

**ON TENTERHOOKS:** Quality assurer Umalusi has announced that this year's matric results are likely to drop. One of the factors for this is that 30 000 pupils who failed Grade 11 were promoted to matric. The class of 2014 achieved a 75.8% pass rate

PHOTO: VELI NHLAPO



# High standard of matric papers leads to failures

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**THE country should not be alarmed if one of the reasons why the matric results have gone down is the high standard of question papers.**

This is according to at least one education expert who was responding to an announcement by quality assurer Umalusi that this year's matric results are likely to drop. The class of 2014 achieved a 75.8% pass rate.

Speaking at a press briefing last week, Umalusi chairman Professor John Volmink said one of the factors that contributed to last year's drop was the number of pupils who failed Grade 11 and were promoted to matric. He said the pupils account for an increase in the failure rate of at least 3.5%.

According to Umalusi, there were 30 000 promoted pupils who

## 2015 RESULTS HAVE GONE DOWN, SAYS UMALUSI

sat for the national senior certificate examination. Volmink further said the standard of papers had improved and were more challenging compared to 2014.

"The cognitive demand of the papers were a contributing factor to this year's performance ... it is for that reason that Umalusi must ensure that the standards of the papers are not dropped in order to improve the failure rate. The performance in the NSC across all levels is one of the most critical indicators of system improvement and we will not do ourselves any favours by lowering the bar," said Volmink.

Dean of the faculty of education

at the University of Johannesburg, Sarah Gravett, said the public must not overreact to the announcement that the results have gone down. "It's a positive if some of the papers had high cognitive demand ... that should not be looked at as a negative and Umalusi is doing a positive thing by safeguarding the quality of papers," said Gravett.

Gravett said the education system must invest more in the foundation phase to build a solid foundation and to make sure that when pupils reach matric they are able to deal with the high cognitive demands.

Deputy secretary of the SA

Democratic Teachers' Union, Nkosana Dolopi, agreed with Gravett that there needs to be more emphasis on the foundation phase for the country to start seeing consistency and impressive matric results.

"The euphoria around matric results must stop. We need to stop creating an impression that matric is the alpha and omega. The important phase is early childhood development."

President of the National Professional Teachers Organisation of SA, Basil Manuel, said the pass rate was not important and that it was quality of passes that should be of concern. "It's not a sprint, it's a marathon, and we will get there," he said.

Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga will announce the class of 2015 matric results tomorrow.

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