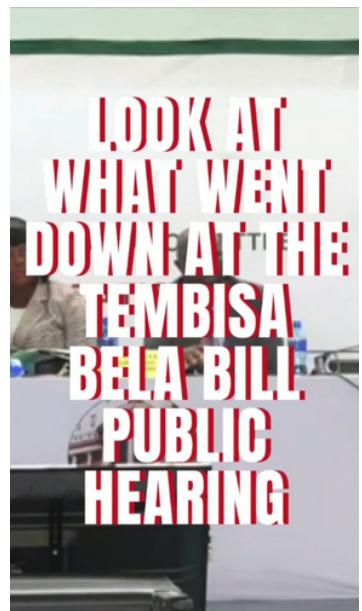
LET THE CHILD SPEAK!

ED WATCHDOG 

THE PICTURES IN THIS ARTICLE HAVE BEEN TAKE DIRECTLY FROM THE VIDEO BEING MENTIONED. UNFORTUNILY, SOME MAY BE BLURRED. THE VIDEO MENTIONED WILL BE POSTED TO THE ED WATCHDOG CHANNEL.

This week has seen public hearings conducted in the Eastern Cape. Last week was the final of the Gauteng public hearings and it was rather eventful. From being told what will be accepted to children being denied the right to speak, it showed many procedural irregularities. In a video doing the rounds on social media it shows one such incident.

The video starts off with footage in the background of Hon. Tshilidzi Munyai, Chair of the Gauteng Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Education. The words "Look at what went down at the Tembisa BELA Bill Public Hearing" flashes and cuts to a mom trying in vain to get the Chair to allow her daughter to speak. The mom, identified as Mrs Singh, tries to have it placed on record that the Chair is not allowing her daughter to speak or allowing her daughter to take her place to speak. The Chair tells her that parents cannot represent their child. Keep in mind that this is a public hearing on education which concerns the children of South Africa.



In the video the crowd begins an uproar and parents become angry. Some shout "Let her speak". One parent stands up with a 2-month-old in a sling in her arms and walks towards the front first rows of chairs to address the Chair in defence of the rights of the child to speak. At no point was this mother a threat, especially with a 2-month-old baby in a sling in her arms but police seemed to believe it may be and are seen walking towards her and later escorting her out of the building. At no point was this portion showed on the official channels. Just footage of the mother, patiently waiting for everyone to calm down, while the Chair kept on telling her to make her contribution. Hon. Dos Santos also tries to raise a point of order in respects for the right of the child to speak. The Chair refuses the point of order and tries to ignore Hon. Dos Santos. A disagreement between Hon. Munyai and Hon. Dos Santos ensues while the mom still patiently waits. Eventually the daughter is allowed to speak.

LET THE CHILD SPEAK!

ED WATCHDOG 

At the end of the video the Chair claims to have phoned the state law advisor who apparently advised him that children, under law, who are under 18 cannot make a submission. This is false. In South Africa, children have the right to be heard when it comes to matters that concern them, including education. This recognition of children as holders of rights is consistent with international agreements on children's rights, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

In the Preamble of the Children's Act the following paragraph: "AND WHEREAS the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child, in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialised agencies and international organisations concerned with the welfare of children;"

The rights of children to speak on matters concerning them is of paramount importance. So much so that it was even mentioned as part of a verdict in the Constitutional Court where children were not heard by a private school who decided to terminate their enrolment due to a breach of contract by the parents with the school. The verdict was read on the 17th of June 2020 and the contract declared unconstitutional based on not allowing the children their constitutional right to be heard on matters concerning them and what was in their best interests.

All Acts, Conventions, Charters and so on where it concerns the child has four key principles which are the right to not be discriminated against, the right to what is in their best interests, the right to life, survival and development, and the right to be heard.

What the video does not show is what transpired before and after the incident. Mrs Singh had already raised a point of order near the beginning of the hearing. Her point of order was that presentations need to be finished quicker due to taking up a lot of time and taking valuable time away from the people who were there. Presentations from the DBE has been known to take up to an hour. Meetings are not extended, and time is then cut short for public participation. Despite this point of order, the DBE representative still proceeded to continue with his long-winded presentation.

And in Article 7 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: "Every child who is capable of communicating his or her own views shall be assured the rights to express his opinions freely in all matters and to disseminate his opinions subject to such restrictions as are prescribed by Laws."

