

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA concerned over Gauteng Government owned structures and buildings after devastating Fire at Riverlea High School
DATE	30 April 2025
EMBARGO	NONE
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is troubled to learn of yet another fire that has devastated public infrastructure, this time at Riverlea High School in Johannesburg, where a blaze broke out on Sunday, 27 April 2025. The fire destroyed 11 classrooms, furniture, and an entire boys' toilet block. Preliminary reports suggest the fire may be linked to ongoing cable theft and suspected arson in the area. This latest incident is part of a troubling pattern of fires affecting government institutions across the country. The PSA has repeatedly urged government to implement and enforce comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards to prevent such disasters. The lack of adequate security measures and the poor state of public infrastructure not only endanger lives but also places immense financial strain on the fiscus a cost the nation can ill afford.

The fire at Riverlea High directly impacts approximately 230 learners who are now without classrooms or basic furniture, just days before the school is due to restart. The PSA is concerned about the Department of Education's temporary plan to accommodate learners in the school hall while four mobile classrooms are being procured. This arrangement is clearly inadequate and fails to meet minimum safety and learning standards. The PSA reiterates its call for a comprehensive and immediate safety audit and risk assessment across all government buildings, including schools, to protect the lives of public servants and vulnerable learners. Without urgent intervention, these preventable incidents will continue to recur.

The PSA welcomes the news that the South African Police Service (SAPS) has opened a case of arson, and that a team of senior detectives and forensic experts are investigating the matter. However, the PSA strongly urges SAPS to include the Department of Employment and Labour in the investigation to address systemic issues related to infrastructure safety and to prevent future occurrences. The PSA stands in solidarity with the affected school community and will continue to advocate for the safety and well-being of all public servants and learners.

END