The Department of Basic Education wishes to set the record straight on the reported shortage of teachers in the country.

The confusion emanates from an article by *BusinessTech.co.za* which incorrectly reported that there was a shortage of 24,000 teachers. The reporter misunderstood the Minister of Basic Education’s reply to a parliamentary question regarding the vacancy rate in the Basic Education sector.

DA MP Ms C V King asked the minister, amongst other things:
What (a) is the national vacancy rate of teachers in the Republic,
(b) is the total breakdown of the number of posts that have remained vacant in each province.

In her reply, the minister said:

(a) 5.8% as at the end of February 2021.

(b) The vacancy rate reported is in terms of the actual vacancies at schools in relation to posts that each school was allocated for 2021. Provincial Education Departments are currently redeploying educators that are additional to the allocated post establishments at some schools to schools that have vacancies. Once this process has been finalised and the residual vacant posts have been filled through appointment of educators from outside the system the actual number of vacancies will be lower than the current rate. In a table presented with this written response, it shows a total of 24,556 vacant posts.

This however does not mean there is an actual shortage of teachers nor does it mean learners are being left unattended. It simply means the process of finalizing the appointment of the people currently in the posts is ongoing.

**MEDIA RELEASE**

15 April 2021

**BASIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SETS RECORD STRAIGHT ON TEACHER VACANCIES**

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**Media Enquiries:**

Elijah Mhlanga - Head of Communication: 083 580 8275 | Hope Mokgatle - Spokesperson to Minister: 079 817 0427
Terence Khala - Media Liaison Officer: 081 758 1546
The department has various teacher recruitment strategies:

- A register of qualified, yet unemployed graduates.
- The national recruitment base which is a register of qualified teachers who are not in the teaching profession.
- The district and community based teacher recruitment strategy for the Funza Lushaka bursary programme.

These databases have thousands of teachers who are requested to apply for jobs as and when they become available. In addition to this, universities produce an estimated total of 25 000 teachers a year, who are not able to get employment in the system due to the lack of capacity to absorb all of them.

This means there are more teachers in the country than the system can accommodate. The reported shortage is therefore inaccurate and misleading.

The Table below shows the number of teacher education headcount enrolments at universities as well as the graduates 2008-2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HC Enrolments</strong></td>
<td>35 275</td>
<td>45 474</td>
<td>59 434</td>
<td>79 435</td>
<td>94 236</td>
<td>104 144</td>
<td>106 981</td>
<td>116 701</td>
<td>122 236</td>
<td>137 731</td>
<td>150 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduates</strong></td>
<td>5 939</td>
<td>6 855</td>
<td>7 973</td>
<td>10 593</td>
<td>13 702</td>
<td>16 496</td>
<td>19 077</td>
<td>20 738</td>
<td>23 818</td>
<td>25 877</td>
<td>28 203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Higher Education and Training: Trends in Teacher Education

The DBE worked with the 24 Universities offering initial teacher education programmes during 2020/21 to compile information on all initial teacher education students.

Media Enquiries:
Elijah Mhlanga - Head of Communication: 083 580 8275 | Hope Mokgatihe - Spokesperson to Minister: 079 817 0427
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A summary of the information is displayed in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY LEVEL</th>
<th>FP</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>SP &amp; FET</th>
<th>FET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>10130</td>
<td>9576</td>
<td>18529</td>
<td>4971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Year</td>
<td>7460</td>
<td>13513</td>
<td>11687</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Year</td>
<td>2906</td>
<td>17327</td>
<td>13679</td>
<td>2129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6855</td>
<td>7734</td>
<td>3624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>10336</td>
<td>1591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td>22528</td>
<td>48247</td>
<td>61965</td>
<td>14275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unaudited reports received from 24 public universities

The consolidated 2020 awards list shows that 13,085 Funza Lushaka bursaries were awarded for initial teacher education by 31 March 2021. The table below shows the number of Funza Lushaka bursaries awarded from 2018-2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13699</td>
<td>12954</td>
<td>13085</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Funza Lushaka Information Management System

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION