

S.Africa high school pass rate edges up slightly

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South Africa's high school pass rate rose slightly in 2012, results showed Wednesday, but science and mathematics scores point to problems still haunting the education system in Africa's economic powerhouse.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said 73.9 percent of pupils passed their pre-university examinations, up from a 70.2-percent pass rate in 2011.

The country only achieved a 54-percent pass rate in mathematics and 61.3 percent in physical science. But that was still better than last year, when test-takers scored 46.3 percent and 53.4 percent respectively in the two key subjects.

"We are beginning to reap the rewards of gradual improvement in the quality of education we are providing," said Motshekga, who came under attack last year for failing to deliver textbooks to millions of learners in parts of the country.

South Africa's public school rankings are among the worst in the region, despite education accounting for the largest share of the national budget.

A study released last year revealed that just 2.3 percent of 15-year-old South Africans achieved a pass grade in mathematics. It cited inadequate [teacher training](#), lack of resources and [overcrowding](#) as reasons for the dismal state of public schools.

The country also has a high number of drop-outs. Education lobby group Equal Education said 512,133 [pupils](#) had made it to the 2012 pre-university exam—less than half the group of 1,130,659 who started grade one in that cohort.

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