

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA concerned regarding reports of an increase in Covid-19 infections in KZN schools**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted with concern reports of an alarming increase in Covid-19 infections in schools across the province, impacting not just staff members but learners as well. Recently the virus has claimed the lives of three learners.

The PSA noted that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education has intensified non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as the wearing of masks, regular hand washing and hand sanitising, as well as social distancing to curb the spread of the virus. However, the PSA is concerned that this may not be effective especially in impoverished schools which lack basic ablution facilities as well as clean running water. This is further aggravated by the unacceptably high teacher to learner ratio. The PSA therefore calls on the MEC and the Department to seriously consider reducing the number of learners per class and to implement an attendance rotation system until a sharp decline in infections is noted.

We urge the Department to reprioritise their budget and ensure that all schools have decent ablution facilities, reliable water supply and a sufficient supply of masks and hand sanitisers. Complying with non-pharmaceutical interventions cannot be over-emphasised and learners must be made aware of the importance of such interventions. Increased vigilance by Educators is also needed to assist in ensuring compliance by learners and stopping the spread of the virus.

END