Section 10 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 reads: "Every child that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development as to be able to participate in any matter concerning that child has the right to participate in an appropriate way and views expressed by the child must be given due consideration." According to the Children's Act a child has the right to participate on matters concerning them. A child is defined as a person below the age of 18 years.

What transpired after the presentation was the Chair calling for a show of hands of those of the public wishing to speak to his right and then to his left where Mrs Singh sat. Afterwards he called for a show of hands on anyone else wanting to speak. Mrs Singh again raised her hand, which was later noted by Hon. Dos Santos during the argument after he called for a point of order that it was on behalf of her daughter. Upon seeing Mrs Singh's raised hand a second time, the Chair berated her without giving Mrs Singh the chance to explain why her hand was up again.

LET THE CHILD SPEAK!

n the Article 12 on the Convention on the rights of the child, it states the following: "1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. 2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law."

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The mom with the 2 month old in a sling, Mrs Ursula Langenberg, who stood and walked to the front first rows cannot be heard in the video, but she shouted at the committee: "Education affects the children. Let her speak." She repeated herself on the way, voluntarily, back to her seat to collect her bag and baby chair with the intention to leave. One member of the audience called Mrs Langenberg a derogatory term in Zulu to which she responded "Aikona" and that she will not stand to be insulted like that. Members in the row behind her, who were identified as teachers, haggled her further and she again repeated herself that education affects the children and to let her speak.



Police escorted Mrs Langenberg outside and, as her intention was to leave, she did not resist. Mrs Langenberg was able to file an official verbal complaint to Hon. Dos Santos, in person and with witnesses, on the conduct of the Hon. Munyai who not only initially refused to let the child speak but also how he had been rude during speeches and towards some after their speeches. The Chair, Hon. Munyai's, intention seemed to have been to insight the crowd and intimidate speakers.

Mrs Langenberg had a right to demand that the child be given the opportunity to speak. The South African School's Act considers compulsory school attendance to be 7 to 15. The BELA Bill in Clause 2 seeks to make this even younger from the age of 6 to 15. Because this affects the future education, and the child has the right to be heard then children of these age groups should especially be allowed to be heard. It is their right. Education affects the children. Let them speak!

At the end of the video shared Arusha Singh does get to speak. Despite what happened she stands with confidence. A calm in the storm. If a child is willing to stand and speak despite all this then it's time we stand with them.



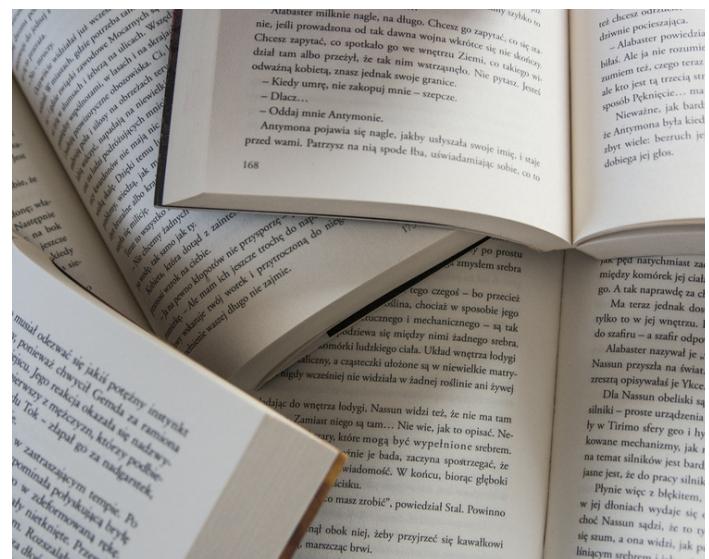
A MUSLIM ECD EDUCATER'S INSIGHTS AND CONCERNS REGARDING THE BELA BILL

Article by Zainab Celen

I am a qualified early childhood educator who has had the privilege to work in both government and private school settings alongside many wonderful teachers from all walks of life. A career focus for me has been researching and trial-testing multiple homeschooling programs through various providers to be used at small independent preschools and primary schools. I have used Clonard, Alpha education, Think Digital and Cambrilearn online learning platforms primarily with students between ages 4 to senior primary level. My experience between each online provider has been varied, with some offering better user interface and curriculum and others severely lacking. One that stood out has been Alpha education as their support and curriculum caters to the everyday parent and students who may not be top achievers, and who may be coming from under-resourced government schools.

