

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19: Northern Cape Department of Education fails to provide schools with PPE on eve of opening of schools

DATE: 13 February 2021

EMBARGO: None

ENQUIRIES: communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed by the Northern Cape Department of Education's failure to provide schools with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) ahead of the 2021-school year.

The PSA is concerned that there is not commitment from the Department to provide masks to all grades. Masks are basic preventative measures to ensure the safety of educators and learners. This situation will have an especially harsh impact on township schools.

The failure by the Department to commit to ensure that basic health and safety measures are in place before schools open on Monday, 15 February 2021 is a health risk. It's excuse of not having money to supply masks is unacceptable.

The PSA maintains that conditions are not conducive for schools to open on 15 February 2021. The PSA is further concerned about the staff establishment at schools in view of the high vacancy rate. There is no clear indication whether vacancies that arose owing to educators being lost to COVID-19 and educators with co-morbidities have been filled. In addition, there is a delay in the appointment of substitute educators.

The Department should practice what it preaches and fulfil the promises made on national television by providing PPE. The PSA cautions the Department to ensure that all health and safety protocols are in place at schools before the academic year starts to ensure the health and safety of school staff and learners.

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