



## EFF STATEMENT ON THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Wednesday, 12 January 2022

The EFF notes the media briefing by Basic Education Minister on school's state of readiness to reopen for the 2022 academic year tomorrow, 12 January 2022. Five inland provinces will be receiving thousands of learners from Grade R to Grade 12 while coastal provinces will open next week.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on Basic Education in the past two years, resulting in an estimated 150 000 to 700 000 learners dropping out due to COVID-19 disruptions. The Basic Education has provided no plans to ensure these learners are readmitted back into the education system. Even more concerning is that the department of Basic Education does not have concrete plans in place for a less disruptive 2022 academic year under the current COVID-19 conditions. The massive dropouts are due to the directionless leadership within the department exacerbated by rotational timetabling and lack of adequate support to educators and Learners.

There must be a continued focus on keeping learners and educators in safe classrooms, by observing all COVID-19 protocols and providing sufficient PPE. Rotational time-tabling and remote learning has exacerbated existing educational inequalities and has been detrimental to the educational attainment of poor and working class learners.

The admission crisis of approximately 400 000 learners who have not been placed in any school will further exacerbate educational inequalities, increasing poverty and illiteracy. The EFF calls for the end of rotational timetabling with immediate effect and for the Education Department to prioritise vaccination education among educators and learners to enable full time learning in all schools.

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