However, all this considered, it is unfortunate that as a teacher working in a primarily Islamic schooling environment, most providers are run by non-muslim faith-based entities and educators that cater to their own sensitivities. This means our young muslim children are one way or the other still exposed to other religious ideologies in lesson materials, assignments and exams.

I have been working with homeschooling systems since 2017, beginning at a girl's boarding centre, and then within a preschool setting, and currently privately with my own child. Using a home schooling syllabus allows muslim independent schools and parents to take control of their students learning, while making accommodations for a focus on Islamic studies and their child's individual needs. This has been my primary goal in incorporating home schooling syllabus at our small centres. It ensures our learners are on par with mainstream schools, have a recognised report and their progress is externally monitored and supported as well.



In my own capacity my involvement with parents and teachers in the community is through my own teacher support group for parents and teachers from both public and independent schools where we share lesson materials, classroom resources, free workshops and skills development programs. I primarily started the group to assist government school teachers I've met along the way who find themselves in very underrepresented and under-resourced school communities. On the homeschooling front I am following the progress and discourse surrounding the BELA bill hearings through various whatsapp groups.

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Regarding the BELA bill, it is most important to note that the BELA bill has not been passed into law as yet. This is a misconception that has been widely shared on social media and this incorrect message continues to spread. An older version of the bill has been passed at the National Assembly to be introduced for comment and adjustments. The bill is now before the NCOP (National council of provinces) where written submissions are being accepted and provincial hearings with written and oral submissions are being collected from the public in favour or against the implementation of the bill. This is the final opportunity for the muslim community and wider community to take a stand for our children's education, both homeschooling and at mainstream schools.

Below I will list a few of many concerning clauses the bill would bring into legislation.

CLAUSE 2: GRADE R

This clause suggests that school attendance must be compulsory from grade R and no longer only from grade 1. The clause further proposes to increase the penalty provision from six to 12 months in the case where the parent of a learner, without just cause, fails to ensure that a learner, who is subject to compulsory attendance, attends school. (A penalty provision means jail time and/or a fine.) It is an offense for any person to unlawfully and intentionally interrupt, disturb or hinder any official educational activity of a school, or hinder or obstruct any school in the performance of the school's official educational activities.

CLAUSE 6: ADVISORS

This clause seeks to empower the Minister to appoint a person, organisation or group of persons to advise the Minister on matters relating to a national curriculum statement and a national process and procedures for the assessment of learner achievement. This allows the Minister to obtain input from a broader spectrum of people. Parents, teachers and governing bodies will have no say in who these people or what organisations may be consulted.

CLAUSE 25: SMALL SCHOOLS

The MEC may close a public school after following a prescribed consultation process if in the case of a primary school, 135 or less are registered at that school and in the case of a secondary school, 200 or less learners are registered at the school.

CLAUSE 33: INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Clause 33 seeks to increase the penalty provision from six to 12 months in the case where a person establishes or maintains an independent school that is not registered by the HoD. This means that independent schools, small home school centres and tutor centres owners can face jail time if they fail to register their school. Unfortunately, it is a well established fact that many small schools struggle for up to years to successfully register their facilities with the Department of Education in many provinces. For some reason, government wishes to punish educational providers rather than support their development and make it easier to register.

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CLAUSE 35: HOMESCHOOL

Home educators must apply to the HoD to register for home education. Even if the registration process was initially successful, the HoD may de-register a child if home education is no longer considered to be in the best interest of the learner. (A parent may challenge this decision.) This clause puts parents and their children's education at the sole discretion of the department. If a child is removed from home schooling and placed into a mainstream school by the department HoD, and the parent does not send the child, the parent can then face a penalty of imprisonment.

CLAUSE 39: MINISTERIAL POWERS

This clause seeks to extend the powers of the Minister to make regulations regarding a range of matters of which the management of learner pregnancy is one. This means that by the minister's decision, pregnant learners may be able to receive medical intervention (termination) without parental consent or the parent even being informed by the school.



In terms of the impact on homeschooling- the BELA bill will firstly add extra steps to the process of registering a child with a homeschooling provider, Clause 35 states that parents must apply to the HOD to register their child. Even if the child has been accepted by the registered provider, the HOD from the education department has the power to reject applications as well as de-register the child if they feel that homeschooling is not in the best interest of the child. While a parent may challenge this decision, they are left at the discretion of the department - facing possible jail time of 6 to 12 months for failure to send the child to school.

