

FreeFACTS

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Some successes in education but challenges remain

A well-functioning education system is one of the cornerstones of any successful society. When viewed through the lens of education can we say South Africa is successful?

This may surprise some but the answer is a mixed one.

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at a number of educational statistics. Like a number of developmental figures in South Africa the ANC government made some progress since the end of apartheid.

The number of people who have completed Grade 12 or have some form of tertiary education has grown rapidly in the last nearly 30 years. In addition, the proportion of people who pass matric well enough to secure entrance to university has also risen rapidly.

However, there are serious questions about the quality of education that people at South African schools receive. This is reflected in the explosion in the number of private schools and in the number of children attending these schools. This would imply that many people are seeking to educate their children outside of the state school system, because of a variety of concerns.

There are also worrying differences in outcomes between black and white children at school, which is likely a reflection that white children will – in general – attend a well-resourced government school – a so-called former 'Model C' school. While many black children attend former Model C schools (which were reserved for whites during apartheid) the proportion of black children attending these schools will be lower than the proportion of white children at these schools.

Furthermore, there are also serious questions around throughput. For example, of the 1.1 million children that started Grade One in 2010, less than half passed matric in 2011. In addition, less than a quarter did so well enough to go to university.

The South African education system has had some successes, but faces serious challenges. New ideas need to be introduced, such as education vouchers, and the power of the teachers' unions need to be curtailed. If this does not happen South African children will be doomed to a life of penury.

— Marius Roodt

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Education

People aged 20 and older with no schooling by race, 1995-2021						
Race	People aged 20+	1995	2002	2010	2021	Change 1995-2021
Black	Number with no schooling	2 640 000	2 812 000	1 913 000	1 147 000	-1 493 000
	Total aged 20+	15 676 000	19 783 000	22 076 000	30 093 000	14 417 000
	Proportion with no schooling	16,8%	14,2%	8,7%	3,8%	—
Coloured	Number with no schooling	182 000	171 000	88 000	44 000	-138 000
	Total aged 20+	2 079 000	2 332 000	2 807 000	3 362 000	1 283 000
	Proportion with no schooling	8,8%	7,3%	3,1%	1,3%	—
Indian/Asian	Number with no schooling	34 000	27 000	16 000	16 000	-18 000
	Total aged 20+	644 000	743 000	900 000	1 120 000	476 000
	Proportion with no schooling	5,3%	3,6%	1,8%	1,4%	—
White	Number with no schooling	8 000	5 000	10 000	— ^b	—
	Total aged 20+	3 700 000	3 069 000	3 338 000	3 447 000	-253 000
	Proportion with no schooling	0,2%	0,2%	0,3%	— ^b	—
Total ^a	Number with no schooling	2 864 000	3 016 000	2 026 000	1 209 000	-1 655 000
	Total aged 20+	22 100 000	25 954 000	29 121 000	38 023 000	15 923 000
	Proportion with no schooling	13,0%	11,6%	7,0%	3,2%	—

Source: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), *October Household Survey 1995*, Statistical release P0317, 27 November 1996, Table 8.1, p75; *General Household Survey 2002*, Statistical release P0318, 15 December 2003, p4; *General Household Survey 2010* (Revised version), Statistical release P0318, 3 August 2011, Table 2.2, p53; *General Household Survey GHS 2021: Addendum tables*, Statistical release P0318, 23 June 2022, Table 2.2, pp5-6

^a Totals should add up vertically but may not, owing to rounding/the inclusion of unspecified values.

^b Figures too small for reliable estimates.

