

MURANG'A COUNTY ASSEMBLY

THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 10th February 2016

The House met at 2:35 p.m.

(Second Chair Hon. Catherine Mugo in the Chair)

PRAYERS

MOTION

ADOPTION OF REPORT OF EDUCATION, CHILD WELFARE, RESEARCH, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND E-GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE ON THE MURANG'A COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Hon. John Gitau: Thank you Madam Speaker, before I move this motion, I would like to welcome our visitors in the plenary; they are pupils from St. Andrews Academy which is in a place called Kanderendu in Kangari ward.

I beg to move the following motion;-

That, this Assembly adopts the report of Education, Child welfare, Research, Information Technology and E-Government committee on Murang'a county early childhood development policy laid on the table of the Assembly on Tuesday February 9, 2016.

In a committee sitting held on October 8, 2015, the Education, Child welfare, Research, Information Technology and E-Government committee resolved that it was necessary for the county government to have clear policy guidelines for deployment of early childhood care givers.

This was informed by the fact that in financial year 2015/2016 this hon. Assembly approved a budget of Kshs. 98 million towards the employment of caregivers in the county. The reasons why we were doing this is so that we can make nursery schools in our county free.

Having seized the opportunity to request for the above said policy, the committee in a sitting held on October 15, 2015 invited the executive member in charge of education and technical training and his officers, where both parties agreed that the department of education and technical training drafts the ECDE employment policy and forwards the same to the committee for adoption.

On 2nd November 2015, the County Executive Committee member for education forwarded to the County Assembly a draft employment policy for ECD caregivers which was then forwarded to the committee by the clerk to the County Assembly.

However, in a committee meeting held on November 10, 2015 members discussed the policy and felt it was not satisfactory in concept and the way it was drafted. It was then resolved that a more detailed policy be sought from the County Executive Committee member for education for tabling in this hon. House.

Consequently, a second policy was received on November 19, 2015 which was then tabled in the committee on November 24, 2015. In a committee sitting held on 6th January 2016 members discussed the submitted response and thereafter adopted it for tabling in this hon. Assembly with the following, recommendations; that the number of the ECD caregivers to be employed be as per the approved budget estimates for financial year 2015/2016 of Kshs. 98 million.

This recommendation is because as a committee we had given a budget to employ over 800 caregivers, but subsequently department of education resolved that they are going to employ about 312 caregivers, so there was a shortage of close to 500 caregivers.

As a committee we felt that this is not fair and there will be an outcry when make some nurseries free while others will not be free. So when we came back to the drawing board and

when we invited the County Executive Committee member and the County Public Service Board they agreed that they will employ over 800 as it had been put in the budget.

The other recommendation is that the number of caregivers to be employed should be in line with compendium of projects for the department of education and technical training for the financial year 2015/2016. This is in line with law and set regulations within the budget and within the committee.

Next recommendation is that the policy should include the names of the members of the selection panel.

The other recommendation is that the Chief Officer for the department of education and technical training should represent the department in the selection/ recruitment panel.

Recommendation five is that the policy should include the selection criteria and the scheme to be used during the whole recruitment process.

Sixth recommendation is that recruitment of ECD caregivers be done at the sub-county level to see to it that there is equity and fairness in distribution of the available vacancies.

The last recommendation is that a selection criteria for posting of caregivers to various care centres be included as part of policy.

Madam Speaker, I wish to give a fair view of the policy that we received from the department of education and because of interest of time it will not be verbatim but I will sample the policy.

Just for introduction; early childhood education in Kenya has been recognized as a crucial programme that acts as the foundation of child, community and integrated education that gives the cognitive moral, emotion, spiritual and physical development needs. In essence what we are saying is that ECD or nursery schools are functions for the county government.

The committee has been very careful and vocal on how we start our ECD because if we have a good foundation we are going to improve our education standards in Murang'a county.

If you talk to engineers and those people who build houses, they will tell you that the foundation will dictate how many storeys that building will go, so if we have a very good foundation for our children, like the one we are seeing at the plenary, if the foundation is very good at nursery school then they shall have a very easy time progressing upwards.

The education of these young ones has been vested in various stakeholders including the local authorities, communities, faith based organisation, individuals, national government and currently the county government.

