



THE GOVERNING BODY FOUNDATION

NATIONAL OFFICE

Suite 22, Private Bag X2, Pinegowrie, Johannesburg, 2123
Tel: 011 886 0031 Cell: 061 091 2374
e-mail: ceo@gbf.org.za website: www.gbf.org.za

MEDIA RELEASE – 13 JUNE 2109

THE DEEPENING SCHOOL SAFETY CRISIS – “GUNS IN SCHOOLS” NOT THE SOLUTION

The Governing Body Foundation is shocked and saddened by the criminal acts of violence and other tragic events that have resulted in the loss of the lives of children and adults in and around schools during the last two weeks. On behalf of the Governing Body Foundation, Chief Executive Officer, Dr Anthea Cereseto, extends sincere condolences to the families and school communities traumatised by these incidents.

The Governing Body Foundation is not surprised by these occurrences. Principals have informed their school governing bodies of increasing levels of disrespect and lawlessness in their schools. They have reported that disrespect is being demonstrated at an ever younger age. In some circumstances, educators are afraid to take disciplinary action against learners for fear of their own safety and that of the other learners in their classrooms. Unfortunately, the failure to apply the school's Code of Conduct whenever it is breached, eventually results in the total breakdown of discipline and opens the door to criminal activities.

The Governing Body Foundation urges all school governing bodies to exercise the responsibilities assigned to them in terms of the South African Schools Act and relevant provincial regulations. School governing body members must support the professional management of the school by playing their role in disciplinary procedures. In addition, since parents, or those performing the duties of parents, are ultimately responsible for the discipline of their children, the Governing Body Foundation exhorts school governing bodies to set up school-wide parent structures to assist in re-establishing safe and disciplined teaching and learning environments.

Depending on each school's challenges, school governing bodies must demand the support and intervention of the relevant government agencies, the South African Police Services, and

community organisations, especially where school discipline is threatened by factors outside the school.

The Governing Body Foundation believes that, amongst other strategies, capacity-building programmes for school staff in new disciplinary approaches and the handling of serious misconduct as well as psycho-social support for troubled learners are necessary. Offending learners must face the consequences of their wrong-doing and understand the impact their wrongful actions on others. Learners found guilty of serious misconduct that threatens the safety and well-being of learners and staff at one school must not simply be expelled and placed in another school. These learners need to be educated in schools that are equipped with specially trained staff who have the knowledge and skills to help rehabilitate offenders and, where possible, enable their reintegration into the ordinary school system.

It is the view of the Governing Body Foundation that provincial education departments must be accountable for vigorous and consistent support. Officials must know what is happening in their schools. They must act before a tragedy brings to light serious behavioural dysfunctionality.

The Governing Body Foundation strongly rejects the call for educators to carry guns in their classrooms. The proposal is reckless and against the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools. There are adequate legal measures available to schools and education departments to enforce orderly, safe and purposeful learning environments.

What is needed is a national continuous and determined multi-pronged drive to restore order and ensure quality teaching and learning happens in all schools.

**** End of statement****

Enquiries:

Dr Anthea Cereseto (Chief Executive Officer) – 061 091 2374 / 011 886 0031