

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NORTHERN PROVINCE SINCE 1910

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to discuss the history of the school leaving examination in South Africa and its hidden curriculum. It aims at giving in nutshell the historical events of the South African school leaving examination as impacted by the hidden curriculum throughout the ages. While admitting that the history of the South African school leaving examination can be traced back from the founding of the Cape Public Board in 1858, I intend to focus on the school leaving examination in South Africa from 1910. Attention will be given to selected historical events since 1910 which, in my view, have influenced the South African school leaving examination as impacted by the hidden curriculum as it manifests itself in South Africa, including the Northern Province.

This chapter argues that the South African school leaving examination can only be understood if it is viewed against the background of the country's broad policy of apartheid and the aim of apartheid education. This study will briefly focus on the influence of the following aspects on the school leaving examination:

Different educational histories experienced by South Africans: a brief history of the division, inequality, contestation and conflict in South African schools; the role played by the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) and the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT). This chapter focuses on the University of the Cape of Good Hope and the South African school leaving examinations, 1910 - 1917; the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) and its constitution, 1917 - 1947; the decentralisation of education, the matriculation function of the JMB as impacted by the hidden curriculum, 1918 - 1953; language, decentralisation of education and the hidden curriculum, 1910 - 1953; the Joint Matriculation Board, decentralisation and hidden curriculum, 1918 - 1953; the relationship between the Joint Matriculation Board, the Committee of Vice-

Chancellors and the Committee of University Principals; the constitution of the Joint Matriculation Board and the hidden curriculum, 1948 - 1986; the functions of the Joint Matriculation Board and the hidden curriculum, 1948 - 1986; educational funding and the South African school leaving examination and the hidden curriculum, 1948 - 1994; the 1976 uprising, the South African school leaving examination and the hidden curriculum as well as the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT) and the hidden curriculum. This chapter closes with an analysis of the school leaving examination results of the Northern Province as compared to other South African provinces from 1994 - 2001.

3.2 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION 1910 - 1917

When the four colonies, viz. Natal, the Cape, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were united by the Act of Union in 1910, the University of the Cape of Good Hope was responsible for the school leaving examination functions of the whole country. The University of the Cape of Good Hope replaced the preceding examination boards and was responsible for the control and conducting primary, secondary and tertiary examinations and prescribing standards for the issuing of certificates. The school leaving examination and the determining of the admission requirements for university studies were the primary focus of the University of the Cape of Good Hope until the termination of its services in 1917. Behr (1988:183) asserts that:

“It controlled the Junior Certificate and Matriculation examinations, as well as entry to the Public service ... The colleges continued to do the teaching, but the University of the Cape of Good Hope laid down the syllabuses and conducted the examination.”

Though the University of the Cape of Good Hope had some shortcomings, it ensured the improvement of standards along the entire spectrum of education in those early years. Trumpelmann (1991: 4) argues that:

“The Cape Matriculation examination not only gained in popularity ... but ... the examination was recognised by several foreign educational bodies.”

3.3 THE JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD (JMB)

In 1918 the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) was founded and charged with the responsibility of conducting the school leaving examination of the three universities, viz. the University of the Cape of Good Hope (the University of South Africa), the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch. The JMB was further charged with the responsibility of prescribing the conditions of exemption from the examination which were subject to the approval of the Minister of Education (Trümpelmann 1991:5).

Section 16 of Act No. 12 of 1916 authorised the JMB to issue matriculation and exemption certificates to successful candidates. It was also responsible for designing some basic subject packages for university admission. Such subject packages were regarded as the yardstick for probable successful university study.

The Board was responsible for issuing certificates of success in individual subjects. It contributed to subject curriculum development of subject committees, examiners and moderators. The JMB managed to keep a watchful eye on subject standards. Trümpelmann (1991: 40) avers:

“... it was regarded as one of the functions of the JMB to exercise control over syllabuses in order to ensure that they conformed to the requirements for university admission.”

Though the primary function of the JMB was to structure university admission, it also functioned as an examining body, conducting its own school leaving examination.

3.4 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE JMB AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM, 1917 - 1947

The Joint Matriculation Board was founded with 23 members which consisted of four representatives for each of the three white universities, viz. the University of the Cape of Good Hope, the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch; five representatives of the education departments and six representatives from government and private schools (Trümpelmann 1991:7).

As the number of white universities increased, the members of the Board also increased. In 1922

the representation of the universities was reduced to three people per university. In 1930 the membership of the Board rose to 26 due to the establishment of the University of Pretoria. The admission of members from South West Africa and Southern Rhodesia increased the number to thirty-four.

During this period many interested groups, e.g. The Federal Council of Teachers, the Catholic schools, etc., applied for representation on the Board but all the applications were turned down.

Throughout this period, the constitution of the Board was exclusively white. A black university, e.g. Fort Hare which was founded in 1916, was not allowed to have representation on the Board and this marked the beginning of the power struggle for control and representation between the Joint Matriculation Board and the black universities. Though the primary functions of the Board, viz. conducting and overseeing the university entrance examination and the granting of exemption, served all the people of South Africa, the Board membership was dominated by whites. Trumpelmann (1991: 11) avers:

“It is also striking that the Board’s composition reflected the political realities of the day quite accurately ... the Board’s character was explicitly ethnic and in effect it was dominated by whites.”

Although the Board was to serve all the people of South Africa, it had to execute its functions in a discriminatory manner, i.e. on the basis of colour in order to comply with the political realities of the time. The Constitution of the Board guaranteed whites power and control over the school leaving examination and over other racial groups.

3.5 THE DECENTRALISATION OF EDUCATION, THE MATRICULATION FUNCTIONS OF THE JMB AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM, 1918 - 1953

Throughout South African history, centralisation versus decentralisation of education had always been a problem which took various forms. When the JMB was founded in 1918, it had to contend with this old, national problem.

The problem of centralisation versus decentralisation was not only an educational problem and can only be understood against the background of the political, economical and social activities of that time.

3.5.1 Language, decentralisation of education and the hidden curriculum 1910 - 1953

When the JMB was founded in 1918, centralisation versus decentralisation of education operated under the banner of language. The issue of language had been a basis for differing concepts and the struggle for nationalism. Language and nationhood were always equated and language was viewed as a symbol of national identity.

The struggle for language rights among whites resulted in separate English and Afrikaans medium schools. In order to inculcate the co-operation of all the Europeans who had made South Africa their permanent home, the English and Dutch languages were placed on an equal footing by the Union constitution. Article 137 of the Union (Malherbe 1977:9) states:

“Both the English and Dutch languages shall be official languages of the Union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality and process and enjoy equal freedom, rights and privileges.”

The aim of this article was to wipe out the bitterness of the past by encouraging healthy co-operation between Dutch and English speakers. As education was a provincial task, the four provinces, viz. the Transvaal, the Cape, Natal and the Orange Free State, were granted time for the implementation of language equality through dual medium or bilingualism. Instead of welding together all the whites in all the provinces, the implementation of dual medium divided them further. Though the principle of dual medium was introduced in all the provinces, language problems remained unsolved.

