

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA calls for action on challenges faced by Special Schools in KwaZulu-Natal
<b>DATE</b>	22 October 2025
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing thousands of Educators in the public sector, is alarmed by challenges faced by Special Schools in KwaZulu-Natal, after three such Schools were closed recently owing to various challenges.

One of these Schools, Entokozweni Special School in Edendale, did not open for the fourth term as parents were concerned about unreliable scholar transport provided for their children. The School has been provided with four buses to transport learners from home to school but only one bus is functioning well.

Pro Nobis Special School in Dundee and uKukhanyakoMsinga Special School in uMsinga also remain closed because the Department of Education's current budget constrains make it difficult for these Schools to function, as they are unable to pay electricity bills.

There is a shortage of school staff, salaries of staff members have not been paid, and transportation issues - including old, rundown buses with repairs taking up to six months - leaving learners stranded. The National School Nutrition Program is also affected as service providers are not paid on time.

KwaZulu-Natal has 76 special-needs schools that rely mostly on the Department of Basic Education for funding through the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF), which aims for schools to have sufficient resources to provide quality education. Budget cuts have, however, resulted in delays in payments. Whilst the Provincial Government has received an extra boost of funds from National Treasury, it is not sufficient to rescue the Department from its deep financial crisis.

The PSA is extremely concerned about this problem that has resulted in school closures. The Department must find an urgent solution to resolve this matter. The PSA will write a letter to the Department of Basic Education, requesting an urgent meeting to discuss this funding crisis in KwaZulu-Natal.

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