I believe the Bill represents government overreach. Through the BELA bill our government is trying to remove control from parents and educators into the hands of an authoritarian government controlled governing body. The BELA bill provides a clause for the Minister of Education to maintain a total veto over decisions made by school governing bodies, educators and parents.



Moreover, there is a very valid concern about Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) having greater effect once the BELA Bill becomes law. Unfortunately, the Department of Education has already given schools, now beginning from Grade R, the first set of new guidelines regarding CSE and its implementation and introduction in South African schools under the guise of improving equality and diversity in the classroom.

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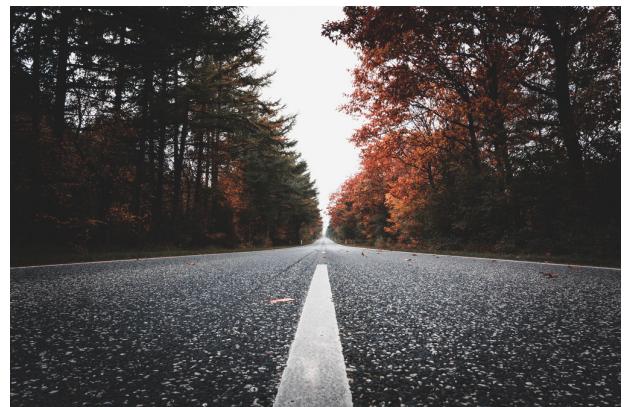


The guidelines are called 'ALL ARE WELCOME: Promoting gender equality in early childhood development' where early childhood educators are advised on how to introduce alternative gender ideologies to our young children in their foundational years. These guidelines encourage teachers to allow boys to wear dresses and play with dolls, and for girls to take traditionally male roles in their imaginative play. The guidelines also discourage traditional gendered language. They encourage the use of story books showing alternative lifestyles with same gender parents, among other un-islamic concepts. The guidelines refer to a concept called 'gender responsive pedagogy'. With all this said, CSE while important and necessary, if left totally in the hands of our government, has the potential to make un-islamic indoctrination of our children compulsory. They wish to take the narrative away from parents and faith based approaches. No child should be exposed to and encouraged into alternative lifestyles without the guidance of their parents or guardians.

Unfortunately not every Muslim parent can afford to send their child to a private educational facility or homeschool. This is the shocking trajectory our government has chosen. When they struggle to provide and resource schools in the first place, it is unbelievable this is what they choose to focus on. One wonders what the underlying agenda of the Department of Education truly is.

Where our children are well protected and guided in an Islamic environment at our small schools and through homeschooling, CSE brings in unnecessary alternative ideology into our homes that can send our children down the road of sin and shirk. Should our children be forced to be assessed on these sections we will have no choice but to expose our children for the sake of their academic performance not being affected. Even if we advise our children to leave these sections of exams blank, they will still appear in front of our children.

Unfortunately due to the remote location of the BELA bill hearings I was unable to attend. My main concern is the deliberate choice by the NCOP to hold discussions in hard to reach areas away from central hubs- a prime example being that the KZN hearings were held in Dundee, Phongola and Ixopo, 5-7 hours drive away from Durban and Pietermaritzburg which should have been obvious choices. Another concern is the short period of time allowed for participants to make their verbal submissions, as well as the lack of media coverage and instances of media not being allowed to record the hearings.



A MUSLIM ECD EDUCATER'S INSIGHTS AND CONCERNS REGARDING THE BELA BILL

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I would like to see government take the following alternative approaches to address education reform: In terms of government schools: The first would be for greater support of early childhood development centre programs and their educators. Funds need to be channelled into foundational education rather than be drastically cut down. Next, safe infrastructure for learners from all phases. The removal of all pit latrines, school libraries made available and maintained at all schools, availability of computer and technology labs. Availability of safe and regulated sports infrastructure. Upgrading all tin walled schools to brick and cement.

In terms of home schooling: Regulation that will ensure children are being educated by registered providers and progressing appropriately with support for parents in terms of curriculum guidance. Very little other interference is required from the government in homeschooling.

