



## Opinion

## Teachers' unions and IEB segregation are the real 'Mabenas' of poor matric performance

Matric results. It's a complex subject and the following is the reason why.

### 1) The media's evil pathetic obsession.

The media's pathetic obsession with children is insane. From literally printing individual matric results in newspapers, to "calling schools out" for having a zero percent pass rate, or annually harassing the province of Limpopo; the media has been nothing short of problematic.

But the worst part is that in its bland reenactment of the Hunger Games, it refuses to acknowledge the inequality of its own charade. Without a single irony these people will tell you about the boy who got how many distinctions because his folks rented him his own apartment to have a "distraction-free studying environment," while the rest of the participants of this race study in crowded homes and literal shacks.

The saddest part ultimately is that after berating public-funded rural and township schools for their 0% pass rates and their lack of distinctions; these same journalists will forget that we have a crisis for the rest of the year. That our schools are underfunded. That there are children who, this year, will write their matric exams without owning a textbook, without having reliable teachers in the classroom, without the internet for help, without educated parents to assist; and then next year when matric results come out they'll display the horrific cases of suicide beside portraits of privilege.

(And let me tell you. I do not want to know which white kid scored the highest marks this year.)

### 2) The DOE is once again found wanting.

The Department of Education has once again failed the learners. In fact, its failures cannot be likened to no other.



Photo: Minister of Basic Education - Angie Motshekga ([photo source](#)).

In 2019, 70% of grade six kids were functionally illiterate; and around half of all students who start grade R this year won't make it to matric.

They won't tell you this though. They won't tell you about the pit-latrines, the paedophiles working in classrooms, gangsterism that threatens the daily existence of students, lack of learning materials, absent teachers.

They won't tell you that there are students missing school because they can't afford school shoes, or sanitary pads or a stick of Pritt.

3) SADTU is a partner in crime.

Collective union bargaining in parliament means that most decisions made regarding primary and secondary education aren't even made by elected representatives, but rather by a crime syndicate called SADTU.

This is a union that has actively defended absent and dysfunctional teachers and teachers who are sexually predatory towards their students. They have partaken in bribe-taking and entered numerous courtrooms with the single intent to defend problematic and dysfunctional staff in exchange for membership fees.

Foregrounding the desires of its members (its cash cow) over the well-being of students, then threatening the state with strikes if the clock in systems and other means of accountability are implemented.

And they're getting away with it because poor families, who are the ones relying on public schools, don't have the means to call any of this out. And rich families, who do have the means to call it out, have decided they're not South African enough to check-in.

4) IEB protects the white interest.

Under the facade of saving education, and the lie that education can be saved by running away: we have allowed this tool of institutionalized segregation to persist. Not only have we tolerated this rubbish, but we have also danced with it, romanticized it and convinced ourselves that we would be nothing without it. It's a toxic relationship. For so long we have allowed rich folks to buy their way out of the duty of being stakeholders of nation-building. These people have shed the responsibility of encouraging healthy state institutions.

Commodifying education undermines the dignity of the state and encourages disparity in quality. It is a way of shaking the responsibility of partaking in the effort of being a citizen who holds its leaders to account. Academic elitism has convinced us that we must bow before this bullshit. Isn't it about time we say Nay?

5) The kids deserve better

Kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, black students, female students, disabled students are most likely to be robbed of their futures. This is the result of a dysfunctional system that deliberately destroy the future of learners. From unfair privilege to corruption; we are all participants of this oppression. What is needed is active participation. We need to organise, petition, protest and demand change.