

School Mathematics as Equaliser

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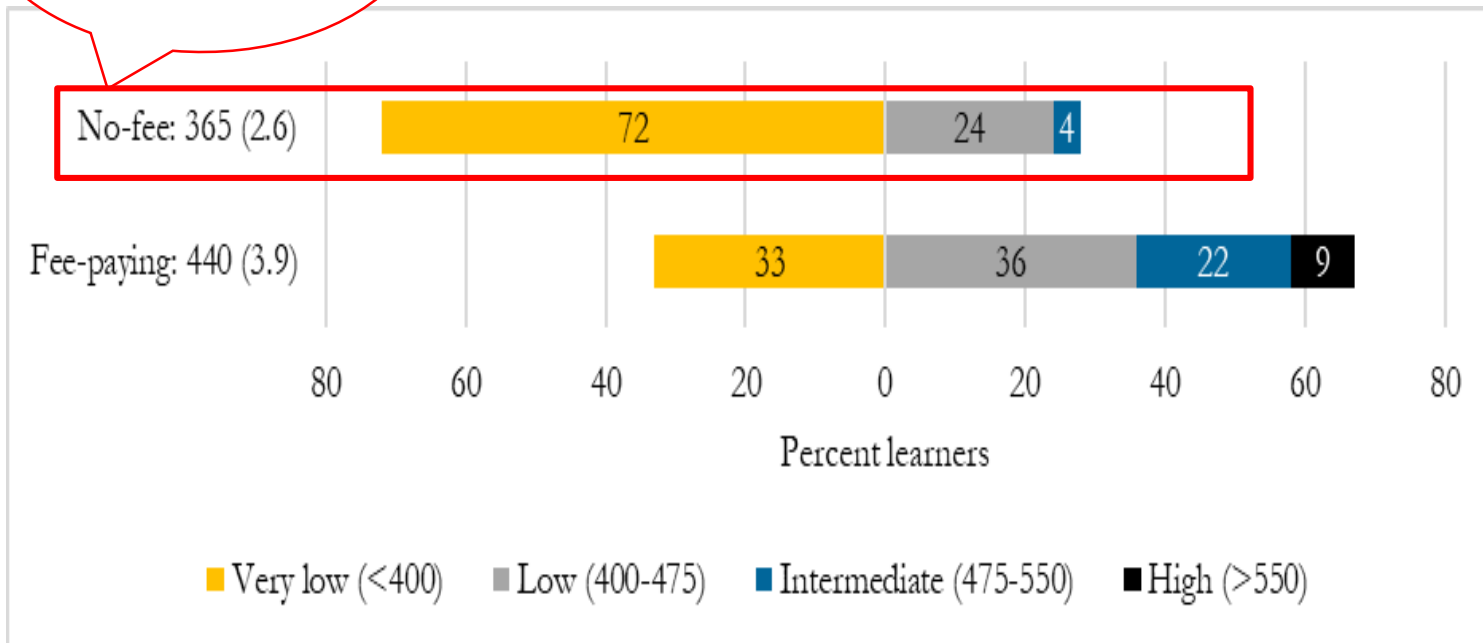
Human Sciences Research Council

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1. South African mathematics achievements are low and socially graded

Math inequality gap 75 points



- TIMSS 2019 results retell the predictable South African story of advantage begetting advantage at one end of the distribution and compounding disadvantage at the other end.
- Achievement gaps continue to be linked to learners' socio-economic backgrounds, gender, poverty index of the school attended and spatial location, and province in which the school is located. Covid widened inequalities.

FUNCTIONING SCHOOLS MATTER – MONITOR and REPORT

2. Prioritise the First 1 000 days of formal learning, i.e., Grades RR, R and 1

Mathematical knowledge is hierarchical in nature, and ‘skills beget more skill’. The more you start with the more you will acquire.

Early mathematical skills are more critical for those from poorer households, to change the patterns of intergenerational poverty.