The fourth schedule of Constitution of Kenya 2010; on distribution of functions between the national government and the county governments allocates responsibilities of ECD to county governments.

(Hon. Charles Kirigwi rose on a point of order)

Hon. Charles Kirigwi: Madam Speaker I am on point of order on standing order number 80 which states very well that speeches may not be read and it is very clear that no member shall read a speech, but member may read a short extract.

I think the member is moving a motion not reading the speech.

Second Chair: Hon. Kirigwi I agree with you. Hon. Gitau I have noted that but there was no point of order raised, so please summarize the document so that you can call the seconder.

Hon. John Gitau: Thank you Madam Speaker, you know we are coming from recess and most of us have actually forgotten some of the customs of the House.

The total numbers of caregivers in the county are distributed; just to highlight we have 76 ECD centres in Kigumo and we need to employ 95 caregivers and two programme officers who will be overseeing the caregivers.

In Kahuro we have 61 ECD centres, in Kangema 46; in Gatanga we have 115, you can see the disparity there is quite big.

If you compare Kangema 46 and Gatanga 115 you find that it is very significant, almost three times. Mathioya we have 89, Murang'a South we have 98, Murang'a East we have 72, Kandara we have 82. We need a total of 882 caregivers and 11 programme officers.

Among caregivers we have graduates, diploma holders and then certificate holders. We had agreed as a committee that all caregivers should be trained because the minds they handle are very fragile and we need to be very careful about what we teach our young ones because whatever they grasp will be very hard for them to let go.

So we agreed that we are going to have qualified teachers and the qualification starts from the certificate all the way to Masters and it was said that 95 % of our caregivers have any of the three qualifications.

Therefore, because it is not advisable to relieve those who have been there for some time and employ others, it will be unfair, it was agreed that those who are there will be retained especially those who are qualified and we can only get other teachers for where we have teachers who are not qualified.

However, we also needed to be fair to those who are not qualified and we said they should not be sent home, they should be absorbed to do other work like assisting the caregivers or even employed in the kitchen to prepare porridge for these children.

The following are suggestions or guidelines for their employment. Madam Speaker, if you allow me to read verbatim because these are points; they should be employed on terms given by the County Public Service Board preferably on contractual basis because of resources.

They should handle a maximum of 35 pupils although the recommended ratio is 1 to 25; that is one teacher to 25 pupils.

The salaries should be channelled through the individual's bank account and they must have undergone thorough training and acquired a certificate either from a university, Kenya National Examination Council(KNEC) or Ministry of Education Science and Technology at the levels of degree, diploma or certificate.

Preference for employment will be given to teachers who are currently serving and are of appropriate age. Why we put age is because we have some of the caregivers, some of the teachers who are teaching in the nursery schools, some are teaching the children having taught their parents and some even grandparents, so some are aged and that is why we are saying the age should be appropriate.

All those seeking employment shall abide by chapter six of the Constitution which talks of integrity; they should be able to satisfy all those conditions.

The ECD caregivers shall be supervised and co-ordinated by the sub-counties officers who will be in contact with the Director of education.

I do not intend to bore the House by giving them so many stories but in essence the Board had promised that from February 1, 2016, which has already passed, all nursery schools in Murang'a county will be free and that all the parents will be relieved of the baggage of paying for nursery schools.

This is in line with making sure that every child in Murang'a county goes to school with no excuse that the parent does not have money; that the child is an orphan, that the child is living with their grandmother, that the parents are drunkard and they have neglected their children.

We are going to make it a very serious offence for the parents who do not take their children to school starting from nursery school. We should never see any child roaming in our towns or in our shopping centres while the other children are in school, and we agreed with the executive member that all children will be in school once the schools are opened.

I wish to call my able vice-chair to second this motion. Thank you Madam Speaker and we wish our children well as they start free nursery education.

If you allow Madam Speaker because i know i will not be allowed to talk again, the County Public Service board is currently on the ground undertaking the interviews, and I would request my colleagues; I have a list of where they are going on daily basis per sub-county, anybody who does not know where they are going they should contact me.

Also, there are malpractices

(Second Chair intervened)

Second Chair: Hon. member, I think you will have to communicate that one later, you are out of order.

Hon. John Gitau: Thank you Madam Speaker, I ask the Hon. vice- chair to second the motion.

