

Best private and public schools in South Africa: cost vs performance

By [BusinessTech Staff Writer](#)

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With the rising costs of education at the top of parents' minds, BusinessTech investigates how the top schools in both the public and private sectors compare when it comes to the performance of their pupils.

In 2015 there were 667,925 full time candidates participating in the NSC Examination, with 455,825 learners achieving a NSC pass (70.7%).

While the pass rate is down from 2014's 75.8%, there were more passes in raw numbers, with 51,951 more students passing in 2015 than in 2014.

Private schools sat a different exam, with 10,212 full time students from 200 schools writing the 2015 IEB matric exams. 98.3% of matrics passed the exams, and 85.5% of those students qualified for Bachelor's entry.

BusinessTech has compiled data looking at the tuition costs, number of students and number of Bachelor entry passes attained from some of the most expensive private schools and top-performing public schools in South Africa.

To determine the “top performing” public schools, BusinessTech ranked the top 10 according to the number of students who sat the exams.

According to the department of education, 470 schools had a 100% matric pass rate in 2015, and 111 of them maintained a 100% pass rate for the past five years.

As all the schools listed in this comparison – private and public – achieved a 100% pass rate in 2015, **the number of Bachelor entry passes (as a percentage) was selected as the measure of performance.**

Note: It must be stressed that drawing any conclusions based on performance versus cost in the schools listed below is limited, as private school costs encompass more than just tuition.

For many private schools, the costs account for facilities, location and other benefits (such as fewer students per class), as well as the history and prestige associated with the schools.

The analysis does not take this into account, nor does it seek to compare differences between IEB and NSC qualifications, the quality of teachers, or any other factors that may affect the pricing of an institution.

Top performing public schools in 2015

School	Matrics who wrote in 2015	% of Bachelors entry achieved	School fees (2016)
Hoërskool Garsfontein	350	84%	R24 200
Hoërskool Waterkloof	341	87%	R25 805
Northcliff High School	252	87%	R34 485
Durban Girls High School	226	96%	R23 300
Westville Girls High School	225	96%	R25 410
Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool	197	97%	R28 800
Grey Boys School	186	79%	R40 200
Randfontein High School	185	70%	R7 800*

Westford High School	182	99%	R31 600
Eunice Secondary School	174	100%	R19 600
Average	232	90%	R26 120

* latest available

Top performing private schools in 2015

School	Matrics who wrote in 2015	% of Bachelors entry achieved	School fees (2016)
St Stithians	255*	98%	R117 470
Bishops	144	98%	R113 440
St John's	141	100%	R124 618
Michaelhouse	115	97%	R225 000**
Hilton College	114	95%	R235 960**
Kearsney College	113	96%	R145 500
St Alban's College	107	95%	R112 200
St Mary's Waverley	103	100%	R109 450
St Mary's DSG	85	100%	R104 100
St Andrew's School for Girls	75	100%	R111 110
Average	125	98%	R139 884