MEDIA RELEASE	**COVID-19: PSA welcomes postponement of 2020-academic year for basic and higher education**
DATE	1 May 2020
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents thousands of educators and administrative staff in the Basic and Higher Education sector, welcomes the announcement on 30 April 2020 that the resumption of the 2020-academic year for schools and Technical Vocation Education Training colleges will be delayed until the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic is under control.

The PSA believes that a cautious approach to ensure the safety of educators, learners and their families is needed as predictions are that the pandemic is still approaching its peak in South Africa. In addition, hundreds of schools must undergo major repairs after falling victim to burglars and vandalism during lockdown. The PSA appeals to communities expose the criminals responsible for these despicable acts and report criminal activities to the authorities.

The PSA further welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, that much-needed occupational health and safety training will be provided to stakeholders, including union shop stewards, to specifically address matters related COVID-19. This intervention will empower shop stewards to play an active role in ensuring that all bases are covered in workplaces to support a return to full economic activity.

The PSA remains optimistic that both the Department of Basic and Higher Education will use the extended lockdown period to implement the required safety measures to ensure a safe return for educators and learners. The PSA remains committed to work with both Departments to ensure that schools and colleges can open as soon as possible to salvage the 2020-academic year without taking costly risks.

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