

MEDIA RELEASE PSA condemns Department of Basic Education's unilateral decision to slash thousands of teaching posts

DATE 11 September 2024

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly condemns the Department of Basic Education's unilateral decision to cut thousands of teaching positions across the country without proper consultation with the PSA, as a major Union representing public-sector employees.

This hasty and shortsighted decision will have devastating consequences for teaching and learning, particularly in under-resourced areas already burdened by overcrowded classrooms and insufficient teaching staff. The PSA is extremely concerned about the Department's approach, particularly in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, where severe budget shortfalls are respectively placing more than 11 000 and 2 400 teaching positions at risk. These cuts will exacerbate existing educator shortages, increase class sizes, and severely compromise educational quality, thereby jeopardising thousands of learners.

It is alarming that the Department has failed to fully engage with key stakeholders, including unions such as the PSA, on such a critical matter. The PSA demands that the Minister of Basic Education must reconsider the Department's decision. Meaningful dialogue must be initiated urgently with all relevant unions to explore viable alternatives as these cuts threaten educators' livelihoods and undermine learners' fundamental right to quality education.

The PSA urges the Minister to intervene and address the funding crisis plaguing the education sector. Using wage agreements as justification for cutting teaching posts is unacceptable. The escalating wage bill reflects broader fiscal mismanagement, and the Department must find sustainable solutions that do not compromise the future of South Africa's children.

The PSA is prepared to take decisive action to protect the Union's members and uphold the integrity of the education system. The PSA therefore urges the Minister of Basic Education to address this crisis promptly and collaborate with unions to find a path forward that safeguards jobs and preserves educational standards. Without immediate intervention, the repercussions and ripple effects of these decisions will be felt for generations with rising unemployment figures, dismal educational outcomes, and increased learner drop-out figures.

The PSA is committed to advocating for public servants' rights and ensuring that South Africa's education system is adequately funded to meet the needs of educators and learners.

END

