

CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION STATEMENT ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ATTAINING TOP MATRIC RESULTS (13/1/92)

The Matric results of students of Catholic schools have once again been amongst the best of DET schools. Most of the eighteen Catholic High schools had a pass rate of above 90%, and five schools had 100% pass rates. When compared with the DET schools' provincial average of 39.2% this year, these schools have every reason to feel some degree of satisfaction.

While we commend these schools, their teachers and their pupils on their results, perhaps there also needs to be an examination of what factors have led to the success that their students have enjoyed – a consideration of what factors are significant in establishing a culture of learning. Do these factors include?

- A year of little or no disruption,
- Qualified and committed teachers,
- Timely delivery of textbooks, and
- An environment which is conducive to learning – one which is not overcrowded and one which is suitably equipped.

These are things that are taken for granted in so many of the House of Assembly schools, but are struggled for by most of the DET schools.

Further, examinations are not an end in itself. The question of what doors these matric qualifications will open, or what opportunities it will present to the candidate, is equally significant. There are numerous comments from employment agencies, educationists and economists alike, warning that there are very few opportunities for standard 10 school leavers. Where there are jobs available to a matriculant there is enormous competition, particularly when the job seeker has no experience. Compounding the problem according to the career information centre, is that this is a time when most companies are cutting back on training and more importantly, the number of jobs available is decreasing. Recently it has been estimated by various reliable sources that 7 to 10% of black matriculants who have no further training or experience are likely to find jobs.

Unemployment Figures are estimated at being approximately six million. More alarming perhaps is that the youth are forming a larger and larger proportion of the population that is unemployed.

Perhaps one can only echo the advice of the economist, Van Rensburg, of the South African Chamber of Business, when he said that those matriculants who were successful on the job market should attempt to improve their qualifications with more marketable skills especially in commercial and technical areas.