

EDUCATION MATTERS PROMOTE ALL TO NEXT GRADE

- Cape Argus
- 12 Nov 2020
- BRIAN ISAACS



I AM sure parents across South Africa are concerned about the future of their children in education at this time of the year. We, like all other people in the world, have had to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our learners and teachers in all schools in South Africa have been affected. The virus did not discriminate against schools of the poor, private or former Model C schools. Of course, well resourced schools were able to cope better than poor schools.

Countries around the world had to decide how to combat the pandemic in all spheres of life. Most sensible governments around the world worked with their education departments as to how best to deal with the pandemic. Well-known educationist Professor Jonathan Jansen suggested early in 2020 that schools should be closed until 2021 and all learners be promoted. Some of us thought that it was not the most sensible thing to do and he was heavily criticised by many.

This is the same professor who called for the scrapping of Outcomes Based Education in 1998 because it would dumb down our learners. Jansen's prediction came true.

Our Grade 12 learners are, unfortunately, at the start of exams and the national Department of Basic Education (NDBE) was hell-bent on getting the illprepared Grade 12s to write the final examinations. One national spokesperson for the NDBE even had the audacity to say matric exams should not be viewed against the background of Covid-19.

Who fights on behalf of the children of South Africa? Is it the children themselves, the teachers, the parents or government. Of course, all should be fighting and supporting one another. In most cases the government makes the decision and in many cases it takes the wrong decisions. Learners in this country, most of whom are illprepared for a final exam, are being forced to write exams in order to go to the next grade.

Now under abnormal conditions can you impose regulations that apply to normal situations? Obviously you cannot. Therefore even if learners from grades R to 11 write examinations, I feel that all learners must be promoted to the next grade and that the necessary assistance be given to learners to cope in the new grade.

This has been a very unusual year. Academically and psychologically, most learners have been affected. We can only but hope that the NDBE will take a decision to promote all learners, grades R to 11, to the next year and provide the necessary assistance to the students next year. To my mind this is the most logical and educational thing to do. I agree with Jansen.