Education

People aged 20 and older with grade 12 ^a by race, 1995-2021						
Race	People aged 20+	1995	2002	2010	2021	Change 1995-2021
Black	Number with grade 12	2 110 000	3 398 000	5 024 000	10 135 000	8 025 000
	Total aged 20+	15 676 000	19 783 000	22 076 000	30 093 000	14 417 000
	Proportion with grade 12	13,5%	17,2%	22,8%	33,7%	—
Coloured	Number with grade 12	268 000	404 000	745 000	1 245 000	977 000
	Total aged 20+	2 079 000	2 332 000	2 807 000	3 362 000	1 283 000
	Proportion with grade 12	12,9%	17,3%	26,5%	37,0%	—
Indian/Asian	Number with grade 12	207 000	246 000	362 000	589 000	382 000
	Total aged 20+	644 000	743 000	900 000	1 120 000	476 000
	Proportion with grade 12	32,1%	33,1%	40,2%	52,6%	—
White	Number with grade 12	1 545 000	1 228 000	1 472 000	1 464 000	-81 000
	Total aged 20+	3 700 000	3 069 000	3 338 000	3 447 000	-253 000
	Proportion with grade 12	41,8%	40,0%	44,1%	42,5%	—
Total ^b	Number with grade 12	4 131 000	5 286 000	7 603 000	13 435 000	9 304 000
	Total aged 20+	22 100 000	25 954 000	29 121 000	38 023 000	15 923 000
	Proportion with grade 12	18,7%	20,4%	26,1%	35,3%	—

Source: Stats SA, October Household Survey 1995, Statistical release P0317, 27 November 1996, Table 8.1, p75; General Household Survey 2002, Statistical release P0318, 15 December 2003, p4; General Household Survey 2010 (Revised version), Statistical release P0318, 3 August 2011, Table 2.2, p53; General Household Survey GHS 2021: Addendum tables, Statistical release P0318, 2 June 2022, Table 2.2, pp5-6

^a As their highest level of education. Figures include those who have completed the equivalent of grade 12 at TVETs.

^b Totals should add up vertically but may not, owing to rounding/the inclusion of unspecified values.

Education

People aged 20 and older with a degree and higher ^a by race, 1995-2021						
Race	People aged 20+	1995	2002	2010	2021	Change 1995-2021
Black	Number with a degree and higher	188 000	330 000	604 000	1 378 000	1 190 000
	Total aged 20+	15 676 000	19 783 000	22 076 000	30 093 000	14 417 000
	Proportion with a degree and higher	1,2%	1,7%	2,7%	4,6%	—
Coloured	Number with a degree and higher	24 000	42 000	105 000	165 000	141 000
	Total aged 20+	2 079 000	2 332 000	2 807 000	3 362 000	1 283 000
	Proportion with a degree and higher	1,2%	1,8%	3,7%	4,9%	—
Indian/Asian	Number with a degree and higher	35 000	57 000	107 000	138 000	103 000
	Total aged 20+	644 000	743 000	900 000	1 120 000	476 000
	Proportion with a degree and higher	5,4%	7,7%	11,9%	12,3%	—
White	Number with a degree and higher	403 000	526 000	755 000	806 000	403 000
	Total aged 20+	3 700 000	3 069 000	3 338 000	3 447 000	-253 000
	Proportion with a degree and higher	10,9%	17,1%	22,6%	23,4%	—
Total ^b	Number with a degree and higher	649 000	956 000	1 572 000	2 503 000	1 854 000
	Total aged 20+	22 100 000	25 954 000	29 121 000	38 023 000	15 923 000
	Proportion with a degree and higher	2,9%	3,7%	5,4%	6,6%	—

Source: Stats SA, *October Household Survey 1995*, Statistical release P0317, 27 November 1996, Table 8.1, p75; *General Household Survey 2002*, Statistical release P0318, 15 December 2003, p4; *General Household Survey 2010 (Revised version)*, Statistical release P0318, 3 August 2011, Table 2.2, p53; *General Household Survey GHS 2021: Addendum tables*, Statistical release P0318, 2 June 2022, Table 2.2, pp5-6

^a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 7-10. Includes Higher Diploma/National Certificate.

^b Totals should add up vertically but may not, owing to rounding/the inclusion of unspecified values.