When the JMB started its primary functions of determining university admission according to subject packages, a language problem in the form of Afrikaans versus Dutch arose. The core of the argument was the recognition of Afrikaans as distinct from Dutch as a school subject.

Due to persistent representation by several Afrikaner bodies which even led to the split of the teachers' societies, Afrikaans was recognized as a subject for both ordinary and higher grade. The recognition of Afrikaans as a subject gave rise to discontent among the predominantly English speaking areas which viewed that as an unnecessary strict examination rule which aimed at penalizing them by denying them learning other world-wide languages. Commenting on the issue of Afrikaans and Dutch, Trumpelmann (1991: 58) stated that:

“This issue proved to have been a delicate matter which indicated some sensitivity on the Board In the nature of things, this language issue also showed political undertones.”

It was not languages *per se* or the learning of English, Dutch or Afrikaans which were a problem, but the extent of centralisation versus decentralisation of authority or power, be it in education or politics. Language was just a blanket which covered numerous hidden structures and a hidden curriculum which include, *inter alia*, power struggle between English speakers and Afrikaans speakers with regard to control over education, including control over the school leaving examination, citizenship, race, nationhood, etc. According to Malherbe (1977:4) it was British imperialism which the Afrikaners hated, not English as such.

3.5.2 The Joint Matriculation Board, decentralisation and the hidden curriculum 1918-1953

When the JMB took over the responsibility of co-ordinating and conducting the matriculation examination, there was a strong urge by the provincial education departments for the right to conduct their own examinations. The decentralisation of the matriculation function and the devolution of authority were advocated mainly by the Afrikaners and Afrikaner journals, viz. *Het Schoolblad*, *De Unie* and *Het Christelik Schoolblad* which incited the public and the provinces to conduct and control their own matriculation examination.

The Transvaal Education Department (TED) applied to the JMB for a departmental school leaving examination in the Transvaal which was granted in 1921. The JMB was praised by *Die Christelike Skoolblad* for granting such permission and out of fear that the JMB would change its position.

Since a precedent was set by the JMB by granting permission to the TED, other education departments started considering conducting and controlling their own matriculation examinations. The Education Department of the Cape Province was granted permission to institute its own departmental matriculation examination in 1923. In 1932 the Union Education Department of the Orange Free State was granted recognition of its National Senior Certificate. The Education Department of the Orange Free State was granted permission to institute its own departmental matriculation examination in 1939. In 1953, Natal was granted permission to conduct its own

matric examination.

The granting of permission to various departments to conduct their own matriculation examinations broadened the primary functions of the JMB. The permission granted to various departments was subject to certain conditions. Education departments were to conduct their own examinations subject to JMB control as a measure of ensuring the quality of the examinations. The JMB had to exercise control over the syllabi, question papers and the marking of examination scripts annually in order to ensure that they conformed to the requirements for university admission. Two members of JMB were assigned to each departmental examination board in order to ensure the standards of the examination.

Although the JMB approved the decentralisation of the matriculation examination functions, some Afrikaner education journals, e.g. *Die Skoolblad*, which advocated complete autonomy of the departments, were not satisfied and appealed for greater decentralisation. The decentralisation of the matriculation functions was used as a blanket which covered many hidden issues which include devolution of power to the provinces so that they could be autonomous.

3.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD, THE COMMITTEE OF VICE-CHANCELLORS AND THE COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY PRINCIPALS - STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND CONTROL

Although the JMB was charged with the task of determining university admission and conducting the matriculation examination, it was not entirely autonomous since its function was only advisory. The JMB did not have the legal competence to change or amend university admission requirements but could only make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellors' Committee (VCC). According to Trumpelmann (1991: 19):

“... the VCC was authorised to promulgate, amend or withdraw regulations affecting the JMB. Amendments to the JMB's statute could be considered by the VCC.”

The JMB and the VCC could not always agree on the basis of legal powers and functions. The disagreements were, *inter alia*, (Trumpelmann 1991:19):

“... differing university admission packages (which continued up to 1931); different views as to the position of Afrikaans as distinct from Nederlands as school subject.”

Some of the proposals of the JMB with regard to university admission packages were viewed as not being suitable for courses for entrance to universities or educationally unsound, hence approval could not always be obtained. Inadequate communication between the JMB and the VCC aggravated their differences.

In order to ease the tension between the JMB and the VCC, it was decided in 1929 by the Minister of Education that the matriculation examination should no longer be subject to the approval of the VCC. After the autonomy of the JMB with regard to university admission had frequently been questioned, the Minister of Education further decided that all regulations and standards of the JMB be subjected to the Department's approval.

The tension between the JMB and the VCC was further eased by the University Act, Act No. 61 of 1955, which replaced the VCC with the Committee of University Principals (CUP). Two members of the CUP served in the JMB and the relationship between the two bodies was cordial. Throughout this period, the tension between the JMB, VCC and CUP was based on a power struggle for controlling university admission and other matriculation functions.

3.7 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM, 1948 - 1986

Although the primary functions of the JMB remained almost the same throughout its existence, the scope of its functions broadened from time to time and it had to face some new challenges in order to keep pace with reality. The Board membership grew with every increase of white universities and remained static with every increase of black universities.

In line with the country's broad policy of separate development, the Department of Bantu Education was allowed to have representation on the Board in 1958; in 1966 the Department of Coloured Affairs followed suit as did the Department of Indian Affairs in 1969. In 1958, the first black university, Fort Hare, was allowed to have representation on the Board. However, within two years of service on the Board, Fort Hare University was expelled from the Board as it was argued that it was not instituted by the Government Act.

While all white universities had Board representation of two members per university, black universities were allowed in 1971 to have Board representation of one member representing all the black universities. Although the same rule was applied to the coloured universities, their representation was later increased to two while that of black universities remained at one.

The application of this principle probably ensured white domination of the Board. Trümpelmann (1991: 9) argues that in practice the constitution of the Board at this stage was exclusively white. It was only towards the end of the Board's existence that coloureds, Indians and blacks also became members of the Board though white domination remained the principle of the Board throughout.

The advent of the homeland system and the tricameral system affected the composition of the JMB. In 1988 the membership of the Board was forty six which included the following (Trümpelmann 1991: 10):

“... twenty two were representatives from white universities, and also two CUP members, four representatives of coloured universities, one from black universities, nine from education departments, six representatives of government schools and two private schools.”

Representatives of the homelands and black universities were given observer status and in 1990 they were allowed eleven representatives. The constitution of the Board had always been questioned by various institutions including Fort Hare University, particularly regarding the lack of equal representation among the universities and among people of different population registration groups. In the light of its composition, the JMB has always been viewed with suspicion. Trümpelmann (1991: 136) argues:

“The fact that almost throughout, the board was constituted of white members only, affirmed that the Board was obliged to function within a specific ideological reality.”

