



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

**EDUCATION**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

To All Media / News Editors

Embargo: For Immediate Release

Date : Sunday, 08 March 2026

### **KZN EDUCATION ACKNOWLEDGES CABINET DECISION ON EARLY RETIREMENT AND VOLUNTARY EXIT PROGRAMMES**

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education acknowledges the decision taken by the Cabinet of South Africa to introduce the Incentivised Early Retirement Programme (EAP) without penalisation of pension benefits and the Voluntary Exit Programme (VEP) for employees in the Public Service, as approved during the special Cabinet meeting held on 10 April 2024.

In implementing this decision, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) issued a formal determination in October 2025 outlining the framework and procedures for the implementation of the programmes across government departments.

The determination provides for financial incentives to qualifying employees, with certain costs — including the waiving of pension penalties and incentive payments — funded by National Treasury of South Africa. However, other associated costs such as pro-rata service bonus payments, capped leave, unused annual leave and resettlement expenses, where applicable, must be funded from within the baseline budgets of individual departments.

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**INSPIRING NEW HOPE**

**Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education**

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While the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education fully recognises and respects the national directive, it is important to note that approval of applications under these programmes is not automatic. In line with the DPSA determination, departments are required to assess applications against specific criteria, including ensuring that service delivery is not negatively affected, that critical skills are not lost, and that the financial implications remain sustainable within departmental budgets.

Given the current fiscal constraints faced by the Department, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education regrettably does not have the financial capacity at this stage to absorb the additional costs that must be funded from its existing baseline budget.

Accordingly, while employees retain the right to apply for the programme, the Department is presently unable to approve applications under the current phase, particularly in circumstances where the departure of employees may create service delivery gaps that cannot immediately be addressed.

The Department wishes to emphasise that this position does not oppose or undermine the decision of Cabinet or the determination issued by the DPSA. Rather, it reflects a responsible and transparent approach to communicating the Department's current financial and operational realities to employees while remaining aligned with national policy directives.

"As a Department, we issued HRM Circular No. 3 of 2026 to keep employees informed and ensure clarity within the system as Government continues to work towards sustainable implementation of the programme", said KZNDOE'S Head of Department, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo.

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