Hon. Danson Mburu: Thank you Madam Speaker, I rise to second all what the chairman has said, thank you.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Samuel Wandia: Thank you Madam Speaker, the policy has come at the right time and this is the way to go in order to improve our education system because when a baby goes to class at an early stage, that baby will improve and have the courage to read. I congratulate the committee for insisting on this policy.

I would say that the policy be applied fairly across the board. We have seen in this county where a policy is in place, it is not fairly applied but only benefits those who are close to the powers that be.

I am urging the Education committee to ensure that all facilities to be given to the ECD teachers are fairly extended, for instance, training facilities for teachers to further their education; that should be fairly extended.

The interviews are ongoing; there are some cases where the headteachers of primary schools gave two names, one being the serving ECD teacher and another one who had been called from the bush, such that when the interviewers go to the institution, two are presented for interview.

It is upon the Education committee to tell us whether they went round collecting the names of the true teachers who have been in service so that when the interviews are done, they can follow and ensure that those who are teaching the kids are the ones who are given opportunities.

Otherwise, I do not know what the interview team will be given in the field but it is my submission that the committee accompanies the interview team to ensure those who are given the job are the ones who have been teaching the kids.

I will not mind if the committee gives me the mandate to ensure that in Muthithi, it is only those who have been serving who are given the job. Thank you

Hon. Cecilia Gitu: I am happy about the steps we have taken in the Education committee working together with the executive. The minister for education has been very co-operative and I am glad to see what we have been yearning for three years is now taking place. We have always wanted to put order in our early childhood education and it looks like it will happen.

If you recall, you know where the rain began to beat us as far as the early childhood education is concerned. This is when the defunct council gave over the work of the ECD and there followed some exploitation from unscrupulous individuals who raised fees for the children in the name of teachers' salaries, food and porridge. This has been a terrible thing.

Witnessing what our chair has discovered, there were many children not going to school because of the high fees. The chairman has a school in Saba Saba where the children attend for free.

What is happening today should have happened yesterday. ECD is the foundation of education; you cannot purport to correct a child after you have erred with child in ECD. I am delighted knowing that what we have engaged in is going to put order and sanity in our education system. If you have a good foundation, primary and secondary are easy

Addressing the concerns of Hon. Wandia regarding nepotism in recruitment, as a committee we have taken it up, we want everything done above board; we want a fair system where those who have been working will be considered if they are qualified.

If they are not, we want to ratify the mistakes we made in the past, I promise this House, we have just started a very good job and whatever you hear about the ECD and recruitment should come to us, so that we can address it and engage the powers that be to make sure that we have a process which is fair so that we can correct the past mistakes. I support

Hon Joseph Ndung'u: I stand to support the motion and let the hon. chair note that in the schedule of the ECD centres in Ichagaki, two are missing; under Kianjiru-ini primary school which should have two; there is Kianjiru-ini and Ikuyu and Gathunguri nursery school, the two nursery schools under Kianjiru-ini.

Regarding what Hon. Wandia raised, it needs to be looked at because there are some who have been working there but are not qualified. If they have to be substituted, it has to be by ECD teachers from those local areas, not bringing a teacher from Gatanga to Ichagaki, this will not be acceptable. I just wanted to raise that.

Hon. Charles Kirigwi: I thank the committee for this recruitment policy, I think it is among the few that this Assembly has received, we rarely get policies from the executive.

I must say that I have an issue with annex one; the institutional framework of implementing the recruitment policy. We have a County Public Service Board which is an independent body as per the law. This being the case, if you look at the organogram presented, it implies they will be getting instructions from the County Secretary.

The linkages between the County Secretary, CEM Education and the board should be dotted. This is an independent body that should be allowed to work without interference from the CEM, or the County Secretary; this is like in the Assembly. The county government has three arms, the County Executive, the County Assembly and the County Public Service Board.

I have noted elsewhere that in the policy, they have indicated that one teacher should go, Some ECD centres like Kahatia, Kirogo, Kahithe and Nyagatugu have more than 60 kids with one caretaker. This will be difficult since we have others with 30 kids with three caretakers. I do not know how we are going to re-deploy since re-deploying to another sub-county will be very unfair, this is an issue they need to look at.