3.8 THE JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD FUNCTIONS AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM, 1948 - 1986

Since 1948 the JMB had to operate within the country's broad policy of separate development. The various apartheid acts affected the JMB since apartheid was the policy of the country. The

primary functions of the JMB, viz. conducting and determining university entrance examinations, granting exemption, allocation and selection, certification, standardisation, etc. were based on the policy of apartheid.

The JMB had to co-ordinate the school leaving examinations of various departments, viz. the Transvaal Education Department, the Natal Education Department, the Cape Education Department, the Orange Free State Education Department, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Department of Coloured Affairs and the Department of Bantu Education (which was renamed to the Department of Education and Training in 1979). Since some of the departments were imposed by the government on the people they were supposed to serve, viz. the Department of Bantu Education, the Department of Coloured Education and the Department of Indian Education, the JMB had to contend indirectly or directly with the problems emanating from such departments. Although the JMB and the Department of National Education were responsible for co-ordinating education and ensuring quality in the school leaving examinations of various departments, the results of learners of different population groups always differed greatly.

Though the JMB was charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating and overseeing the examinations of the above departments, it also conducted its own examination and issued certificates. The various departments were responsible for conducting their own examinations subject to JMB control.

The introduction of the homelands, viz. Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Qwaqwa and the establishment of a three chamber parliament consisting of the House of Assembly (for whites), the House of Representatives (for coloureds), and the House of Delegates (for Indians) resulted in eighteen racially-divided education departments. The JMB and the Department of National Education had to co-ordinate the school leaving examination functions of the eighteen racially-divided education departments.

The centralisation and decentralisation of the school leaving examination were often debated within the JMB and even outside the Board. In 1969 there were nine JMB examination bodies in South Africa. A great deal of research was conducted on the issue of centralisation and decentralisation. The debates focussed on whether one examination body and one university admission examination would be in the best interest of the whole South Africa as opposed to the existing examination bodies with their divergent university admission examinations.

In 1968 Professor de Waal strongly advocated the centralisation of the school leaving examination functions. He proposed that subjects sharing a common basic syllabus should be examined by means of one joint question paper. De Waal was supported by the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, the Van Wyk De Vries Report, the CUP and other Board members. The protagonists of decentralisation included the six education departments, the Pretorius Report, the Steyn Report, the Wilks Committee, *Die Christelike Skoolblad*, *Die Unie*, etc.

While some of the examining bodies were founded mainly on geographical grounds, some were founded on the basis of race and colour. The Department of Bantu Education (Department of Education and Training) as an examining body was solely for blacks, irrespective of the geographical area.

Though the JMB remained a committed examining body by serving all the people of South Africa, it remained a pillar of consolidating and co-ordinating the racially and ethnically divided education departments as created by the apartheid government. It functioned within the apartheid policies and managed to co-ordinate and implement the apartheid acts in its operation. The JMB had been very active in matters affecting the education of whites while the problems which affected the majority of the South African population were often left to the Bantu Education Department. Irrespective of the many problems which were in the realm of the school leaving examination, particularly amongst the blacks, the Board could not initiate any solution or any reform. Trumpelmann (1991: 137) avers that the Board rarely spearheaded any reform or renewal, on the contrary, it could merely react to such innovative initiatives. Throughout its existence, the Board had always served the interests of the whites rather than those of other people of different population registration groups.

The adoption of the new constitution in 1984, which gave rise to the tricameral system, i.e. the three chamber parliament, resulted in the restructuring of the South African education system, including the JMB. The main committee of the HSRC accused the JMB of allowing matric to continue dominating the entire school system, to the detriment of curriculum development. The main committee (HSRC 1981:31) argues that:

“... the provision of education has always primarily been geared to preparing pupils for study at university ... The result is that a large part of the white population enters the world of work without adequate vocational qualification, skills or appropriate value system.”

The committee recommended the establishment of a new council which could take over the school leaving examination functions from the JMB. The main committee of the HSRC summed up the services of the Board as follows (HSRC 1981:129):

“... the JMB had fulfilled an important function in controlling and maintaining standards for university admission, thereby forestalling fragmentation ... the JMB had concerned itself too narrowly with universities only.”

3.9 EDUCATIONAL FUNDING AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM, 1948 - 1994

Throughout the history of apartheid education, viz. 1948 to 1994, educational funding, one of the hidden structures of apartheid education, was used as a mechanism of social, political and economical control. Financial resources, the life-blood of any education system, were used as a means of controlling the quality of education, including the South African school leaving examination.

Through the skewed funding principle, the government could determine and control the number of pupils per population registration group who should have access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. Numbers of pupils per population registration group were controlled from an early stage.

In line with the discriminatory and unequal education funding policies of the government, the school leaving examination results of various population registration groups clearly resembled the skewed funding policy. As more money was given to white schools, followed by Indian schools, coloured schools and lastly black schools, the school leaving examination results of white schools have always been the best, followed by the Indian, coloured and lastly black schools (Table 3.5). Throughout the history of the apartheid government, this has been an inherent trend of the school leaving examination.

Apart from the fact that from 1976 to 1981 the government started to narrow the funding gap, notwithstanding the acceptance of the HSRC report (1981) which recommended that the

government refrain from discriminatory educational policies, practically very little change was effected in terms of the funding policy (See Tables 3.1 - 3.3).

Table 3.1 Per capita expenditure on education in South Africa: Selected years

Year	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
1953-4	17	40	40	128
1969-70	17	73	81	282
1975-6	42*	140	190	591
1977-8	54*	185	276	657
1980-1	139*	253	513	913
1982-3	146*	498	711	1 211
1984-5	227*	639	1 112	1 702
1986-7	369*	887	1 714	2 299
1988-9	656*	1 221	2 067	2 882

* Excluding T.B.V.C.

Source: Christie, 1991:108

Until 1994, the control and administration of education in South Africa was fragmented into fifteen different ministries of education, viz. six of the self-governing territories, four in the independent homelands, one responsible for the Department of Education and Training (catering for blacks outside the homelands, one in each of the three tricameral houses of parliament catering for whites, coloureds and Indians) and one of the Department of National Education which coordinated all the departments.

In order to ensure that the quality of education offered by the various departments to various ethnic groups varied, the government continued to apply the skewed funding system (see Tables 3.1 - 3.4).

Table 3.2 Per capita expenditure on education in South Africa in ratio forms: selected years (in Rand)

Year	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
1953-4	R1	R2.35	R2,35	R7,53
1969-70	1*	4,29	4,76	16,59
1975-6	1*	3,33	4,52	14,07
1977-8	1*	3,43	5,11	12,17
1980-1	1*	1,82	3,69	6,57
1982-3	1*	3,40	4,86	8,27
1984-5	1*	2,81	4,90	7,50
1986-7	1*	2,40	4,64	6,23
1988-9	1*	1,86	3,15	4,39

* Excluding T.B.V.C.

