

**MEDIA RELEASE**                                 **COVID-19: PSA calls for review of 2020 year-end examination date**

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EMBARGO   None

ENQUIRIES                                       communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents thousands of educators and administrative staff in schools across the country, is concerned about the quality of education that learners will receive to complete the 2020-academic year.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 17 000 educators received a concession from the Department of Basic Education to work from home or in a safe environment away from classrooms based on their pre-existing medical conditions. This situation created a vast number of shortages of educators in schools and although discussions were held to appoint temporary teachers, the reality is that provincial Education Departments simply do not have the financial means to appoint these temporary teachers. The resultant vacancies, combined with the reality that schools will continue to open and close owing to infections, give rise to concern that learners will be fully prepared for year-end examinations. The 2020 matriculants will be worse off than any other grade as the curriculum was finalised well before the pandemic arrived in South Africa.

Investigations conducted by the PSA across the country have revealed that several schools were closed since the return of all grades on 24 August 2020. Reports indicate that schools were closed for several reasons, including learners and educators being infected with COVID-19, non-compliance with safety protocols and regulations and a lack of infrastructure. The PSA therefore calls on the Department of Basic Education to proactively review the year-end examination date to compensate for the curriculum that could not be concluded owing to the impact of the pandemic.

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