



Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

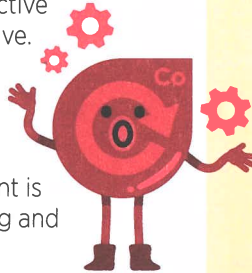
## LET US MAKE 2023 THE BEST SCHOOL YEAR YET!

Welcome back to the 2023 school year!

A warm welcome also to all those parents joining the Western Cape public school system for the very first time.

For many, it is the start of a 12-year journey with us and our school communities. For some, it may be the final year. Regardless of where you are in the cycle, the focus required for the school year ahead is important. We need to take each other by the hand and provide a nurturing, protective and safe environment where our children can thrive.

We want to ensure that **every child, in every classroom, in every school in the province receives quality education.** For this to happen parental support, encouragement and involvement is essential in every grade. We lost valuable teaching and learning time during the COVID-19 pandemic and now it's time to get "back on track" to recover these losses and make solid gains.



Whilst we have made some progress over the past year, sadly, we have also seen some decline in learner behaviour at our schools. Anti-social behaviour, bullying, assault and the possession of illegal substances at schools are on the rise. The toll this has placed on many of our educators has sometimes been too high – with some giving up on the profession.

As Head of Education in this province, I therefore appeal to every one of you to help us maintain acceptable behaviour in our schools. Our educators have a role to play but your role as parent is fundamental to all our success. You are a role model and you help shape your child's opinions, values, attitudes and approach towards learning and life in general.

### Here are some ways in which I think you can assist:



- » Encourage your child to go to school on time every day, **prepared to learn, to play, to participate and to enjoy.**
- » Ensure that every child treats his/her educators in a respectful manner.

- » Promote positive behaviour and hope. Children who are hopeful and happier reportedly perform better academically, in extramural activities and in life.
- » Engage with your child about their education and other interests daily, e.g. make reading a priority in your home or talk about the next soccer match or whatever is in the news.
- » Build their self-esteem, allowing them to become confident and independent thinkers and doers!
- » Discuss the consequences of actions and teach them that life is about choices - Our children will test our limits, but we need to set the boundaries.
- » Talk with your children about values. These form an integral part of society and are found in various contexts, including in homes or school or sports clubs or religious associations. Discuss your values and ask your children which values they believe are their own.
- » Support your child's educator throughout the school year. Educators have a heavy burden to carry and your cooperation will ultimately benefit your child. Obviously, there are exceptions to this, exceptions that may require intervention from school management. However, give your child's educator the chance to grow with your child as they tackle this new school year.
- » Be a good role model in everything that you do!

Being an ex-teacher myself, I know that the overwhelming majority of our educators come to this profession with high hopes of being able to help others be the best version of themselves. Let us do all we can to strengthen our teachers so that our children can reap the benefits.

In Africa there is a saying that says it takes a village to raise a child. We are the village – all of us. Let us make 2023 the best school year yet.

Let us live for our children.

**Brent Walters**  
Head: Education