Source: Christie, 1991:110

Table 3.3 Per capita expenditure by former departments, 1994

Former departments	Rands
House of Assembly	5 403
House of Delegates	4 687
House of Representatives	3 691
Qwaqwa	2 241
DET	2 184
Ciskei	2 056
Venda	1 792
Gazankulu	1 699
KwaNdebele	1 595
Bophuthatswana	1 580
Lebowa	1 549
KaNgwane	1 480
KwaZulu	1 459
Transkei	1 053
Average	2 222

Source: Department of Education, 1995:15

Table 3.4 School leaving examination results according to population group for the period 1979 to 1994

YEAR	CANDIDATES	AFRICANS		WHITES		COLOURED		ASIANS		TOTAL	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1979	Number	23 096		49 160		7 654		5 366		85 276	
	Matriculation exemption	5 776	25.01%	22 623	46.02%	2 456	32.9%	1 605	29.91%	32 460	38.06%
	School Leaving Certificate	10 364	44.87%	24 116	49.06%	4 323	56.48%	3 050	56.84%	41 853	49.08%
	TOTAL PASSES	16 140	69.88%	46 739	95.08%	6 779	88.57%	4 655	86.75%	74 313	87.14%
1980	Number	43 237		52 786		8 389		5 395		109 807	
	Matriculation exemption	6 447	14.91%	24 277	45.99%	1 416	16.88%	1 871	34.68%	34 011	30.97%
	School Leaving Certificate	16 203	37.47%	25 753	48.79%	3 866	46.08%	2 764	51.23%	48 586	44.25%
	TOTAL PASSES	22 650	52.39%	50 030	94.78%	5 282	62.96%	4 635	85.91%	82 597	75.22%
1981	Number	57 529		52 507		9 269		5 986		125 291	
	Matriculation exemption	6 803	11.83%	24 469	46.60%	1 384	14.39%	2 086	34.85%	34 742	27.73%
	School Leaving Certificate	22 220	38.62%	24 873	47.37%	3 895	42.02%	2 909	48.60%	53 897	43.02%
	TOTAL PASSES	29 023	50.45%	49 342	93.97%	5 279	56.95%	4 995	83.44%	88 639	70.75%
1982	Number	70 241		52 418		10 207		6 622		139 488	
	Matriculation exemption	7 005	9.97%	24 162	46.09%	1 696	16.62%	2 426	36.64%	35 289	25.30%
	School Leaving Certificate	26 954	38.37%	25 374	48.41%	5 127	50.67%	3 127	47.22%	60 627	43.46%
	TOTAL PASSES	33 959	48.35%	49 536	94.50%	6 868	67.29%	5 553	83.86%	95 916	68.76%
1983	Number	82 449		53 317		11 076		7 403		154 245	
	Matriculation exemption	8 128	9.86%	24 762	46.44%	1 679	15.16%	3 097	41.83%	37 666	24.42%
	School Leaving Certificate	31 687	38.43%	25 357	47.56%	6 215	56.11%	3 258	44.01%	66 517	43.12%
	TOTAL PASSES	39 815	48.29%	50 119	94.00%	7 894	71.27%	6 355	85.84%	104 183	67.54%
1984	Number	86 191		57 005		14 138		10 508		167 842	
	Matriculation exemption	9 727	11.29%	25 391	44.54%	2 108	14.91%	3 561	33.89%	40 787	24.30%
	School Leaving Certificate	32 219	37.38%	27 043	47.44%	8 273	58.52%	5 530	52.63%	73 065	43.53%
	TOTAL PASSES	41 946	48.67%	52 434	91.98%	10 381	73.43%	9 091	86.52%	113 852	67.83%

Table 3.4/ Continued

YEAR	CANDIDATES	AFRICANS		WHITES		COLOUREDS		ASIANS		TOTAL	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1985	Number	82 815		59 991		11 052		11 109		164 967	
	Matriculation exemption	9 958	12.02%	26 243	43.74%	1 381	12.50%	3 582	32.24%	41 164	24.95%
	School Leaving Certificate	28 741	34.71%	29 029	48.39%	5 734	51.88%	6 142	55.29%	69 646	42.22%
	TOTAL PASSES	38 699	46.73%	55 272	92.13%	7 115	64.38%	9 724	87.53%	110 810	67.17%
1986	Number	99 715		64 327		17 624		11 406		193 072	
	Matriculation exemption	13 460	13.50%	28 071	43.64%	2 707	15.36%	3 787	33.20%	48 025	24.87%
	School Leaving Certificate	37 867	37.98%	34 447	53.55%	9 212	52.27%	6 142	53.85%	87 668	45.41%
	TOTAL PASSES	51 327	51.47%	59 915	93.14%	11 919	67.63%	9 929	87.05%	133 090	68.93%
1987	Number	150 119		64 672		18 289		12 429		245 509	
	Matriculation exemption	24 597	16.39%	27 508	42.53%	3 456	18.95%	4 625	37.21%	60 195	24.52%
	School Leaving Certificate	59 601	39.70%	34 024	52.61%	9 825	53.72%	7 211	58.02%	110 661	45.07%
	TOTAL PASSES	84 198	56.09%	61 532	95.14%	13 290	72.67%	11 836	95.23%	170 856	69.59%
1988	Number	187 123		69 549		21 456		13 221		291 349	
	Matriculation exemption	30 685	16.40%	29 126	41.88%	3 492	16.28%	5 397	40.82%	68 700	23.58%
	School Leaving Certificate	75 500	40.35%	37 683	54.18%	10 679	49.77%	7 180	54.31%	131 042	44.98%
	TOTAL PASSES	106 185	56.75%	66 809	96.06%	14 171	66.05%	12 577	95.13%	199 742	68.56%
1989	Number	209 319		70 666		22 666		14 191		316 842	
	Matriculation exemption	21 357	10.20%	29 933	42.36%	4 044	17.84%	5 889	41.50%	61 223	19.32%
	School Leaving Certificate	66 153	31.60%	37 892	53.62%	12 431	54.84%	7 393	52.10%	123 869	39.09%
	TOTAL PASSES	87 510	41.81%	67 825	95.98%	16 475	72.69%	12 282	93.59%	185 092	58.42%
1990	Number	255 498		68 097		22 315		14 542		360 452	
	Matriculation exemption	21 025	8.23%	27 986	41.10%	4 656	20.86%	6 614	45.48%	60 281	16.72%
	School Leaving Certificate	72 837	28.51%	37 269	54.73%	13 661	61.22%	7 201	49.52%	130 968	36.33%
	TOTAL PASSES	93 862	36.74%	65 255	95.83%	18 317	82.08%	13 815	95.00%	191 249	53.06%

