

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

For immediate release

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No-fee schools account for more than half of all South African schools

No-fee schools make up 55% of South Africa's public schools, and account for 43% of all pupils attending public schools, according to the latest *South Africa Survey*, to be released next week by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg.

The data, which was derived from the Department of Basic Education, shows that the province with the highest number of no-fee schools is the Eastern Cape. There are some 3 699 schools there where pupils are not required to pay fees, accounting for 65% of all Eastern Cape schools.

There are three other provinces with more than 1 000 no-fee schools. These are the Free State with 1 067 (accounting for 69% of all Free State schools); KwaZulu-Natal, which has 3 099 no-fee schools (53% of all schools there); and Limpopo with 2 805 (70%).

The province with the lowest proportion of no-fee schools is Gauteng. Some 22% of schools in that province do not charge fees. The total number of no-fee schools in Gauteng is 425.

The lowest number of no-fee schools in any province is in the Northern Cape, with 391. This means that 65% of all schools in the province are no-fee schools.

The only other province which has fewer than 500 no-fee schools is the Western Cape, at 403. This equates to 28% of all schools in the province.

There are three provinces where more than one million pupils attend no-fee schools. In the Eastern Cape some 1.2 million pupils (or 57% of all pupils at public schools in the Eastern Cape) are in no-fee schools.

In KwaZulu-Natal there are 1.2 million pupils (42%) in no-fee schools. In Limpopo there are 1.1 million pupils (63%) in schools where one does not have to pay fees.

The only other province where more than half of pupils are in no-fee schools was the Northern Cape. Of the 264 857 pupils attending public schools there, some 54% attend no-fee schools.

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The only provinces where fewer than 40% of the pupils in public schools were in no-fee schools were Gauteng, the North West, and the Western Cape. In those provinces the proportion of pupils attending no-fee schools was 23%, 38%, and 15% respectively.

The Government in 2008 set itself a target of ensuring that 60% of all public schools, would become no-fee schools over the medium term. However, there have been question marks around no-fee schools. Anecdotal evidence indicates that people who are entitled to send their children to no-fee schools still prefer to send them to schools which require pupils to pay fees. There is no means test for children attending no-fee schools. All pupils attending these schools are exempt from paying fees.

A researcher at the Institute, Marius Roodt, said that it had to be ensured that standards in no-fee schools were high. 'It does not help having no-fee schools which do not provide pupils with a decent education.'

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