

MEDIA RELEASE

PSA: Mpumalanga not ready for schools to reopen so soon

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), is concerned and dismayed regarding the current state of readiness to open schools in Mpumalanga. The PSA has observed a number of schools with infrastructure challenges and if that is not enough, no arrangement of water supply has been made, especially to rural areas where schools are still utilising pit toilets in areas around Manyeleti.

A PSA shop stewards did an inspection *in loco*, in all three Districts and in checking the readiness of the schools, the following was observed, there is still no procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), most schools have still not been fumigated, and the employer is relying on the municipality to assist with fumigating. In a meeting between labour and the employer, their response was that the District offices play a pivotal role in the support and maintenance of schools and is in the process of arranging water tanks, for those schools that do not have water. The employer further stated that mobile toilets will be arranged for rural schools, that are presently utilising the pit toilets. When coming to the issue of infrastructure, submissions would have to be made to fix infrastructural challenges in the affected schools. To date, none of the above has been affected. The PSA is thus adamant that at this stage, the Department of Education cannot be said to be ready for the reopening of schools on 1 June 2020.

The PSA wishes to emphasise that this state of affairs, prohibits educators and learners from resuming schoolwork as these institutions pose a huge health risk. The PSA still reiterates that the health and safety of employees is to be prioritised and since no compliance has not been met by the department, it cannot be said that the Department is ready for schools to be reopened.

The PSA will keep monitoring the compliance of health and safety standards and will have a follow up meeting with the employer in due course.

END