Table 3.4/ Continued

YEAR	CANDIDATES	AFRICANS		WHITES		COLOUREDS		ASIANS		TOTAL	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1991	Number	304 315		67 490		22 405		14 258		408 468	
	Matriculation exemption	33 330	10.95%	27 751	41.12%	4 911	21.92%	7 062	49.53%	73 054	17.88%
	School Leaving Certificate	91 013	29.91%	37 064	54.92%	13 646	60.91%	6 630	48.50%	148 353	36.32%
	TOTAL PASSES	124 343	40.86%	64 815	96.04%	18 557	82.83%	13 692	96.03%	221 407	54.20%
1992	Number	342 038		67 549		24 419		14 485		448 491	
	Matriculation exemption	35 357	10.34%	27 968	41.40%	5 120	20.97%	7 156	49.40%	75 601	18.68%
	School Leaving Certificate	114 624	33.51%	37 740	55.87%	15 994	65.50%	6 568	45.34%	174 926	39.00%
	TOTAL PASSES	149 981	43.85%	65 708	97.27%	21 114	86.47%	13 724	94.75%	250 527	55.86%
1993	Number	366 501		65 019		25 735		15 203		472 458	
	Matriculation exemption	29 517	8.05%	27 030	41.57%	5 411	21.03%	6 862	45.14%	68 820	14.57%
	School Leaving Certificate	113 570	30.99%	36 229	55.72%	16 666	64.76%	7 025	46.21%	173 490	36.72%
	TOTAL PASSES	143 087	39.04%	63 259	97.29%	22 077	85.79%	13 887	91.34%	242 310	52.29%
1994	Number	392 434		62 507		25 375		15 092		495 408	
	Matriculation exemption	49 239	12.55%	26 057	41.69%	5 562	21.92%	7 639	50.62%	88 497	17.86%
	School Leaving Certificate	141 101	35.96%	34 764	55.62%	16 639	65.57%	6 342	42.02%	198 846	40.14%
	TOTAL PASSES	190 340	48.50%	60 821	97.30%	22 201	87.49%	3 981	92.64%	287 343	58.00%

Source: Strauss, J.P., Plekker, S.J., Strauss, J.W.W. and Van der Linde, H.J. (1992, 1993, 1994).

3.10 THE 1976 UPRISING, THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

From 1960 up to the early 1970s there was a growing militancy among black pupils. Those authorities in schools who were associated with apartheid were often targeted for resistance.

The dissatisfaction with the quality of education culminated in the 1976 uprising which started in Soweto and later spread like wildfire throughout the country. Parents, students, children and workers joined hands in protesting against the medium of Afrikaans. Half of the subjects in standards 5 and 6 were to be taught by medium of Afrikaans as instructed by the Minister of Bantu Education. As the protests spread further afield, the source changed from one area to another and from time to time.

June 1976 marked the beginning of a new era - a long and continuing history of resistance to the schooling system. In an attempt to portray the resistance, Christie (1986:221) argues:

“Sometimes this protest and opposition was mainly confined and linked to events outside of school; sometimes it was well organized beforehand; sometimes it was spontaneous.”

In 1980, the Cillie Commission which was appointed by the government to investigate the uprising, reported that besides the objection to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction there was general dissatisfaction with the quality of education. It was not only Afrikaans *per se* which the blacks, Indians and coloureds protested against but the whole oppressive apartheid system. While some people opposed it for educational reasons, some opposed it for political reasons. Some people viewed it as a way of extending and intensifying the offensive, oppressive system.

Although the actions of the protest varied from place to place and from time to time, they all culminated in one clear message, viz. attempting to make Bantu Education fail. This strategy resulted in a large number of casualties. A very high price was paid in terms of large numbers of learners, particularly blacks, who failed the school leaving examination. Some learners were detained before writing the school leaving examination while some fled into exile. This resulted in the congestion of learners in matric classes.

3.11 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CERTIFICATION COUNCIL (SAFCERT) AND THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

The South African Certification Council Act, Act No. 85 of 1986 and the Universities Amendment Act terminated the services of the JMB as an examining body but allowed it to continue to exist as a committee of the CUP. In order to terminate the examinations of the Board, the system was phased out which allowed the Board to continue with its examining functions until 1991.

The act established an autonomous certification council, viz. the South African Certification Council which consists of twelve members appointed by the Minister of National Education. The South African Certification Council (SAFCERT) took over the responsibility for the school leaving examination functions, viz. quality assurance.

SAFCERT is an independent board under the auspices of the Minister of Education. Until 1994 SAFCERT consisted of 12 members, i.e. eight members with relevant qualifications and expertise appointed by the Minister and one member from each of the four national education departments (white, coloured, Indian and black).

Being an apartheid structure, SAFCERT had to undergo some changes in order to keep pace with the changing needs of the democratic South Africa. During the apartheid era, i.e. until 1994, the constitution of SAFCERT resembled the political realities of that time, viz. being ethnic, dominated by whites and functioning within the broad policy of apartheid. The Department of Education (2000:5) asserts that:

“SAFCERT ... did not appropriately represent all stakeholders in education and therefore presented the false image of being the custodian of standards in education. SAFCERT at that stage discriminately applied its standards keeping function to various Examining Bodies.”

Up to 1994 SAFCERT functioned like its predecessor, the JMB. While it was its responsibility to co-ordinate the school leaving examination of the eighteen racially-divided education departments, it discriminately applied its functions to various examining bodies in order to comply with the broad policy of the country. The Department of Education (2000:5) asserts that:

“Given the low levels of provisioning in the homelands and in ex-DET and the

resultant poor performance in these systems, SAFCERT was compelled to upwardly adjusting raw scores in excess of acceptable practice so as to present a more favourable picture of performance in these systems.”

In 1998 a new Council was appointed by the Minister in order to ensure the representativeness of the democratic South Africa. The Department of Education (2000:5) argues:

“... since then SAFCERT has indicated a strong commitment to transforming its role and image so that it appropriately executes its functions of quality assurance.”

The basic functions of SAFCERT include, *inter alia*, the co-ordination of the school leaving examinations of the nine provincial education departments. Through moderation of the question papers and monitoring of the conduct of the school leaving examination, SAFCERT ensures the integrity of the examination and the standardisation of the results.

3.12 THE SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION RESULTS OF THE NORTHERN PROVINCE AND OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN PROVINCES, 1994 - 2000

While acknowledging that poor results in the South African school leaving examination is a problem faced by all the provinces of South Africa, the Northern Province is the most affected. Throughout the early years of the South Africa democratic government, viz. 1994 to 1999, the Northern Province has obtained the worst results of all the provinces.

In 1994 in South Africa there were 495 408 candidates who wrote the school leaving examination. Out of this total only 287 343 (58%) candidates passed and 208 065 (42%) candidates failed the school leaving examination. The Northern Province had a total of 129 951 candidates sitting for the school leaving examination, with a pass rate of 57 731 (44,4%) and a failure rate of 72 220 (55,6%).

