



GOVERNING BODY FOUNDATION

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO EDUCATION BUDGET CUTS

25 September 2024

The budgets of all provincial education departments have been cut because of the severe fiscal constraints affecting the national budget. These cuts have had an impact on the number of posts that provincial education departments can afford to fund. The Governing Body Foundation (GBF) along with other SGB associations and the teacher unions have voiced their serious concerns about the impact of these cuts and other types of education-related cost-cutting measures on the quality of education.

The Minister of Basic Education, Ms Siviwe Gwarube, after receiving reports from the MECs for Education, presented the regrettable funding shortfall reality facing the provision of education in the country. Education funding has decreased over the years in real terms making improved education provision and quality impossible. The system needs qualified teachers, the correct learning materials, and acceptable school infrastructure. These resources require a reliable level of funding.

An increase in learner numbers, about 293 000, needs an increase in teaching posts, not a decrease. Obviously, those posts need to be funded. Quality education is not possible in the face of increased learner numbers and fewer teachers. Classes become unmanageable and the use of the most effective teaching strategies in such contexts becomes almost impossible.

The Minister was correct to point out what could have been done for education with the money that was wasted through SOE bailouts and corruption, but we need to get past those offences to the nation which disproportionately affected the most vulnerable in society. The GBF supports the Minister's appeal to the Minister of Finance and Treasury to reprioritise government spending so that it benefits "the frontline services" of the country.

Education is first in line. The country needs an educated and skilled population to revitalise the economy, increase revenue, and enable the provision of quality public services.

The GBF agrees that the national public service wage bill consumes an enormous slice of the national budget. Above inflation increases each year are not sustainable in the current economic circumstances. Teachers deserve a fair wage but not one that will collapse the education system. Having teachers in classrooms but

without textbooks and other learning materials, and children unable to concentrate on learning because their school nutrition programme and transport has been cut, will not bring better education outcomes.

The GBF applauds the strategy the Minister to meet the Minister of Finance to present the financial facts that have been gathered from the provincial education departments over the last two weeks. We look forward to the outcomes of the “the political 10 x 10”, trusting that the Ministers of Basic Education and Finance and their provincial counterparts will find solutions to the current funding crisis.

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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.