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Rise in no-fee schools

The proportion of schools that do not charge school fees increased from 55% in 2008 to 60% two years later, an overall rise of 9%, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

While all provinces experienced an increase in the proportion of schools that do not charge fees in this period, the highest increases were in the Western Cape and the Free State. All other provinces experienced only slight to moderate growth rates.

This is according to data sourced from the Department of Basic Education and Statistics South Africa.

The Free State had the highest proportion of schools that do not charge fees in 2010 (83%), overtaking Limpopo, which had the highest proportion in 2008 (71%).

Despite recording the highest growth rate, the Western Cape still had the second lowest proportion of schools that do not charge fees, although this was still more than double the proportion of such schools in Gauteng.

'While expanding access to education in poor communities is necessary, there is evidence that schools that do not charge for tuition do not perform as well academically when compared to schools that charge relatively low school fees', said Mr Jonathan Snyman, a researcher at the Institute. 'Because of this, the rise in schools that do not charge for tuition needs to be accompanied by the provision of quality education otherwise increased access to education will be meaningless' added Mr Snyman.

Province	2008			2010			Change 2008-2010
	Number of no- fee schools	Total number of public schools	Proportion of schools no-fee	Number of no- fee schools	Total number of public schools	Proportion of schools no-fee	
Eastern Cape	3 668	5 617	65%	3 721	5 590	67%	3%
Free State	1 119	1 814	62%	1 354	1 636	83%	34%
Gauteng	425	1 989	21%	449	2 012	22%	5%
KwaZulu-Natal	3 024	5 751	53%	3 119	5 845	53%	0%
Limpopo	2 827	4 009	71%	3 052	3 942	77%	8%
Mpumalanga	923	1 849	50%	952	1 828	52%	4%
Northern Cape	393	603	65%	398	597	67%	3%
North West	859	1 730	50%	889	1 626	55%	10%
Western Cape	405	14 52	28%	663	1 456	46%	64%
South Africa	13 643	24 814	55%	14 597	24 532	60%	9%

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the 2008-2009 Annual Surveys for Ordinary Schools*, p18; *Report on the 2009-2010 Annual Surveys for Ordinary Schools*, pp10-11

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