Education

People aged between 0 and 4 attending/not attending an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre ^a by race, 2009 and 2021					
—2009—					
—Number—					
Status	Black	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Total ^b
Attending	1 240 000	89 000	28 000	131 000	1 488 000
Not attending	2 979 000	323 000	69 000	115 000	3 486 000
Total^b	4 299 000	417 000	99 000	248 000	5 063 000
—Proportion ^c —					
Status	Black	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Total ^b
Attending	31,5%	24,5%	25,0%	48,0%	31,6%
Not attending	68,5%	75,3%	75,0%	52,0%	68,4%
Total^b	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
—2021—					
—Number—					
Status	Black	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Total ^b
Attending	1 392 000	115 000	— ^d	155 000	1 669 000
Not attending	3 667 000	365 000	59 000	89 000	4 181 000
Total^b	5 059 000	480 000	66 000	244 000	5 849 000
—Proportion ^c —					
Status	Black	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Total ^b
Attending	27,5%	24,0%	— ^d	63,5%	28,5%
Not attending	72,5%	76,0%	89,4%	36,5%	71,5%
Total^b	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: Stats SA, *General Household Survey 2009, (Revised version)* Statistical release P0318, 3 August 2011, Table 3.11, p75; *General Household Survey 2021 GHS: Addendum Tables*, Statistical release P0318, 22 June 2022, Table 3.10, p19

^a Includes day-care centres, crèches, playgroups, nursery schools and pre-primary schools.

^b Includes those who did not specify whether or not they attend an ECD centre.

^c IRR calculations. This indicates that, of all Black children between 0 and 4 years of age, 27.5% attended an ECD centre in 2021, and so on.

^d Figures too small for reliable estimates.

Education

Pupils in public and independent schools by province, 2000 and 2021			
Province	Year	Public	Independent
Eastern Cape	2000	2 130 390	8 471
	2021	1 772 877	75 176
	2000-21	-16,8%	787,5%
Free State	2000	744 868	19 887
	2021	706 269	20 444
	2000-21	-5,2%	2,8%
Gauteng	2000	1 436 964	117 531
	2021	2 227 733	337 079
	2000-21	55,0%	186,8%
KwaZulu-Natal	2000	2 619 621	43 739
	2021	2 831 417	62 541
	2000-21	8,1%	43,0%
Limpopo	2000	1 830 018	15 247
	2021	1 723 583	75 547
	2000-21	-5,8%	395,5%
Mpumalanga	2000	898 599	13 180
	2021	1 101 224	33 665
	2000-21	22,5%	155,4%
North West	2000	902 256	7 650
	2021	848 086	24 515
	2000-21	-6,0%	220,5%
Northern Cape	2000	196 205	2 445
	2021	298 253	6 313
	2000-21	52,0%	158,2%
Western Cape	2000	888 251	28 133
	2021	1 196 715	67 812
	2000-21	34,7%	141,0%
SOUTH AFRICA	2000	11 647 172	256 283
	2021	12 706 157	703 092
	2000-21	9,1%	174,3%

Source: DBE, *Education Statistics in South Africa at a glance, 2000*, February 2002, p4;
National Senior Certificate Examinations: Results of the Class of 2021,
 Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, 25 January 2022, p12 .

Education

National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results (new curriculum), 2008-21

Year	Candidates	—Pass ^a —		—Higher Certificate admission ^b —		—Diploma admission ^c —		—Bachelor's admission ^d —	
		Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
2008	533 561	334 744	62,7%	102 032	19,1%	124 258	23,3%	107 274	20,1%
2009	552 073	334 718	60,6%	93 356	17,0%	131 035	23,8%	109 697	19,9%
2010	537 543	364 513	67,8%	91 241	17,1%	146 224	27,2%	126 371	23,5%
2011	496 090	348 114	70,2%	85 296	17,2%	141 584	28,5%	120 767	24,3%
2012	511 152	377 829	73,9%	88 604	17,3%	152 881	29,9%	136 047	26,6%
2013	562 112	439 779	78,2%	94 556	16,8%	173 292	30,8%	171 755	30,6%
2014	532 860	403 874	75,8%	86 022	16,1%	166 689	31,3%	150 752	28,3%
2015	644 536	455 825	70,7%	105 770	16,4%	183 720	28,5%	166 263	25,8%
2016	610 178	442 672	72,5%	100 486	16,5%	179 619	29,4%	162 374	26,6%
2017	534 484	401 307	75,1%	86 265	16,1%	161 333	30,2%	153 610	28,7%
2018	512 735	400 632	78,1%	86 790	16,9%	141 700	27,6%	172 043	33,6%
2019	504 303	409 906	81,3%	78 984	15,7%	144 672	28,7%	186 058	36,9%
2020	578 468	440 598	76,2%	79 117	13,7%	150 600	26,0%	210 820	36,4%
2021	704 021	537 565	76,4%	103 859	14,8%	177 572	25,2%	256 031	36,4%
2008-21	31,9%	60,6%	21,9%	1,8%	-22,5%	42,9%	8,2%	138,7%	81,1%

