

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**COVID-19: PSA shocked by Limpopo Premier's declaration of readiness to reopen schools**

DATE 22 May 2020  
EMBARGO None  
Enquiries communication@psa.co.za

---

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked at the declaration from the Limpopo Premier stating the Provincial readiness to reopen schools on 1 June 2020 as suggested by the Minister of Basic Education.

This declaration is against what the PSA established upon engaging with the members at the ground as the School Governing Bodies, Parents and Educators alike are all concerned with the safety of learners and workers alike.

The Province of Limpopo is one of the most challenged provinces when it comes to schools' infrastructure. Water and sanitation, classrooms and provision of scholar transport is still major problem. The precondition before schools reopens are far from being met and the Premier is basing his assessment of readiness of what he is hoping will happen. The province failed to ensure that more than 500 schools are provided with proper sanitation and have conceded even in the budget speech that only 215 will be provided with such during this financial year. It must be noted that will not happen before school reopen.

Further, the Department confirmed that 520 schools do not have running water wherein they hope that the Department of Water and Sanitation will deliver the water tanks before school reopening, which according to the PSA, is highly unlikely that it will be achieved by 1 June.

The Premier was also silent about the plan to ensure that additional 27 000 classrooms for all the grades in Limpopo are provided whilst the issue of additional teachers is also not addressed. The PSA is aware that there is high number of educators that are 60 years and older and those with comorbidities whom the Directives from Department of Employment and Labour and Department of Public Service and Administration have respectively indicated that they must work remotely. Therefore, that would necessitate the appointment of additional teachers. It is a fact that those teachers are experienced, and some are teaching specialized subjects hence they cannot be replaced by just any available teachers, thus the PSA is concerned where the budget going to come from.

The scholar transport in Limpopo is insufficient leaving children to fend for themselves to access education. The children are walking through the bushes and hitchhiking to schools, yet the Premier pronounce the readiness and say nothing about this critical matter. The Provision of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is another concern. The PSA is still fighting other Departments to provide adequate PPE and certain the same issues will be faced in schools.

The PSA values the importance of education however safety of educators and learners remains of utmost importance. The PSA is calling upon the Premier to show proper leadership and not be politically correct but conduct proper assessment of the readiness of Limpopo before educators and learners are sent to a burning fire with the hope that they will not be burned. The Premier cannot be oblivion of the impact of the COVID-19 as the Chairperson of Provincial Command Council.

END

