

FreeFACTS

No 1/2020 / January 2020 / Issue 21

Find us online at www.irr.org.za

Education in South Africa – the outlook is bleak

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at matric results and shows what are some concerning trends which bode ill for South Africa's future.

The number of people who passed matric as well as those who passed well enough to be able to go to university showed a small increase between 2018 and 2019. However, the overall number of people who wrote the school-leaving examinations have been on an overall declining trend since 2013. However, this has not been the case for people who passed matric well enough to go to university. In 2019 a record 186 058 learners did well enough to go to university. Serious questions must be asked about the standard of school leavers, given the challenges the South African education system faces.

In addition, the issue of throughput should be a serious concern. In 2008, when 2019's matrics would have started school, there were 1 070 000 children in grade one. In 2017, when these children would have been in grade ten, there were 1 050 000 learners in that grade, indicating rather low attrition. However, only two years later the number of learners had plummeted to just over 500 000. It is likely that a large number of children who are unlikely to pass matric are then shepherded out the system. It is unlikely that they find work or enter a vocational college.

In addition, just fewer than 80 000 of those who wrote matric passed mathematics with a mark of above 40%. But even more concerningly, only 4 415 of the class of 2019 passed mathematics with a mark of 80% or higher. Put it another way, less than one percent of grade ones in 2008 managed to get above 80% for mathematics in matric twelve years later.

The vast majority of these passes would have come from well-resourced schools which in the government system will often be former 'Model C' schools reflecting our two-tiered system – partly due to the legacy of the past but also failures of the current government.

South Africa will struggle to become a prosperous, free, middle-income country if we remain on the current trajectory with regard to school education.

— **Marius Roodt**

JOIN US

The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

**SMS YOUR NAME
TO 32823
SMS costs R1.
Ts and Cs apply.**

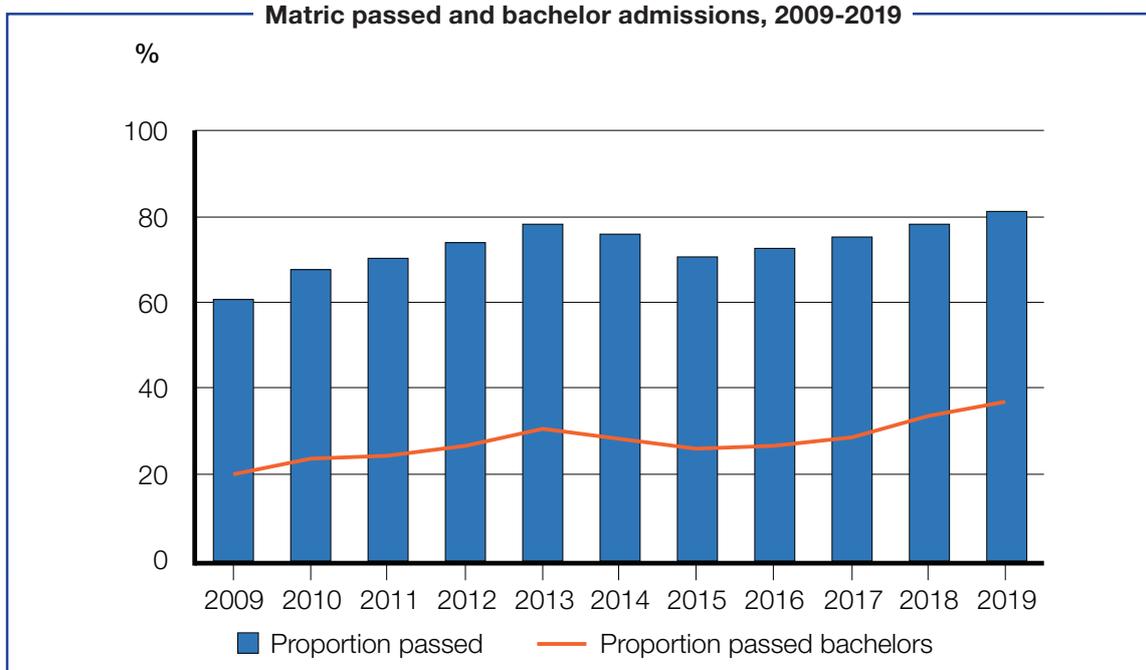
Education

National Senior Certificate results, 2018 and 2019

	2018			2019			Total wrote, change	Number of passes, change	Proportion of passes, change
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed			
Eastern Cape	65 733	46 393	70.6%	63 198	48 331	76.5%	-3.9%	4.2%	8.4%
Free State	24 914	21 806	87.5%	25 572	22 602	88.4%	2.6%	3.7%	1.0%
Gauteng	94 870	83 406	87.9%	97 829	85 342	87.2%	3.1%	2.3%	-0.8%
KwaZulu-Natal	116 152	88 485	76.2%	116 937	95 017	81.3%	0.7%	7.4%	6.7%
Limpopo	76 730	53 254	69.4%	70 847	51 855	73.2%	-7.7%	-2.6%	5.5%
Mpumalanga	44 612	35 225	79.0%	43 559	34 995	80.3%	-2.4%	-0.7%	1.6%
North-West	29 061	23 578	81.1%	26 819	23 272	86.8%	-7.7%	-1.3%	7.0%
Northern Cape	9 909	7 264	73.3%	9 138	6 990	76.5%	-7.8%	-3.8%	4.4%
Western Cape	50 754	41 350	81.5%	50 404	41 502	82.3%	-0.7%	0.4%	1.0%
South Africa	512 735	400 761	78.2%	504 303	409 906	81.3%	-1.6%	2.3%	4.0%

