

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA: Ministers indecisive leadership has undermined a poor child right to education.**

DATE 1 June 2020

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents thousands of educators and administrative staff in schools across the country believes the Minister of Basic Education lacked leadership on her handling of Covid-19 and the impact on schools.

The Minister fails to understand and have appreciation towards the continuous discrimination between schools with regards to infrastructure. This past discrimination existed even before the arrival of Covid-19 and the department failed to address the minimum required infrastructure that will ensure that all learners receive equal quality education. This discrimination practices have since the arrival of Covid-19 increased with schools in richer communities that implemented online learning and those learners in poorer communities being left behind with no schooling that took place since the President closed schools on 16 March 2020. Schools in poorer communities are still struggling to implement the minimum required infrastructure that will ensure that they can open their doors to learners by being compliant to good hygiene practices. The absence of running water in schools is a serious health risk and the department failure to address this risk creates more division between schools.

The Minister's poor foresight has created a federal education system with richer schools , mostly in Western Cape and Gauteng having access to infrastructure and technology to can go ahead and open schools where it could take up to another 3 months for a poorer school to be ready to open its doors for learners. This will discriminate against learners and will continue with the unjust benefit of the privileged few whilst the poor will remain and fall behind even further.

The Ministers failure to address these imbalances has created more division amongst parents, learners, educators and the nation. The PSA cannot conceive why the department wish to push ahead to open schools when clearly majority of schools will not be ready and will not be able to adhere to the national regulations implemented to ensure the safety of educators and learners. The Minister's plan to opens schools fails to instil confidence in the schooling system that learners and educators will be safe whilst attending to classes whilst the daily infection rate has drastically increase in the last couple of days.

The PSA calls on the Minister to reconsider the PSA proposals made earlier and to use the next 3 months to prepare schools to resume with the academic year in order to leave no learner behind. This will also necessitate a change to the academic year to run until July 2021.



END