

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

For immediate release

7 January 2010

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The South African Institute of Race Relations anticipates that an assessment of the 2009 matric results will reveal the following problems:

1. The drop out rate of school pupils before they reach matric remains at between 40% and 50%.
2. Pass rates and university entrance rates are set too low. Pupils, for example, need an aggregate of between 30% and 40% to pass.
3. The gap between school and university remains too great.
4. School leavers are too poorly equipped with basic literacy and numeracy skills to progress rapidly in the job market.
5. Racial inequalities are likely to remain unchanged. The Institute has previously demonstrated that black pupils receive an inferior level of public education compared to white pupils.
6. Maths and science results are likely to demonstrate this racial inequality most clearly. White pupils are expected to win approximately 50% of distinctions in these two subjects. The implications for general empowerment and equity policy are obvious.
7. The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) remains a primary obstacle to implementing many of the reforms necessary to improve the quality of the education system.
8. Teacher numbers and quality remain a concern.

The Institute suggests that education authorities consider the following practical interventions:

1. Reducing the influence of SADTU is a primary intervention necessary for the Department of Education to instill the discipline, standards, and inspections necessary to improve the standard of teaching at poor black schools.
2. Instilling a stronger emphasis on mother-tongue education for pupils in their early years of schooling.

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3. Concentrating resources on teaching basic numeracy and literacy skills from foundation phase upwards.
4. Re-establishing dedicated teacher training colleges.
5. Stepping up teacher recruitment through full teaching bursaries in exchange for a certain number of years of service in public schools.
6. Pursuing partnerships with universities and private sector companies to recruit voluntary or part time teaching expertise into underperforming schools.
7. Establishing a more technical matriculation stream and encouraging more pupils to pursue a less academic and more technical matric. Such a matric will offer better job opportunities to more school leavers while doing much to curb skills shortages in the country.
8. Expanding government managed bursary programmes to ensure that any capable but poor school leaver can access higher education.
9. Launching a trial school voucher scheme giving parents a voucher from the State that they can use towards funding their children's school education. Such vouchers could be redeemed at either private or public schools. The vouchers would ensure that parents have control over the quality of education received by their children through using their buying power to direct resources to better managed schools with better teachers. Managed properly such a scheme could do much to improve the quality of teaching at underperforming schools.