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p7

Matric passed and bachelor admissions, 2009-2019



Education

National Senior Certificate results, 2018 and 2019 (bachelor passes)

	2018			2019			Total wrote, change	Number of Bachelor passes, change	Proportion of bachelor passes, change
	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors admission	Proportion passed with bachelors admission	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors admission	Proportion passed with bachelors admission			
Eastern Cape	65 733	18 001	27.4%	63 198	20 419	32.3%	-3.9%	13.4%	17.9%
Free State	24 914	9 333	37.5%	25 572	9 992	39.1%	2.6%	7.1%	4.3%
Gauteng	94 870	41 410	43.6%	97 829	43 494	44.5%	3.1%	5.0%	2.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	116 152	38 571	33.2%	116 937	44 189	37.8%	0.7%	14.6%	13.9%
Limpopo	76 730	17 999	23.5%	70 847	19 022	26.8%	-7.7%	5.7%	14.0%
Mpumalanga	44 612	13 199	29.6%	43 559	14 228	32.7%	-2.4%	7.8%	10.5%
North-West	29 061	9 449	32.5%	26 819	9 964	37.2%	-7.7%	5.5%	14.5%
Northern Cape	9 909	2 589	26.1%	9 138	2 769	30.3%	-7.8%	7.0%	16.1%
Western Cape	50 754	21 492	42.3%	50 404	21 981	43.6%	-0.7%	2.3%	3.1%
South Africa	512 735	172 043	33.6%	504 303	186 058	36.9%	-1.6%	8.1%	9.8%

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p7

Matric passes by gender, 2018 and 2019

	2018				2019			
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)
Eastern Cape (boys)	29 128	21 269	73.0%	1:1.2	27 765	21 833	78.8%	1:1.2
Eastern Cape (girls)	36 605	25 124	68.6%	1:1.2	35 433	26 448	74.6%	1:1.2
Free State (boys)	11 578	10 271	88.7%	1:1.2	11 549	10 348	89.6%	1:1.2
Free State (girls)	13 336	11 535	86.5%	1:1.2	14 023	12 254	87.4%	1:1.2
Gauteng (boys)	42 475	37 444	88.2%	1:1.2	43 485	38 122	87.7%	1:1.2
Gauteng (girls)	52 395	45 962	87.7%	1:1.2	54 344	47 220	86.9%	1:1.2
KwaZulu-Natal (boys)	50 761	39 296	77.4%	1:1.3	50 767	41 906	82.5%	1:1.3
KwaZulu-Natal (girls)	65 391	49 189	75.2%	1:1.3	66 170	53 111	80.3%	1:1.3
Limpopo (boys)	34 613	25 116	72.6%	1:1.1	32 107	24 565	76.5%	1:1.1
Limpopo (girls)	42 117	28 138	66.8%	1:1.1	38 740	27 290	70.4%	1:1.1
Mpumalanga (boys)	19 710	15 896	80.6%	1:1.2	19 396	15 964	82.3%	1:1.2
Mpumalanga (girls)	24 902	19 329	77.6%	1:1.2	24 163	19 031	78.8%	1:1.2
North-West (boys)	13 347	10 980	82.3%	1:1.1	12 182	10 713	87.9%	1:1.2
North-West (girls)	15 714	12 598	80.2%	1:1.1	14 637	12 559	85.8%	1:1.2
Northern Cape (boys)	4 318	3 233	74.9%	1:1.2	3 980	3 163	79.5%	1:1.2
Northern Cape (girls)	5 591	4 031	72.1%	1:1.2	5 158	3 827	74.2%	1:1.2
Western Cape (boys)	22 162	18 418	83.1%	1:1.2	22 131	18 336	82.9%	1:1.3
Western Cape (girls)	28 592	22 932	80.2%	1:1.2	28 273	23 166	81.9%	1:1.3
South Africa (boys)	228 092	181 923	79.8%	1:1.2	223 362	185 000	82.8%	1:1.2
South Africa (girls)	284 643	218 838	76.9%	1:1.2	280 941	224 906	80.1%	1:1.2

