



MEDIA RELEASE – POST CUTS BY PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

9 September 2024

EMBARGO: For immediate release

SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN OF THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION TO CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THE FISCAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT POST CUTS WITH A VIEW TO PRESENTING THE FINDINGS TO THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE NATIONAL TREASURY

The Governing Body Foundation supports Minister Gwarube’s plan for provincial education departments to analyse the impact of the fiscal constraints and austerity measures required of them on their ability to provide quality education services, both related to personnel expenditure and non-personnel expenditure, as announced in her media release of 6 September 2024.

The Governing Body Foundation supports the need to approach National Treasury for additional funding to mitigate the dire consequences of reduced educator posts, for example, increased learner numbers in already large classes, which renders effective teaching and learning as well as discipline very difficult, inability to provide substitute educators for employees on lengthy sick leave, and inability to fund support programmes and scholar transport. The impact will have greater negative impact on the no-fee and poorer fee-paying schools and their learners as they have no means, at school level, to reduce the adverse consequences.

Securing effective teaching and learning opportunities for the learners is critical for their future and the future of the country. National Treasury may have to consider reprioritising expenditure to prevent the irreparable harm that would result from undermining the ability of schools to provide quality education.

All provinces are affected by the austerity measures to a greater or lesser degree depending on their access to Provincial Treasury funds. A long-term solution must be found. It is not possible for the system to survive continuous funding reduction, in real terms, while learner numbers increase and the sector wage bill, agreed in a nationally negotiated collective bargaining agreement, is not funded fully by National Treasury.

Some provinces, having faced their provincial fiscal realities, have begun the process of dealing with post reduction, while in other provinces the unions have sent the provincial departments back to the drawing board to seek a better way of dealing with the financial crisis.

Resolution is urgent as schools are supposed to be informed of their post allocations for the 2025 school year by 30 September of this year. The Minister of Basic Education has given provinces two weeks to provide information on the impact of the fiscal constraints for her to table these findings in a meeting with the Minister of Finance and the National Treasury. The Governing Body Foundation believes that although provincial education departments are independent employers and responsible for managing their resources, it is beneficial for the provinces to coordinate a response to the predicament in which they all find themselves and to develop a proposal to put to those in charge of national finances.

The Governing Body Foundation is deeply concerned about the situation and fervently hopes that all role players involved will apply their minds in the best interest of learners and quality education.

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Notes to Editor:

The Governing Body Foundation (GBF) is an organization dedicated to supporting and empowering governing bodies in South African schools. As an influential advocate for effective school governance, the GBF provides guidance, resources, and training to help governing bodies fulfil their responsibilities and enhance educational outcomes. The organization assists in developing policies, codes of conduct, and strategies that promote school safety, inclusive practices, and educational excellence. Through its initiatives, the GBF aims to foster cooperation and collaboration between schools, parents, and education authorities, ensuring a conducive learning environment for all learners. The GBF's work is rooted in the principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability, with a focus on promoting the interests and wellbeing of students, educators, and school communities. To learn more about the Governing Body Foundation and its initiatives, please visit www.gbf.org.za.