

Education as an Essential Service: Does South Africa have Sufficient Support Services to Turn Education into an Essential Service?**Takalani Samuel Mashau and Humbulani Nancy Mutshaeni***University of Venda, South Africa*
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ABSTRACT The ruling party in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC)'s sub-committee, after its first meeting in the Mangaung Conference (in 2012) and the ANC Lekgotla resolved that education should become an essential service. There is an outcry from different stakeholders that education cannot become an essential service. Some stakeholders indicate that education is not like any other special service and cannot be given essential service status. The idea of making education an essential service was derived from the Mangaung Conference Resolution, which states that there is general agreement that education has to be protected from disruptions. Disruption of schooling through industrial action and service delivery protests negatively impacts the stability of schools and the quality of education. In this conceptual paper, researchers are arguing that education cannot become an essential service as per the Labor Relations Act, and there are still schools, which are under-resourced throughout the country. The schools are physically, financially and humanly under-resourced. Schools and teachers still need basic support services and competitive salaries.