

Teachers' Day: PSA applauds dedication amidst challenges

On Teachers' Day, the PSA acknowledges the dedication of educators in performing their demanding duties amidst continued challenges. Educators face overcrowded classrooms, impacting on their ability to address learners' individual needs whilst manage large groups of learners with limited resources and decaying infrastructure. Schools are increasingly becoming targets for criminals and vandalism. Despite these challenges, educators often go beyond their roles, by offering emotional support and guidance to learners.

Amidst these grim realities, educators are facing increasing pressure owing to decisions by the Department of Basic Education. These include the unilateral slashing of thousands of posts in various provinces without consultation. The cuts will exacerbate existing challenges by further increasing class sizes and stretching already limited resources. The PSA strongly condemns these cuts and calls for urgent government intervention. The looming educator shortage, worsened by budget shortfalls and rising retirements, demands immediate action. The PSA urges the Department to work with unions to explore sustainable solutions that protect jobs and education quality in the interest of the country's future.

The PSA has continuously been pursuing improved conditions for educators, including fair salaries, better resources, and a safer, healthier work environment. Educators, especially those in rural and underfunded schools, are disproportionately affected by inadequate infrastructure, as well as a lack of support staff and essential teaching materials.

Despite the challenges, being a teacher is a deeply fulfilling profession. Every day presents opportunities to shape young minds, inspire curiosity, and foster personal growth. Teachers have the unique privilege of witnessing "light-bulb moments" when learners grasp new concepts. The relationships built with learners, the ability to nurture future leaders, and the rewarding impact on their communities are rewards associated with a career as an educator.

The PSA, whilst applauding the invaluable role that educators play in shaping the future of South Africa, remains committed to protect and promote teachers' rights and interests to ensure that they receive the support and recognition they deserve.

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