While the Western Cape topped all the provinces with a pass rate of 85,6%, the Northern Province obtained the lowest pass rate of 44,4%. While the percentage pass rate of the whole South Africa was 58,0%, the Northern Province percentage pass rate was far below par. The pass rate of 44,4% of the Northern Province consists mainly of candidates who passed without endorsement, i.e. without matric exemption (see Table 3.5).

In 1994 the poor results of the Northern Province in the school leaving examination were mainly attributed to apartheid policies since the control of education was still vested in the former seven departments of education, viz. the Department of Education and Training, Lebowa, Venda, Gazankulu, the House of Delegates and the Transvaal Department of Education and the House of Assembly.

In 1995 there were 531 453 candidates in South Africa who wrote the school leaving examination. Of that total only 283 742 (53,4%) candidates passed and 247 711 (46,6%) candidates failed the school leaving examination. A total of 138 816 candidates sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and only 52 425 (37,8%) candidates passed while 86 391 (62,2%) failed. Whereas the Western Cape topped all the provinces with a pass rate of 82,7%, the Northern Province obtained the lowest pass rate, viz. 37,8%, which is far below the South African pass rate of 53,4%. The pass rate of 37,8% of the Northern Province consists mainly of candidates who passed without university endorsement (Table 3.6).

In 1996, there were 518 225 candidates in South Africa who wrote the school leaving examination. Of that total the results of 4 357 (0,8%) candidates were pending while 279 487 (54,4%) candidates passed and 234 381 (45,6%) candidates failed. A total of 126 081 candidates sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and the results of 3 634 (2%) candidates were pending while 47 569 (38,8%) candidates passed and 74 878 (61,2%) failed. The Western Cape topped all the provinces' pass rate while the Northern Province obtained the lowest pass rate of 38,8% (Table 3.7).

In 1997, South Africa had 559 233 candidates who wrote the school leaving examination. Of that total, the results of 263 (0,0%) candidates were pending while 264 795 (47,4%) candidates passed and 294 175 (52,6%) failed the school leaving examination. A total of 128 559 candidates sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and only 41 031 (31,9%) passed; 87 432 (69,1%) failed while the results of 96 (0,1%) were pending. The Western Cape topped all the provinces with a pass rate of 76,2% while the Northern Province obtained the lowest pass rate of 31,9% (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.5 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 1994

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	29 824			29 824	4 291	14,4	16 767	58,2	8 706	29,4	25 533	85,6	1
N. Cape	5 855			5 885	1 304	22,3	3 318	56,6	1 235	21,1	4 551	77,7	2
North West	34 984			34 984	10 412	29,8	16 542	47,3	8 030	23,0	24 572	70,2	3
Kwa-Zulu Natal	75 409			75 409	24 404	32,4	31 555	41,8	19 450	25,8	51 005	67,6	4
Gauteng	75 266			75 266	29 123	38,7	30 445	40,4	15 696	20,9	46 143	61,3	5
E. Cape	73 728			73 728	81 847	43,2	31 233	42,4	10 648	14,4	41 881	56,8	6
O.F.S.	30 278			30 278	13 390	44,2	12 352	40,8	4 536	15,0	16 888	55,8	7
Mpumalanga	40 113			40 113	21 074	52,5	14 672	36,6	4 367	10,9	19 039	47,5	8
N. Province	129 951			129 951	72 220	55,6	41 964	32,3	15 767	12,1	57 731	44,4	9
TOTAL (RSA)	495 408			495 408	208 065	42,0	198 846	40,1	88 497	17,8	287 343	58,0	

Source: Rearranged from Department of Education 1997; Department of Education 1998

Table 3.6 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 1995

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	31 867			31 867	5 509	17,3	17 611	55,3	8 747	27,4	26 358	82,7	1
N. Cape	6 529			6 529	1 666	25,5	3 725	57,1	1 138	17,4	4 863	74,5	2
Kwa-Zulu Natal	87 053			87 053	26 751	30,7	38 205	43,9	22 097	25,4	60 302	69,3	3
North West	41 950			41 950	14 138	33,7	20 710	49,4	7 102	16,9	27 812	66,3	4
Gauteng	79 215			79 215	33 275	42,0	31 047	39,2	14 893	18,8	45 940	58,0	5
O.F.S.	33 147			33 147	16 680	50,3	12 574	37,9	3 893	11,7	16 467	49,7	6
E. Cape	67 397			67 397	35 177	52,2	25 039	37,2	7 181	10,7	32 220	47,8	7
Mpumalanga	45 479			45 479	28 124	61,8	13 951	30,7	3 404	7,5	17 355	38,2	8
N. Province	138 816			138 816	86 391	62,2	42 069	30,3	10 366	7,5	52 425	37,8	9
TOTAL (RSA)	531 453			531 453	247 711	46,6	204 921	38,6	78 821	14,8	283 742	53,4	

Source: Rearranged from Department of Education 1997; Department of Education 1998

Table 3.7 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 1996

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	34 830	0	0	34 830	6 890	19,8	15 810	45,4	12 130	34,8	27 940	80,2	1
N. Cape	7 111	104	0,15	7 007	1 813	25,9	3 969	56,6	1 225	17,5	5 194	74,1	2
North West	46 349	128	0,3	46 221	14 036	30,4	24 574	53,2	7 611	16,5	32 185	69,6	3
Kwa-Zulu Natal	86 608	152	0,2	86 456	33 059	38,2	33 357	38,6	20 040	23,2	53 397	61,8	4
Gauteng	72 959	3 434	4,7	69 525	27 385	39,4	28 332	40,8	13 810	19,9	42 142	60,6	5
O.F.S.	35 554	28	0,1	35 526	17 373	48,9	13 945	39,3	4 208	11,8	18 153	51,1	6
E. Cape	66 609	9	0,3	66 600	33 961	51,0	25 578	38,4	7 061	10,6	32 639	49,0	7
Mpumalanga	41 731	101	0,24	41 630	21 891	52,6	15 407	37,0	4 332	10,4	19 739	47,4	8
N. Province	126 081	3 634	2,8	122 447	74 878	61,2	38 218	31,2	9 351	7,6	47 569	38,8	9
TOTAL (RSA)	517 832	7 590	1,5	510 242	231 284	45,3	199 190	39,0	79 768	15,6	278 958	54,7	

Source: Rearranged from Department of Education 1997; Department of Education 1998