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p45

Education

Matric bachelors passes by gender, 2018 and 2019								
	2018				2019			
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)
Eastern Cape (boys)	29 128	8 328	28.6%	1:1.2	27 765	9 358	33.7%	1:1.2
Eastern Cape (girls)	36 605	9 673	26.4%		35 433	11 061	31.2%	
Free State (boys)	11 578	4 300	37.1%	1:1.2	11 549	4 545	39.4%	1:1.2
Free State (girls)	13 336	5 033	37.7%		14 023	5 447	38.8%	
Gauteng (boys)	42 475	17 412	41.0%	1:1.4	43 485	18 358	42.2%	1:1.4
Gauteng (girls)	52 395	23 998	45.8%		54 344	25 136	46.3%	
KwaZulu-Natal (boys)	50 761	17 051	33.6%	1:1.3	50 767	19 649	38.7%	1:1.2
KwaZulu-Natal (girls)	65 391	21 520	32.9%		66 170	24 540	37.1%	
Limpopo (boys)	34 613	8 683	25.1%	1:1.1	32 107	9 214	28.7%	1:1.1
Limpopo (girls)	42 117	9 316	22.1%		38 740	9 808	25.3%	
Mpumalanga (boys)	19 710	6 062	30.8%	1:1.2	19 396	6 549	33.8%	1:1.2
Mpumalanga (girls)	24 902	7 137	28.7%		24 163	7 679	31.8%	
North-West (boys)	13 347	4 295	32.2%	1:1.2	12 182	4 517	37.1%	1:1.2
North-West (girls)	15 714	5 154	32.8%		14 637	5 447	37.2%	
Northern Cape (boys)	4 318	1 053	24.4%	1:1.5	3 980	1 174	29.5%	1:1.4
Northern Cape (girls)	5 591	1 536	27.5%		5 158	1 595	30.9%	
Western Cape (boys)	22 162	9 347	42.2%	1:1.3	22 131	9 384	42.4%	1:1.3
Western Cape (girls)	28 592	12 145	42.5%		28 273	12 597	44.6%	
South Africa (boys)	228 092	76 531	33.6%	1:1.2	223 362	82 748	37.0%	1:1.2
South Africa (girls)	284 643	95 512	33.6%		280 941	103 310	36.8%	

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p46

Pass rate by school quintile						
		Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
Pass rate: 0-19.9%	Number	29	15	7	1	0
	Proportion*	1.6%	0.9%	0.5%	0.2%	0%
Pass rate: 20-39.9%	Number	94	75	38	5	1
	Proportion	5.2%	4.4%	2.6%	0.8%	0.1%
Pass rate: 40-59.9%	Number	278	183	180	23	16
	Proportion	34.1%	10.8%	12.3%	3.7%	2.2%
Pass rate: 60-79.9%	Number	565	530	481	180	104
	Proportion	31.1%	31.4%	33.0%	29.2%	14.4%
Pass rate: 80-100%	Number	849	884	751	408	603
	Proportion	46.8%	52.4%	51.5%	66.1%	83.3%
Total	Number	1 815	1 687	1 457	617	724

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p48

*The proportion of schools in that particular quintile which achieved the relevant pass rate

Note: Quintile 1 schools cater for the poorest 20% of learners. Quintile 2 schools cater for the next poorest 20%, and so on. Quintile 5 schools are those schools that cater for the least poor 20% of learners.

Education

Selected subject performances, 2018 and 2019

	2018				
	Number wrote	Number achieved above 40%	Proportion achieved above 40%	Number achieved above 80%	Proportion achieved above 80%
English First Additional Language*	498 959	485 112	97.2%	7 064	1.4%
Accounting	90 278	43 831	48.6%	5 169	5.7%
Geography	269 621	126 011	46.7%	2 934	1.1%
History	154 536	112 266	72.6%	7 656	5.0%
Life Sciences	310 041	160 208	51.7%	7 507	2.4%
Mathematical Literacy	294 204	133 568	45.4%	3 957	1.3%
Mathematics	233 858	86 874	37.1%	5 828	2.5%
Physical Sciences	172 319	84 002	48.7%	8 135	4.7%
	2019				
	Number wrote	Number achieved above 40%	Proportion achieved above 40%	Number achieved above 80%	Proportion achieved above 80%
English First Additional Language*	489 072	489 072	97.6%	7 787	1.6%
Accounting	80 110	42 113	52.6%	3 875	7.7%
Geography	271 807	144 755	53.3%	2 752	1.0%
History	164 729	121 936	74.0%	8 702	5.3%
Life Sciences	301 037	147 436	49.0%	8 525	2.8%
Mathematical Literacy	298 607	162 877	54.5%	6 280	2.1%
Mathematics	222 034	77 751	35.0%	4 415	2.0%
Physical Sciences	164 478	85 034	51.7%	7 763	4.7%

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p52, p55, p56, p57, p59, and p60

*Proportion who passed with 30% and more.

Education

Throughput, 2008-2019	
Number of grade ones, 2008	1 071 905
Number of grade tens, 2017	1 052 080
Number of grade 12 candidates	504 303
Number of matric passes	409 906
Number of bachelor passes	186 085
Number of mathematics passes at above 40%	77 751
Number of mathematics passes at above 80%	4 415

Source: Department of Basic Education, *School Realities*, 2009, p2; *School Realities*, 2017, p3; *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p7, p55

