



Mixed feelings as pupils wait for results

Matric 2020 a tough year

By **Yoliswa Sobuwa**

The next three days will be nail-biting for thousands of the 2020 class of matriculants as they anxiously wait for the announcement of matric results on Monday, which will determine their admission into higher institutions of learning.

Despite challenges the 2020 grade 12 cohort had to deal with in the Covid-19 pandemic, they told Sowetan they were optimistic all was not lost.

The matric year was marred by disruptions at schools as a result of Covid-19-positive cases, less contact lessons with teachers, some of them could not afford to be part of online lessons and the exam paper leakages that threatened the integrity of the matric results.

Emihle Moleka, 18, did not write some subjects during the trial exams in September as she was among the 102 pupils from Ethembeni Secondary School in Burgersdorp who tested positive for the virus.

"I did not get the opportunity to write isiXhosa paper 1, maths paper 3, history paper 2 and agriculture paper 2 during the trial exams as I was in a quarantine site. However, I am optimistic that I did well in the finals as I gave it my all."

Sibusiso George, 19, who did grade 12 at Moses Mabhida Senior Secondary School in Kirkwood, Eastern Cape, said the most challenging for him was online learning as not ev-

eryone could afford data.

Thabo Maliea, 18, from Setjhaba Se Maketese Combined School in Botshabelo, Free State, said he was worried about not scoring the necessary points for admission. "Most of our challenges were during the level 5 of the lockdown period when we had less contact with our teachers."

Dean of the faculty of education at the University of Pretoria, Prof Chika Sehoole, said the government needed to invest in redressing the inequalities in the education system.

"Even if these learners pass and enter university, some will struggle to cope and adjust as a result of knowledge gaps, as a result of the disruption of teaching and learning.

"There were a group of schools, mainly in disadvantaged urban and rural black areas, without technology use that had their schools closed for up to three months during the past year. These learners would have been poorly prepared and this will be clear in the result that will be released next week."

Prof Kobus Maree, an educational psychologist, said the adverse influence of the pandemic on the pupils cannot be overestimated.

"However, if one does not achieve the marks required for university admission, it is not the end of the world. While your current marks will co-determine whether you will be accepted into your preferred field of study, they will not determine if you will be successful in life, nor will they limit your career prospects."

