



Contact: 031 207 1116 / 082 082 8265 | **Fax:** 086 401 7560

32 West Riding Row, Sherwood, Durban, 4092

P O Box 74132, Rochdale Park, 4034

Web: www.naisa.co.za | Email: secretary@naisa.co.za

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ASSOCIATIONS

NAISA MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND SENIOR DBE OFFICIALS

DATE	13 January 2021 at 18h00
FROM	NAISA Executive Committee
TO	All NAISA Associations and JLCs
TOPIC	Consultation on the Recommendation to Delay the Re-opening of Schools until 15 February 2021

BACKGROUND

NAISA was invited at less than a day's notice to attend an urgent consultative meeting with the Director-General and his senior officials. The meeting was held online between 18h00 and 19h00 on Wednesday 13 January 2021.

KEY ISSUES

In his introductory remarks, the Director-General indicated that the main purpose of the meeting was to report on the discussions held between the DBE and the National COVID 19 Command Council (NCCC) on 12 January. The NCCC had recommended that the DBE should consult with stakeholders to share the view of the NCCC that all schools (Independent and Public schools) should delay the re-opening of schools until 15 February 2021. The NCCC was deeply concerned about the pressure on health care facilities given the rapid increase arising from the second wave of COVID19, with Gauteng, Limpopo and other provinces entering their peak now and with high numbers expected for a few weeks thereafter.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee had met to analyse the results of the research undertaken on the implications of the Second wave of the pandemic. They identified four main issues:

1. How the second wave COVID 19 infections were playing out;
2. The link between closure of schools and the reduction of the surge as it has been shown in other countries, i.e., UK.
3. The fact that the new variant has affected the adolescent groups who also happen to be the main cohort of secondary and high school learners, and
4. The role of co-morbidities in the rise of deaths due to COVID 19.

The sentiment expressed was that the recommendation to delay the reopening school until 15 February was for the benefit of our country and the health system to have the space to cope with the numbers that were rising exponentially in Gauteng and many other provinces. The Director General clarified that the recommendations still must be ratified by Cabinet and signed off by the Minister. The DG also indicated that the Ministerial Advisory Committee was looking beyond the immediate two-week period.

The DBE will report on its consultation with stakeholders to the NCCC on 14 January at 10H00 and the NCCC will then report to Cabinet where a final decision will be taken. The official communication from Cabinet on the opening of all schools is expected to be released after the 15 January 2021. It was emphasised that the request to delay the opening of schools was not coming from the DBE but from the NCCC to bring relief to the health system.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- Those schools that have already opened have a window period of a few days to meet and greet and induct new learners until the date on which all schools should reopen is officially announced.
- Schools that have not yet opened and are able to offer online lessons should make the necessary arrangements to start their online programmes as soon as is practically possible.

It was clear to the NAISA delegation that the independent schools' sector could not take a unilateral stance on this issue given the national imperative of flattening the second wave COVID-19 curve.



EBRAHIM ANSUR
SECRETARY GENERAL

13 JANUARY 2021



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: **Chairperson:** Mandla Mthembu, **Vice Chair:** William Bester, **Treasurer:** Rabbi Craig Kacev,
Secretary-General: Ebrahim Ansur, **Members:** Anne Baker, Confidence Dikgole

PROVINCIAL JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEES: Eastern Cape Joint Liaison Committee • Free State Joint Liaison Committee
• Gauteng Joint Liaison Committee • KwaZulu Natal Joint Liaison Committee. • Limpopo Independent Schools Association
• Mpumalanga Alliance of Independent Schools Association • North West Joint Liaison Committee. • Western Cape Joint
Liaison Committee