

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 3623

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3623. Mr B B Nodada (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

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Since 2015, what is the annual dropout rate (a) nationally and (b) provincially for (i) Grade 8 to Grade 12 and (ii) Grade 7 learners after completion of their General Education and Training?

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Response

The most reliable estimates of dropout rates by grade are derived using STATS SA's General Household Surveys, which are conducted annually. This is a nationally representative survey of South African households and collects information about the highest level of education attained by each member of the household. If a person's highest level of education is grade 11, for example, and they are old enough to be unlikely to still be in the process of completing a higher level of education, it can then be assumed that they exited the education system at that point. The sample sizes are not large enough to permit precise estimates of dropout for each grade and province separately. The table below shows the estimated percentages of children reaching each grade, and conversely, the estimated percentages of children dropping out after each grade. Based on this methodology, data collected in a particular year is reflective of dropping out in the years preceding that year, but not necessarily of dropping out in that year. As the table shows, grade survival rates (or completion rates) have been increasing over time in recent years. Using GHS data from 2019-2021, the estimated percentage of youths who completed grade 12 had reached a figure of 57,0%.

Survival rates and drop-out rates for each grade

	2015-2017		2017-2019		2019-2021	
	Percentage reaching at least this grade	Grade-specific dropout rate	Percentage reaching at least this grade	Grade-specific dropout rate	Percentage reaching at least this grade	Grade-specific dropout rate
Total cohort	100%		100%		100%	
No schooling		0.6%		0.6%		0.7%
Grade 1	99.4%	0.2%	99.4%	0.1%	99.3%	0.0%
Grade 2	99.3%	0.2%	99.3%	0.3%	99.3%	0.2%
Grade 3	99.1%	0.5%	99.0%	0.2%	99.1%	0.2%
Grade 4	98.6%	0.4%	98.8%	0.3%	98.9%	0.4%
Grade 5	98.2%	0.6%	98.5%	0.6%	98.4%	0.4%

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Grade 6	97.6%	1.5%	97.8%	1.4%	98.0%	1.3%
Grade 7	96.2%	2.9%	96.5%	2.7%	96.7%	1.9%
Grade 8	93.4%	4.7%	93.9%	4.3%	94.9%	3.8%
Grade 9	89.0%	9.3%	89.9%	8.9%	91.3%	6.8%
Grade 10	80.7%	15.6%	81.9%	15.3%	85.1%	12.4%
Grade 11	68.2%	25.0%	69.3%	23.7%	74.6%	22.4%
Grade 12	51.1%		52.9%		57.9%	

Notes: Own calculations using General Household Survey datasets, STATS SA. Three years of GHS data are pooled together with the purpose of increasing the sample size and therefore constructing more stable estimates over time. For the GHS datasets of 2015-2017, only persons born between 1991 and 1993 were included; for 2017-2019, only persons born between 1993 and 1995 were included, and for 2019-2021, only persons born between 1995 and 1997 were included. These age ranges were decided on in order to ensure that persons included would have been old enough to have been unlikely to still be completing school but young enough so as to reflect recent trends in school completion and dropout.