Source: Source: DBE, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination Results*, 2009, January 2010, p39;

National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Report 2021, January 2022, Table 6.2.3, pp44-45

^a In order to be granted an NSC, a pupil needs to achieve 40% in three subjects, one of which must be their home language, and achieve 30% in three additional subjects. Pass figures include higher certificate, diploma and bachelor's passes.

^b This allows a person to study for a higher certificate. The minimum admission requirement is an NSC with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching.

^c This allows a person to study for a diploma. The minimum requirement is an NSC with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching and 40% or more in four other subjects.

^d Or university entrance pass, which allows a person to study for a bachelor's degree. The minimum requirement is an NSC with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching and 50% or more in four or more 20-credit subjects.

Education

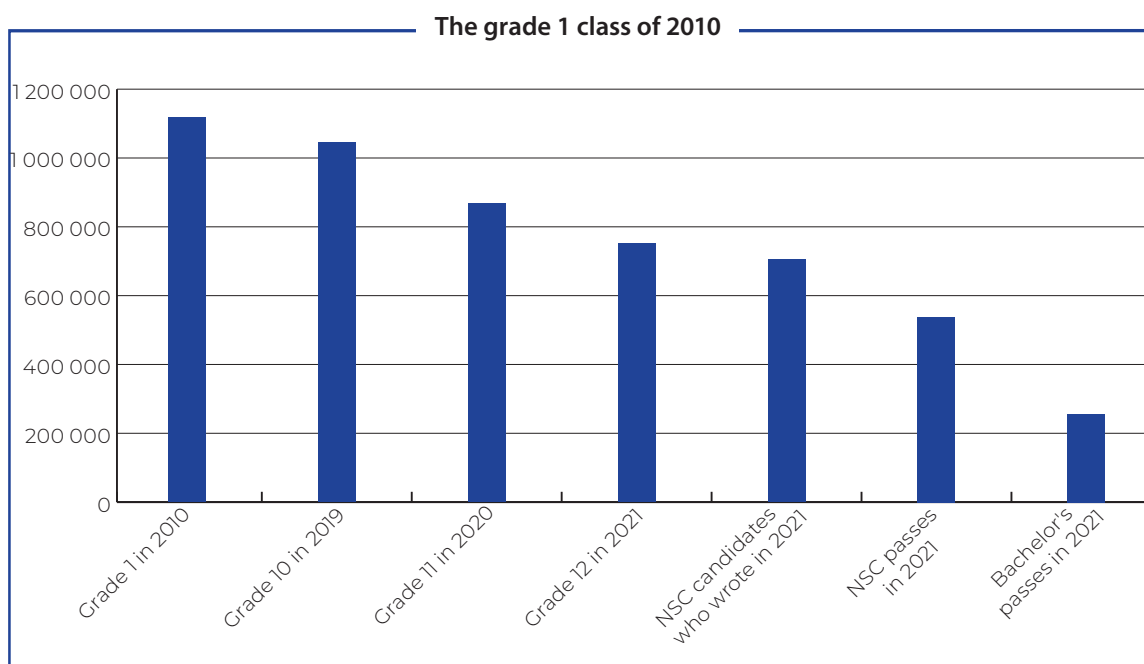
Results for selected subjects by race, 2021					
Subject	Number of candidates	Number achieved 40% and above	Proportion achieved 40% and above	Number achieved 50% and above	Proportion achieved 50% and above
Accounting	105 894	56 340	53,2%	35 060	33,1%
Black	92 463	44 022	47,6%	26 691	28,9%
Coloured	4 695	3 850	82,0%	1 734	36,9%
Indian/Asian	3 390	3 218	94,9%	2 355	69,5%
White	5 285	5 196	98,3%	4 242	80,3%
Other	61	54	88,5%	38	62,3%
Agricultural sciences	123 990	60 308	48,6%	33 323	26,9%
Black	123 054	59 615	48,4%	32 866	26,7%
Coloured	248	119	48,0%	59	23,8%
Indian/Asian	39	24	61,5%	18	46,2%
White	645	547	84,8%	378	58,6%
Other	4	3	75,0%	2	50,0%
Business studies	207 045	147 398	71,2%	100 486	48,5%
Black	208 057	125 259	60,2%	84 389	40,6%
Coloured	21 044	11 065	52,6%	7 339	34,9%
Indian/Asian	5 178	3 932	75,9%	3 131	60,5%
White	8 752	7 052	80,6%	5 555	63,5%
Other	112	90	80,4%	72	64,3%
Economics	139 191	56 145	40,3%	28 904	20,8%
Black	130 975	51 371	39,2%	25 659	19,6%
Coloured	5 350	2 384	44,6%	1 375	25,7%
Indian/Asian	1 024	733	71,6%	510	49,8%
White	1 799	1 625	90,3%	1 338	74,4%
Other	43	32	74,4%	22	51,2%
Geography	358 655	155 060	43,2%	75 884	21,2%
Black	329 803	139 746	42,4%	66 791	20,3%
Coloured	18 561	6 979	37,6%	3 166	17,1%
Indian/Asian	4 027	3 111	77,3%	2 139	53,1%
White	6 173	5 158	83,6%	3 740	60,6%
Other	91	66	72,5%	48	52,7%
History	227 448	166 576	73,2%	118 572	52,1%
Black	200 169	145 920	72,9%	103 216	51,6%
Coloured	21 319	15 024	70,5%	10 237	48,0%
Indian/Asian	2 400	2 213	92,2%	1 951	81,3%
White	3 487	3 354	96,2%	3 115	89,3%
Other	73	65	89,0%	53	72,6%

