



## **MEDIA RELEASE – SEVENTH ADMINISTRATION CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINISTER**

**The Governing Body Foundation (GBF) notes the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa of the new cabinet for the seventh administration. It congratulates these ministers and sincerely wishes them success as they carry out their weighty responsibilities. The assigning of portfolios to a number of different political parties in the Government of National Unity (GNU) presents new challenges to the functioning of government. It is our hope that this diversity will bring new energy and new solutions to the intractable problems that need to be addressed by the new administration.**

The GBF promotes cooperative governance in all its work. It will, therefore, work with the new Minister, Ms Siviwe Gwarube, and the returning Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule, in the best interests of education for all our learners, school employees, schools, and the future of the country.

The ministry's policies will have to be worked out in due course since there are significant differences between the various GNU parties' education policies. The GBF trusts that it will be invited by the new Minister to a constructive dialogue so that the GBF can provide our insights gained from our intimate involvement in education in various roles over very many years.

The GBF would not want to see progress in education stalled because the Minister and labour unions have an adversarial approach to one another. The unions know what goes on in schools on a daily basis and understand school needs. Their voice is important.

The voice of all associations working with school governing bodies (SGBs) must also be heard as it is the school governing body's responsibility to provide the support and additional resources for schools in order to improve the quality of education at the school. We urge the new ministry to engage more meaningfully with all SGB associations in order to understand the needs of schools and what policy adjustments may enable better education outcomes.

The GBF supports the continuation and expansion of current successful programmes of the DBE that support learners' well-being and learning of basic skills but would urge the ministry to review programmes that add to the curriculum and potentially reduce the focus on mastering basic skills and knowledge required for progressing through school and beyond.

There are obvious issues to be attended to immediately and for which there will be support from all sides, for example, speeding up the improvement in infrastructure provision, such as toilets and classrooms, adequate resourcing, for example, ensuring that learners have their own textbooks for each subject, putting in place meaningful measures to make schools safe, providing support to learners with psycho-social needs (often stemming from home circumstances/poverty/ addiction) who are also often the cause of discipline problems, and sometimes even threaten school safety; ensuring the full use of the school day and all days of the school term, applying reasonable accountability measures, ensuring appointments are

based on the ability to do the required job, and increasing accessibility to quality education programmes for learners with barriers to learning.

Progress in education is dependent on other government partners providing the necessary support to schools, learners, their families, and the communities in which schools are located, for example, Health, Social Development, Infrastructure, Police and Finance. Many of the problems attributed to education failure are actually the result of broader societal failure. The ministry of Basic Education will have to work hard at collaborating with these other ministries.

Issued by Dr Anthea Cereseto

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The Governing Body Foundation