Children must be in cognitively rich and stimulating environments that focus on first language development and reading with meaning, basic computational skills and writing simple sentences.

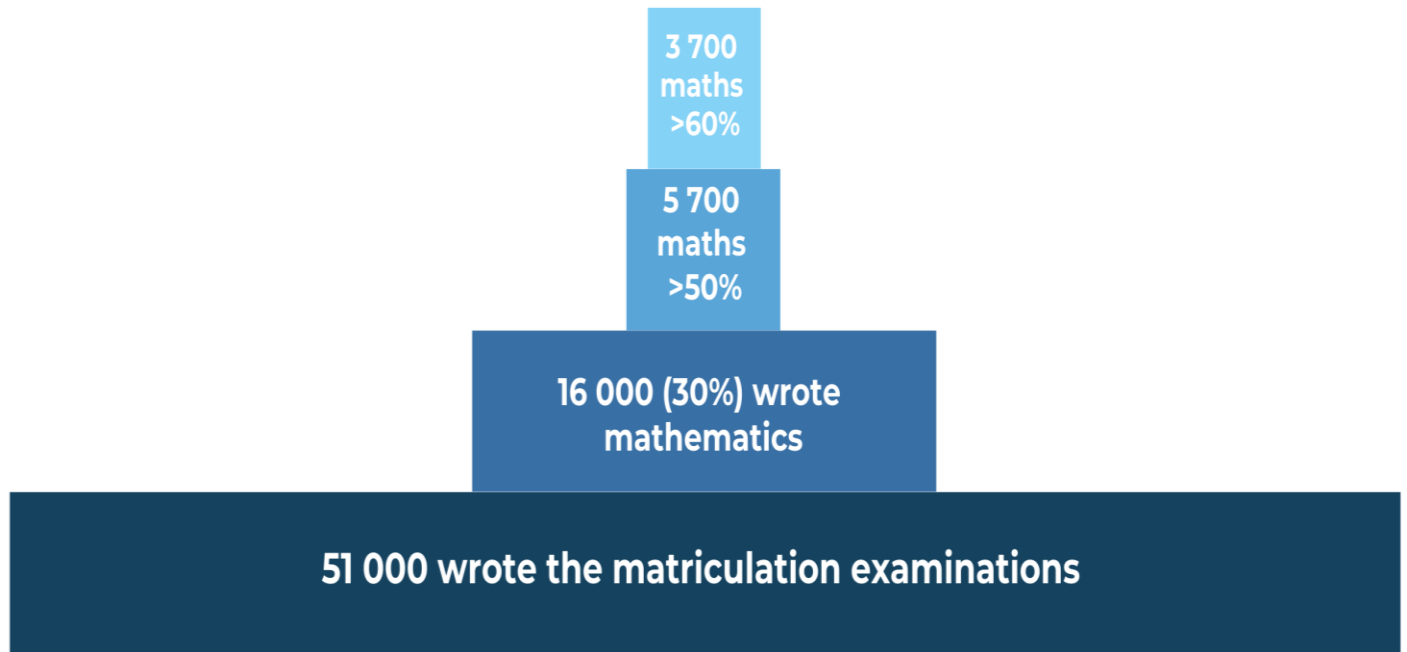
One third of parents reported activities with their children:

- read books
- played with alphabets
- sang counting songs
- played games with shapes
- played with building blocks

**CREATE STIMULATING
EDU-ENTERTAINMENT
PRESENCE IN BOTH
TRADITIONAL AND
SOCIAL MEDIA**

**MONITOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF
POLICY**

3. Perplexing Matric Math and Math Literacy choices in matric



- In TIMSS, two thirds of Western Cape Grade 9 learners acquired basic mathematical abilities. One third could apply knowledge and problem solve.
- Yet only 30% write mathematics in matric. This does not square up with what happens in Grade 9.

PROMOTING, INCENTIVISING & MONITORING MATHEMATICS CHOICES