



MEDIA ADVISORY

To: All Media/News Editors
04 October 2020

Honouring the Teaching Profession's Leadership in Times of COVID 19 Pandemic

2020 experienced the short and long-term ramifications of the unprecedented COVID 19 Pandemic, which left the entire education system and the teaching profession in a crisis mode. Consequently, it transformed the education system with speed and left many educators wounded personally, professionally, and emotionally. Amongst others, educators were inevitably faced with:

- **disruptions in schooling;**
- **new demands, dynamics, and complexities in their workplaces;**
- **lack of responsiveness in addressing their emotional, mental health, and psychological needs;**
- **moving away from bricks and mortar to remote and online teaching;**
- **exposure to the recurring inequalities between impoverished and privileged schools; and**
- **digital divide and inadequate tools of the trade in some instances.**

As we continue to talk about the teaching profession's leadership in times of the COVID 19 pandemic crisis, we can also confirm that educators experienced fear, frustrations, uncertainties, anxiety, and a challenging working environment. Even more disturbing, they experienced the deaths of colleagues and loved ones.

Notwithstanding the challenges and constraints posed by COVID 19 pandemic crisis, the teaching profession and educators alike showed multi-facets foresight leadership that deserves to be applauded.

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic tested our educators' flexibility and willingness to change. They, indisputably, rose to the challenge and led by ensuring against all odds that they: transition to alternative forms of teaching and learning; implement strategies and plans for curriculum recovery to take place; manage and administer COVID 19 compliance

requirements; ensure that extra support lessons and tuition are offered through different approaches; our Matriculants are supported, and assist with the provisioning of the School Nutrition Programme during schools closure.

It is through our esteemed educators' selfless and undying commitment and dedication that, they deliberately chose servanthood and leadership at the profession's national, provincial, district, and school levels, by putting the interest of this country's children first, despite the trying COVID-19 circumstances at the coal face of the teaching profession. It is for this reason and others that in 2020 we are globally and locally celebrating World Teachers' Day on the 05th of October under the theme:

Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future

Therefore, as we reimagine the future, the question is, are we even prepared for the possible second wave of the pandemic or worse, future pandemics that are wicked, intractable, uncertain, and complex. How do we collectively ensure that our educators are not left on their own for emotional and psychological support? Again, as we reimagine the future, we should develop, support, and empower our educators to continue in ensuring a more resilient, adaptable, creative, and sustainable teaching profession, amongst others. In learning the lessons of the COVID 19 crisis, the profession needs to conduct thorough research to be able to identify what worked and develop evidence-based solutions for the future. This should be complemented by practitioner-based Research that is pivotal to informing theory from practice, as well as, current and future planning and public policymaking decisions.

To our esteemed school and office-based educators, SACE owes a debt of gratitude to you all, for showing leadership, professional responsibility, a duty of care, and altruistic motivation during 2020, when the education system was hard hit by the COVID 19 crisis.

Through your leadership and foresight, we can indeed attest that **EDUCATORS BUILD THE NATION AND EDUCATORS ENABLE TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

Issued by South African Council for Educators (SACE)

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