To our community at large: We cannot pass this bill off as the next person's responsibility. We cannot allow the government to criminalize home schooling parents and small independent school owners. In the end, one way or another, we will all be affected. Consider if you are a business person, how comfortable will you be to employ a young person who has been exposed to and then chosen an alternative lifestyle, compared to a young muslim who displays akhlaaq and spirituality? These are challenges we will be facing very soon.



To the policy makers: Hands off our children. We can see the danger and distortion you wish to bring forward, and we are well aware. As parents and educators, we are taking a stand for our children.

The BELA bill has affirmed my conviction to put forward a holistic, Islamic education for as many children as I can reach. If not, I am certain we will see the further degeneration of our beautiful country. While we cannot hide our children from the world, whether through our homeschooling or mainstream schools, we can use our position as parents and educators to make sure our young students are kept firmly on the straight path.

Sources: The BELA bill, Concerned Citizen (Opinion Piece: Relevant Clauses authored by Stacy van der Walt)

Originally written as a contribution for Salaam Media (<https://salaammedia.com/2024/02/26/hands-off-our-children-bela-bill-draws-ire-of-parents/>)

WHAT ABOUT CLAUSE 40?

ED WATCHDOG 

Being asked questions on various Clauses in the BELA Bill is par for the course. I even decided to do something I've never tried before which was a 3 ½ hour whatsapp Q and A on the Election Strategy – Tactical Voting group founded and run by Diane. It was worth it but not something I'd do just for anyone. I do, however, answer questions sent privately to me often when I am able to. This question was asked, in private to me, in the week and it was on the implications of Clause 40.



Clause 40 is the addition of the line "facilitate the education of children through the promotion and protection of the right to basic education" to the third paragraph of the Preamble. The third paragraph with the addition underlined, and if the BELA Bill becomes law, will read as follows: "WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, facilitate the education of children through the promotion and protection of the right to basic education, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State;"

On the surface this seems like a innocent addition that just adds a bit more to the mandate of the State and to the Department of Education. The whole paragraph is to do with the goals for the education and the Act.



WHAT ABOUT CLAUSE 40?

ED WATCHDOG 



The use of the word "children" instead of learners is a slight concern. The South African School's Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) refers to learners and not to children. Learners are defined in the SASA as any person receiving education or obliged to receive education. The word "children" might fall onto the Children's Act for definition which is anyone under the age of 18. The SASA is only supposed to deal with learners which, according to the current compulsory attendance, is ages 7 – 15 (The BELA Bill seeks to lower the age of compulsory attendance to 6 in Clause 2).

The words "basic education" is used in the addition to the Preamble. Basic Education has a definition in the BELA Bill which includes grade R – 12 and is evidenced in the National Curriculum Statement. The wording was changed from "means" to "includes" on that definition which was a slight improvement but not out of the woods yet. It makes the National Curriculum Statement an example as to what basic education should be.

In that small one line it extends the education mandate to all children younger than 18 years of age and limits the type of education to anything that will be able to be compared to the example which is the National Curriculum Statement.

It has the potential to be an issue in future, but I await to hear of example cases with verdicts put before any courts in South Africa where the Preamble was used. It is still disturbing to see the addition and it just might be the prelude to future plans for South Africa.

Thank you to the person who asked me about it. It really is food for thought.





BACKGROUND

Tutor centre registration... This has always been a hot topic of discussion. Talks about tutor centre registration is increasing as the BELA BILL threatens the existence of these establishments.

Micro cottage schools, commonly referred to as 'tutor centres', fall within the Independent schooling sector and are unfortunately subjected to the same registration requirements as independent schools.

TUTOR CENTRE REGISTRATION

There is no formal definition for these micro cottage centres and there is no policy guidance on the establishment and registration of these centres. For this reason no provision is made for them and they function independently of the formal government-regulated education system. They also lack official recognition or accreditation from UMALUSI.

The good news is that Let's do it 2gether 4 EDUCATION (a registered non profit organisation) has established the Standards Commission for Independent Alternative Education Centers: SCI AEC.

On the surface this seems like a innocent addition that just adds a bit more to the mandate of the State and to the Department of Education. The whole paragraph is to do with the goals for the education and the Act.

SCI AEC is a quality assurance body that provides quality standards by which micro cottage centres are monitored to ensure compliance with educational standards, safety standards and ethical practices, in order to ultimately protect the rights of parents and students, and promote transparency and accountability within the micro cottage centre sector.



