MEDIA RELEASE	**PSA disappointed by Minister of Basic Education's briefing on schools' readiness for 2021-school year**
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents thousands of educators and administrative staff at schools nationwide, is extremely disappointed with the media briefing that was held on 14 February 2021 by the Minister of Basic Education and the Department's Director-General.

The briefing highlighted the fact that the Department cannot provide concrete information on the provision of personal protective equipment, the shortage of educators and ensuring infrastructure is adequately addressed. This includes the provision of water at all schools.

Government's ability to provide services to communities has been crippled and destroyed by corruption. It is also clear that the extended period that schools received to prepare for re-opening was not adequately used. The briefing further failed to provide answers on budget requirements and available resources to ensure that schools are properly resourced to allow educators to offer quality education in a conducive environment that is safe for learners, educators, and other staff without risks owing to failing infrastructure.

Schools are breeding grounds for most transmittable diseases and with close to 18 million people gathering in schools daily and commuting to and from schools. To date, more than 1 000 educators and more than 150 administrative staff members have lost their lives to COVID-19. The PSA believes that the Minister and the Department failed to protect educators against the pandemic by not ensuring that educators are also regarded as frontline workers and receive the vaccine in the first phase of the vaccination plan. It is therefore vital that educators are vaccinated without delay to prevent a third wave of COVID-19 erupting in schools. The PSA urges the Minister to urgently engage the Minister of Health to include educators in the first phase of the vaccination plan.

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