Now that we have the recruitment policy, I expect the committee to push for curriculum development for these kids. We need a wholesome ECD policy such that if you go to Gatanga, Kangema or any other place, the entry to standard one is say six years. We should have uniform ECD tires, e.g. baby class, pre-unit, nursery etc. We should also fast track on the Polytechnic policy or the Bill. Thank you Madam Speaker

Second Chair: The mover to respond to the issues raised.

Hon. John Gitau: I am delighted that the members of this Assembly have supported the motion. I noted the issues as they were being raised; Hon. Wandia alluded on the issue of corruption; I noted the changes pertaining to corruption when we travelled to Singapore, that country has a serious policy on corruption.

We looked into their system of education from nursery up to the university. Apart from making their education free, corruption that affects other sectors is not there. It has come up in our committee that we do not want corruption in this exercise. The good thing about it is that we have agreed with the executive member and his team, and we have also agreed with the County Public Service Board.

Madam Speaker, this is actually happening; it is the chair of the County Public Service Board who called me and said that some of the headteachers are proposing teachers who are not teaching in those schools.

I was asking members to be present when the exercise is happening in their respective wards to ensure that the teachers who will be employed are the ones who have been teaching there, otherwise if we sit and hope things will go how we want them to, this may not be the way. Hon. members, I request that you can also sit in these interviews not to interview but as an observer to ascertain that this is going on well.

Hon. Cecilia talked about what I have done in my ward, I have been very vocal about this because my ward is one of those that have very many people who are not endowed, people who are poor.

I was called in a place called Saba Saba and I decided to employ a teacher since many kids were not going to school. I rented a house and last year alone I was able to have 62 kids go through the institution. These children would not have gone to school and thus they would not have transited to this year, this year I have 42 kids. In a small town like Saba Saba you can find 62 kids who are not going to school how is Murang'a county? It is pathetic.

I must thank my committee members because they have been very categorical---

(Hon Duncan Njuguna rose on a point of order)

Hon. Duncan Njuguna: Is the hon. member in order to open the debate instead of responding as you have requested him to do. There is no member who raised the issue of Saba Saba having 42 kids

Second Chair: Hon. Gitau, although you had indicated to the House that we have come from recess, please maintain order, you are out of order, just respond to the issues that you had not raised at the time of moving the motion.

Hon. John Gitau: I was responding to what Hon. Cecilia said, Madam Speaker I am reacting on member's contributions. I note your guidance and stand guided.

Hon. Ndung'u talked of some missing ECD centres in Ichagaki. I want to tell him, the way they were putting the zones in his list is the way the ministry of education has zoned them not per ward, so you might find that Kianjiru-ini is in another ward.

However, I sent the number of the County Public Service Board chairperson to all the members, they should contact her on such.

Hon. Kirigwi raised issues on independence of the County Public Service Board; as a committee we are aware of the issues but to make sure the exercise is above board, we are going to invite everybody involved in the exercise. That is why we said that we need to agree and move forward together

(Hon Joseph Ndung'u rose on a point of order)

Hon Joseph Ndung'u: I am not comfortable with him responding that Ikuyu and Gathunguri nursery schools were placed anywhere else whereas I have the whole list of all the wards and they have not been placed anywhere.

Second Chair: Hon Ndung'u, which page are you referring to?

Hon Joseph Ndung'u. There are names of the nursery schools to be visited in this file. In Ichagaki I can see the names of all the nursery schools except Ikuyu and Gathunguri; the two nursery schools under Kianjiru-ini. Kianjiru-ini is there but there are two other nurseries under Kianjiru-ini. As he responded, he said that they are placed in other wards, but I cannot see them listed.

Hon. Charles Kirigwi: Although it is in the afternoon, and I am not a member of the Education committee, I would like to inform my colleague, member for Ichagaki that what is before us ends in page number ten, so anything else is out of order

Second Chair: Hon Ndung'u, this is why I was requesting you to state the page you are referring to. As far as I am concerned, we do not have such a page with us.

Hon. John Gitau: It is right for Hon. Ndung'u to know that we are dealing with a policy paper. However, I have given out the number of the County Public Service Board chairperson and you can contact her and get all the information required. I rest my case

(Question put and agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Second Chair: This Assembly is adjourned until tomorrow 2:30p.m.

The House rose at 3:20pm