SCI AEC defines these centres as Independent Alternative Education Centres. It provides guidelines and standards for alternative educational centres that are already operating, and for those who want to establish an independent alternative education centre. It also provides a mechanism for parents and students to voice concerns and seek resolutions.

Anyone who would like further info may contact Neeresh at 082 560 8277 or Jayna at 083 560 0123.

STANDARDS COMMISSION FOR INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CENTRES

info@sciaec.org.za

www.sciaec.org.za

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS STILL OPEN

ED WATCHDOG 

Written Submissions still open at date of publication:

Northern Cape
Deadline 12 March
dfritz@ncpleg.gov.za

Eastern Cape
Deadline 15 March
mdaniels@ecleg.gov.za

Western Cape
Deadline 4 April
wasiema.hassenmoosa@wcpp.gov.za
Whatsapp voice notes or messages to
060 250 6165
Online form:
<https://forms.office.com/r/hKVpkPGbbY>

OPEN



<https://dearsouthafrica.co.za/bela-bill-ncop/>



For record purposes please BCC
Home Ed: homeschoolfreedom1996@gmail.com
Other: educationfreedomSA@gmail.com

WE'RE CLOSED

Written Submissions that have closed at date of publication:

NCOP – National
Freestate
Gauteng
KZN
Limpopo
Mpumalanga
North West

Above information may be subject to change.

Public Hearings that have been concluded at date of publication:

Eastern Cape
Freestate
Gauteng
KZN

Limpopo
Mpumalanga
North West

**WE'RE
CLOSED**

OPEN

Public Hearings still ongoing at date of publication:

Eastern Cape

Team 1:

- 8 March, 10h00
City Hall, City Hall (reception)

Team 2:

- 8 March, 10h00
Makhanda, Noluthando Hall

Team 3:

- 8 March, 10h00
Aliwal North, Joe Slovo Hall

Team 4:

- 8 March, 10h00
Komani, Indoor Sports Centre

Team 5:

- 8 March, 10h00
Mthatha, OR Tambo Hall

Team 6:

- 8 March, 10h00
King Williams Town,
Schornville Community Town Hall

Western Cape

- 15 March, 18h00
Paarl, Huguenot Community Hall
- 22 March, 18h00
Saldanha Bay, White City Multi-Purpose Community Centre
- 4 April, 18h00
Cape Town, Chamber (Sixth Floor)
Provincial Legislature Building

For those observing Ramadan there will be a special hearing on 4 April from 15h00 in Cape Town, Provincial Legislature Building, 7 Wale Street. This session will also be available virtually through MS Teams.

Northern Cape

- 23 March, 10h30
Springbok, Bergsig Libra Hall

Above information may be subject to change.



Pestalozzi Trust

www.pestalozzi.org

The BELA Bill Abuse Hotline, operated by the Pestalozzi Trust, is a dedicated line for reporting any issues or irregularities encountered during the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill hearings. This initiative aims to ensure transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in the hearing process by addressing concerns such as inadequate public notification, insufficient educational sessions prior to hearings, limited bill copies or language support, and restrictions on public input. Stakeholders are encouraged to contribute by sending reports, including text, voice notes, or videos, through the dedicated WhatsApp and Telegram lines.

Issues worth reporting include:

- Notification and Accessibility: Cases where the public was not adequately notified about hearings, including where the dissemination of the notices was not widespread.
- Pre-Hearing Preparation: Instances where no preliminary education sessions were held before public hearings, leaving participants under-informed about the bill's content and implications.
- Access to Copies of the Bill: Situations where there were insufficient copies of the bill available at hearings, or where copies were not provided in the languages prevalent in the area, hindering understanding and participation.
- Time Management and Fairness: Concerns about briefings, introductions, and explanations consuming excessive amounts of time, thereby limiting the opportunity for public comment. Also, any attempts to dictate what the public could or could not discuss should be noted.
- Participant Manipulation: Observations of individuals being bussed in to hearings without any prior knowledge of the bill, potentially skewing the nature of public input.

This effort supports the Trust's wider mission to monitor the hearings effectively and advocate for fair legislative processes.

You can send text, voice notes, or videos to the following contact details:

WhatsApp: 069 407 7938

Telegram: 071 356 1528

Top Tip: Add the number to your contacts before sending text, voice notes, or videos. If you are struggling you may need to add +27 in front of these numbers.