Education

Results for selected subjects by race, 2021					
Life sciences	384 216	197 017	51,3%	129 211	33,6%
Black	347 438	173 392	49,9%	111 114	32,0%
Coloured	19 445	9 107	46,8%	5 995	30,8%
Indian/Asian	6 570	5 272	80,2%	4 384	66,7%
White	10 599	9 123	86,1%	7 621	71,9%
Other	164	123	75,0%	97	59,1%
Mathematics	259 143	97 561	37,6%	59 573	23,0%
Black	231 713	78 239	33,8%	44 803	19,3%
Coloured	8 418	3 999	47,5%	2 480	29,5%
Indian/Asian	5 895	4 177	70,9%	3 247	55,1%
White	12 953	11 040	85,2%	8 958	69,2%
Other	164	106	64,6%	85	51,8%
Mathematical literacy	441 067	216 692	49,1%	130 023	29,5%
Black	384 237	177 494	46,2%	100 276	26,1%
Coloured	36 472	20 388	55,9%	13 203	36,2%
Indian/Asian	5 584	4 682	83,8%	3 769	67,5%
White	14 626	14 015	95,8%	12 685	86,7%
Other	148	113	76,4%	90	60,8%
Physical science	196 968	89 604	45,5%	53 844	27,3%
Black	178 744	76 049	42,5%	43 006	24,1%
Coloured	5 226	2 848	54,5%	1 924	36,8%
Indian/Asian	4 271	3 337	78,1%	2 720	63,7%
White	8 617	7 294	84,6%	6 127	71,1%
Other	110	76	69,1%	67	60,9%

Source: DBE, *Education Statistics in South Africa at a glance, 2000*, February 2002, p4;
National Senior Certificate Examinations: Results of the Class of 2021,
 Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, 25 January 2022, p12 .

Economy



The grade 1 class of 2010		
Class progress	Number	Proportion
Grade 1 in 2010	1 116 899	100,0%
Grade 10 in 2019	1 045 424	93,6%
Grade 11 in 2020	867 783	77,7%
Grade 12 in 2021	750 487	67,2%
NSC candidates who wrote in 2021	704 021	63,0%
NSC passes in 2021	537 687	48,1%
Bachelor's passes in 2021	256 031	22,9%

Source: DBE, National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Report 2021, January 2022, Table 6.2.3, pp44-45; National Senior Certificate Examinations: Results of the Class of 2021, Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, 25 January 2022, p15