Table 3.8 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 1997

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	37 197	0	0,0	37 197	8 816	23,7	19 590	52,7	8 791	23,6	28 381	76,3	1
N. Cape	7 604	0	0,0	7 604	2 700	36,3	3 725	49,0	1 119	14,7	4 844	63,7	2
Kwa-Zulu Natal	104 751	317	0,3	104 434	48 975	46,9	36 607	35,1	18 862	18,1	55 459	53,1	3
Gauteng	75 709	9	0,0	75 700	36 702	48,5	25 983	34,3	13 015	17,2	38 998	51,5	4
North-West	48 534	0	0,0	48 534	24 285	50,0	18 918	39,0	5 331	11,0	24 249	50,0	5
Mpumalanga	37 893	159	0,4	37 734	20 498	54,3	13 830	36,7	3 406	9,0	17 236	45,7	6
E. Cape	76 701	1	0,0	76 700	41 899	64,8	27 742	36,2	7 059	9,2	34 801	45,4	7
O.F.S.	40 035	8	0,0	40 027	23 083	57,7	12 667	31,6	4 277	10,7	16 944	42,3	8
N. Province	127 722	385	0,3	127 337	86 849	68,2	23 331	26,2	7 157	5,6	40 488	31,8	9
TOTAL (RSA)	556 146	879	0,16	555 267	293 867	52,9	192 393	34,6	69 007	12,5	261 400	47,1	

Source: rearranged from Department of Education 1999; Department of Education 1999

In 1998 a total of 552 862 candidates sat for the South African school leaving examination. Of that total, the results of 478 (0,1%) were pending while 272 488 (49,3%) candidates passed and 279 896 (50,7%) candidates failed. A total of 114 621 candidates sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and only 40 218 (35,2%) candidates passed and 74 115 (64,8%) failed while the results of 288 (0,3%) candidates were pending. The Western Cape topped all the provinces with the pass rate of 79,0% whereas the Northern Province obtained the lowest pass rate of 35,2% (see Table 3.9).

In 1999, there were 511 474 candidates in South Africa who sat for the school leaving examination. Of that total, the results of 315 (0,1%) were pending while 249 831 (48,9%) candidates passed and 261 328 (51,1%) candidates failed. A total of 104 200 candidates sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and only 39 093 (37,5%) candidates passed, 65 049 (62,5%) candidates failed while the results of 58 (0,1%) candidates were pending.

Although the 1999 school leaving examination results of South Africa as a whole recorded a decrease in the pass rate by 0,4% compared to 1998, the Northern Province recorded an improvement of 2,5%. However, the performance of the Northern Province remained the lowest compared to other provinces. Whereas the Western Cape topped all the provinces with a pass rate of 78,8%, the Northern Province obtained the lowest pass rate of 37,5% (see Table 3.10).

In 2000, a total number of 489 941 candidates sat for the South African school leaving examination. Of that total, the results of 643 (0,1%) were pending while 283 294 (57,9%) candidates passed and 206 004 (42,1%) candidates failed. A total of 95 191 sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and only 48 886 (51,4%) candidates passed, 46 132 (48,6%) candidates failed while the results of 173 (0,2%) candidates were pending. Though the 2000 school leaving examination results of South Africa as a whole recorded an improvement of 8,0% compared to 1999, the Northern Province recorded an improvement of 13,9%. The performance of the Northern Province compared to other provinces remained at the last but one position, i.e. performing better than the Eastern Cape. The Western Cape continued to top all the provinces with a pass rate of 80,6% (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.9 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 1998

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	38 546	0	0,0	38 546	8 108	21,0	21 410	55,5	9 028	23,4	30 438	79,0	1
N. Cape	7 429	0	0,0	7 429	2 571	34,6	4 052	54,5	806	10,8	4 858	65,4	2
Gauteng	76 861	85	0,1	76 776	34 076	44,4	30 202	39,3	12 498	16,3	42 700	55,6	3
North West	42 436	47	0,1	42 389	19 231	45,4	17 467	41,2	5 691	13,4	23 158	54,6	4
Mpumalanga	41 612	58	0,1	41 554	19 667	47,3	16 703	40,2	5 184	12,5	21 887	52,7	5
Kwa-Zulu Natal	108 063	0	0,0	108 063	53 739	49,7	36 326	33,6	17 998	16,7	54 324	50,3	6
E. Cape	82 517	0	0,0	82 517	45 311	54,9	30 673	37,2	6 533	7,9	37 206	45,1	7
Free State	40 777	0	0,0	40 777	23 078	56,6	13 361	32,8	4 338	10,6	17 699	43,4	8
N. Province	114 621	288	0,3	114 333	74 115	64,8	32 438	28,4	7 780	6,8	40 218	35,2	9
TOTAL (RSA)	552 862	478	0,1	552 385	279 896	50,7	202 632	36,7	69 856	12,6	272 488	49,3	

Source: rearranged from Department of Education 1999; Department of Education 1999

Table 3.10 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 1999

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	37 199	0	0,0	37 199	7 896	21,2	20 213	54,3	9 090	24,4	29 303	78,8	1
N. Cape	7 160	1	0,0	7 159	2 556	35,7	3 795	53,0	808	11,3	4 603	64,3	2
Gauteng	71 757	1	0,0	71 756	30 820	43,0	29 457	41,1	11 479	16,0	40 936	57,0	3
North West	36 819	0	0,0	36 819	17 632	47,9	14 485	39,3	4 702	12,8	19 187	52,1	4
Kwa-Zulu Natal	103 268	164	0,2	103 104	50 798	49,3	35 731	34,7	16 575	16,1	52 306	50,7	5
Mpumalanga	38 236	5	0,0	38 231	19 766	51,7	14 277	37,3	4 188	11,0	18 465	48,3	6
Free State	33 004	4	0,0	33 000	19 091	57,9	10 325	31,3	3 584	10,9	13 909	42,1	7
E. Cape	79 831	82	0,1	79 749	47 720	59,8	26 591	33,3	5 438	6,8	32 029	40,2	8
N. Province	104 200	58	0,1	104 142	65 049	62,5	31 232	30,0	7 861	7,5	39 093	37,5	9
TOTAL (RSA)	511 474	315	0,1	511 159	261 328	36,4	186 106	36,4	63 725	12,6	249 831	48,9	

Source: Department of Education 1999

Table 3.11 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 2000

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
W. Cape	37 818	0	0,0	37 818	7 329	19,4	21 254	56,2	9 235	24,4	30 489	80,6	1
N. Cape	7 054	0	0,0	7 054	2 035	28,8	4 127	58,5	892	12,6	5 019	71,2	2
Gauteng	68 202	6	0,0	67 196	22 140	32,5	33 160	48,6	12 896	18,9	46 056	67,5	3
North West	40 098	1	0,0	40 097	16 731	41,7	18 309	45,7	5 057	12,6	23 366	58,3	4
Kwa-Zulu Natal	96 432	31	0,0	96 392	41 264	42,8	39 473	41,9	15 655	16,2	55 128	57,2	5
Mpumalanga	41 115	359	0,9	40 756	19 062	46,8	16 932	41,5	4 762	11,7	21 694	53,2	6
Free State	29 477	15	0,1	29 462	13 924	47,3	11 841	40,2	3 697	12,5	15 538	52,7	7
N. Province	95 191	173	0,2	95 018	46 132	48,6	37 786	39,8	11 100	11,7	48 886	51,4	8
E. Cape	74 563	58	0,1	74 505	37 387	50,2	31 786	42,7	5 332	7,2	37 118	49,8	9
TOTAL (RSA)	489 941	643	0,1	489 298	206 004	42,1	214 668	43,9	68 626	14,0	283 294	57,9	

Source: Department of Education 2000

In 2001, a total number of 449 371 candidates sat for the South African school leaving examination. Of that total, the results of 39 (0,0%) were pending while 277 206 (61,7%) candidates passed and 172 126 (38,3%) candidates failed. A total of 82 246 sat for the school leaving examination in the Northern Province and only 48 971 (59,5%) candidates passed, 33 271 (40,5%) candidates failed while the results of 4 (0,0%) candidates were pending. Though the 2001 school leaving examination results of South Africa as a whole recorded an improvement of 3,8% compared to 2000, the Northern Province recorded an improvement of 8,1%. The performance of the Northern Province compared to other provinces remained at the last but third position, i.e. performing better than the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape. The Northern Cape topped all the provinces with a pass rate of 84,2% (see Table 3.12).

