



## Media Statement

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### SACE WELCOMES DELAY IN SCHOOLS REOPENING

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) receives with appreciation, the delay in the reopening of schools for the beginning of the 2021 calendar year. In line with this, SACE also supports the reopening of both the public and independent schools on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2021. This also shows that government takes equality, equity, and inclusivity issues seriously and acknowledges that schooling in this country is under one government.

While the delay in the reopening of schools is welcomed, SACE advocates for the strengthened safety and protection of all School Management Teams and teachers when reopening on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 respectively. This is even more important and urgent given the new COVID-19 strain during this second wave of COVID-19. The educator Psychosocial Support Programme that has already been commenced through the Department of Basic Education's Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign, NCET, and partners is commendable. However, it must be broadened and scaled up across the country speedily, to ensure that all the educators and school communities benefit from it as they teach under uncertain and irrefragable COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Furthermore, as part of supporting teachers further, SACE's Safety and Security in Schools – Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities Programme will be of great help and empowerment to educators in terms of knowing their rights, responsibilities as well as protecting themselves, and creating a safe school working environment to be able to deliver lessons without fear and intimidation by anyone.

Secondly, in line with the Deputy Minister's key message on strengthening ICT in teaching and learning during these new normal times, SACE has just launched its virtual Library to support teachers with digital material for (a) reading; (b) availing teaching resources; (c) enable material development and (d) for research purpose. The virtual library will go a long way, in providing continuing professional development and support for teachers when they are at home and after the reopening of schools.

SACE wishes all SMTs and teachers, a safe and protected teaching and learning environment when they reopen schools. Our sincere condolences to all the teachers who succumbed to COVID-19 during the holidays and at the marking centre.

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