

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA demands full accountability for mass education failure in Northern Cape
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by the reported dropout of more than 4 000 learners from schools in the Northern Cape in the first quarter of 2025.

The PSA regards this situation not as a policy failure but a betrayal of constitutional duty. It is a direct result of gross neglect, lack of planning, and weak leadership by the Northern Cape Department of Education. The PSA calls for full accountability as this disaster cannot be covered up with weak apologies or hollow promises. Those responsible must answer for this collapse in learner retention.

The PSA demands an immediate full provincial forensic investigation, led by an independent panel, into how more than 4 000 learners disappeared from the school system under the Department's watch. The Head of Department and District Directors where dropout rates are highest should be suspended, with consequences for non-performance. A full, public report by the MEC for Education to the Provincial Legislature is required within ten working days. The MEC must account for every learner lost. If he cannot, he must resign. The PSA further demands the urgent summons of senior officials to appear before the Portfolio Committee on Education in Parliament. This matter must be escalated beyond the province. An emergency recovery plan led by communities, unions, school governing bodies, and civil society is required to find, support, and re-integrate every affected learner.

The PSA also demands that the Office of the Premier and the Provincial Treasury disclose how budget allocations for learner support, school nutrition, and transport were spent in the 2024/25-financial year. There is reason to believe that these funds were underspent or diverted, directly contributing to the dropout crisis.

The PSA reminds the Department and political leadership that section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees every child the right to basic education. Section 195 of the Constitution requires transparency, accountability, and good governance in public administration. This crisis has violated sections. The PSA will write to the South African Human Rights Commission, the Public Protector, and the Auditor-General to investigate potential dereliction of duty and financial mismanagement.

The PSA calls on the Presidency to treat the Northern Cape learner-dropout crisis as a national emergency. A generation is being lost whilst government leaders shift blame and issue meaningless press statements. If this crisis is not addressed decisively, the PSA will mobilise educators, parents, and learners across the province in protest. This will result in offices being closed and picketing at institutions, with a demand for resignations.

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