From 1994 to 1999 the Northern Province had the largest number of grade 12 candidates, followed by KwaZulu Natal. In the year 2000 the Northern Province had the second largest number of grade 12 candidates, topped only by KwaZulu Natal. From 1995 to 2000, the number of grade 12 candidates in the Northern Province have decreased from 138 816 to 95 191. Such a large decrease can probably be attributed to, *inter alia*, the introduction of the policy of allowing grade 12 learners to repeat the class only once. Until 1996, grade 12 learners could repeat a class for as many times as they wished.

From 1994 to 2001, the Northern Province did not obtain a pass rate higher than the South African pass rate. The pass rate of the Northern Province from 1994 to 2001 was 44,4%, 37,8%, 38,8%, 31,9%, 35,2%, 37,5%, 51,4% and 59,5% respectively while the South African pass rate was 58,0%, 53,4%, 54,7%, 47,1%, 49,3%, 48,9%, 57,9% and 61,7% respectively. During the above-mentioned period, the Northern Province did not obtain an endorsement pass rate higher than the South African endorsement pass rate (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.12 School leaving examination results by province for candidates with six or more subjects for 2001

Province	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
N. Cape	6 619	0	0,0	6 619	1 048	15,8	4 596	69,4	975	14,7	5 571	84,2	1
W. Cape	37 559	0	0,0	37 559	6 510	17,3	21 671	57,7	9 378	25,0	31 049	82,7	2
Gauteng	64 339	1	0,0	64 338	16 970	26,4	33 671	52,3	13 697	21,3	47 366	73,6	3
Kwa-Zulu Natal	93 340	2	0,0	93 338	34 718	37,2	42 923	46,0	15 697	16,8	58 620	62,8	4
North West	36 734	1	0,0	36 733	13 770	37,5	17 684	48,1	5 279	14,4	22 963	62,5	5
N. Province	82 246	4	0,0	82 242	33 271	40,5	37 977	46,2	10 994	13,4	48 971	59,5	6
Free State	26 637	0	0,0	26 637	19 034	41,0	11 850	44,5	3 853	14,5	15 703	59,0	7
Mpumalanga	38 693	2	0,0	38 691	20 555	53,1	14 435	37,3	3 701	9,6	18 136	46,9	8
E. Cape	63 204	29	0,0	63 175	34 350	54,4	24 692	39,1	4 133	6,5	28 825	45,6	9
TOTAL (RSA)	449 371	39	0,0	449 332	172 126	38,3	209 499	46,6	67 707	15,1	277 206	61,7	

Source: Rearranged from Department of Education 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

Source: Department of Education 2001

Table 3.13 School leaving examination results for the Northern Province candidates with six or more subjects, from 1994 to 2001

Year	No. of candidates wrote	No. awaiting results		No. wrote exclude awaiting results	No. failed		Number of candidates passed						Position
		No.	%		No.	%	Without endorsement		With endorsement		Total		
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1994	129 951	0	0,0	129 951	72 220	55,6	41 964	32,3	15 767	12,1	57 731	44,4	9
1995	138 816	0	0,0	138 816	86 391	62,2	42 059	30,3	10 366	7,5	52 425	37,8	9
1996	126 081	3 634	2,9	122 447	74 878	61,2	38 218	31,2	9 351	7,6	47 569	38,8	9
1997	128 559	96	0,1	128 463	87 432	68,1	33 765	26,3	7 266	5,7	41 031	31,9	9
1998	114 621	288	0,3	114 333	74 115	64,8	32 438	28,4	7 780	6,8	40 218	35,2	9
1999	104 200	58	0,1	104 142	65 049	62,5	31 232	30,0	7 861	7,5	39 093	37,5	9
2000	95 191	173	0,2	95 018	46 132	48,6	37 786	39,8	11 100	11,7	48 886	51,4	8
2001	82 246	4	0,0	82 242	33 271	40,5	37 977	46,2	20 994	13,4	48 971	59,5	6

Source: Rearranged from: Department of Education 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001

3.13 EXPLANATION FOR BAD RESULTS 1994 - 2001

Although poor learner performances in the South African school leaving examination were attributed to various factors, the following were regarded as the main contributory factors:

The legacy of apartheid education was mainly blamed for poor learner performances from 1994 to 1997. The high failure rate in the school leaving examination in the Northern Province was attributed to the previous policies of the apartheid government which included skewed resource provisioning. Due to the above-mentioned resource provisioning policy, homeland schools, particularly the black rural schools, were neglected and under resourced. Motsoaledi (1996:2) asserts that:

“All in all, the causes can be contributed to the policies of apartheid. These policies have created conditions that made it extremely difficult for children to study in rural schools. These also eroded the quality of teachers produced in the former homelands.”

While the ongoing impact of poor resource provisioning has been acknowledged, other contributing factors were identified from 1998 to 2001, which include, *inter alia*, the collapse of a culture of learning, teaching and service. The collapse of a culture of learning, teaching and service in schools included a lack of commitment from learners, educators and parents with regard to school matters, a lack of permanently appointed school principals, poor attendance monitoring of both educators and learners, a lack of capacity to manage and govern schools, etc. (Northern Province Education, Arts, Culture and Sport 1998).

3.14 CONCLUSION

From 1910 to the year 2001, the school leaving examination in South Africa, including in the Northern Province, had to perform its basic function of allocating and legitimizing while contending with numerous problems. During the pre-apartheid period, the school leaving examination, through the University of the Cape of Good Hope and the Joint Matriculation Board had to contend with the decentralisation of education based on “language and nationhood” amongst the whites and the general neglect of education for blacks (Behr & McMillan 1971:394).

During the apartheid period, viz. 1948 to 1994, the school leaving examination, through the Joint Matriculation Board, the South African Certification Council and other related structures, had to contend with the co-ordination of the eighteen racially-divided education departments by applying its moderation and monitoring functions. The democratic period, viz. from 1994 onwards, required SAFCERT and other related structures to be transformed in order to keep pace with democratic functions, which include quality assurance of the South African school leaving examination without discrimination.