

**MEDIA RELEASE:** **PSA concerned about the dismissal of 13 educators in KwaZulu-Natal**

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**EMBARGO:** None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the decision by the newly appointed Head of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education to discharge 13 educators owing to the Department's failure to follow HRM Circular 50/2021, in declaring 23 educators as surplus from the Umlazi Comprehensive Technical High School.

In 2020, PSA members were subjected to an unfair post provision norm (PPN) process. After the educators lodged grievances, the Department considered the process resulting in 23 educators being surplus. The Department repeated the process in October 2021, with the same incorrect information, which resulted in the same grievances by members. In October 2021, PSA members participated in a PPN process meeting facilitated by a biased Director deployed by the Head of Department. However, the process wasn't different from the nullified 2020 process and educators raised dissatisfaction with non-compliance with HRM Circular 50/2021. Members then formally lodged 17 grievances between October and November 2021. The Department delayed the process of resolving these grievances until 8 December 2021.

The PSA's main concerns with the process is that the educator staff establishment was incorrect for the 10-days statistics during the PPN process; the incorrect number of learners was presented; warm bodies on the PPN certificate reflected 69 educators instead of 68 as one educator passed away in September 2021; the inclusion of four temporary educators resulted in the increased of surplus educators from 17 to 21. As a result of these concerns, the certificate issued and used during the PPN meeting was based on incorrect information submitted by the School Management Team to the Department. The Department failed to comply with HRM Circular 50 clause 4.4.4 on declaring surplus educators, notwithstanding that it should have used Last-In-First-Out principle and curriculum needs to place educators on the surplus list. Instead, unequally distributed duty loads of educators were used to declare the 23 educators on the surplus list.

The Department only responded to the grievances in January 2022, after the opening of schools, with many unresolved issues, resulting in disorder at the school. The Department further decided not to give the 23 educators duty loads to teach learners and prevented them from signing attendance registers. This was done deliberately to revoke the *Employment of Educators Act*, section 14(1), (a) and (b). The Department has over 4 000 vacancies and complained about budget cuts by provincial Treasury. The decision to terminate the employment of educators will have a negative impact on learning. The Department didn't issue release/placement letters, confirming new schools for the educators who were declared as surplus, and they only issued discharge letters on 2 March 2022.

The PSA calls on the KZN MEC of Basic Education to open further engagement and ensure the withdrawal of the discharge letters to these educators with immediate effect.

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