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## Township schools toilet conditions worse than prison

by Liesl Frankson on [May 14, 2015](#) in [News](#)[Share](#)[Share](#)[Share](#)[Share](#)[Share](#)[Share](#)

The conditions of toilets in township High schools in Gauteng are worse than prisons, according to a social audit conducted by Equal Education (EE).

The audit, on the school conditions of 200 000 students in more than 200 schools in over 20 different communities in the province, found that working class children in Gauteng continue to go to school in the shadow of a sanitation crisis.

According to EE, a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members working for quality and equality in South African education, 30% of high schools have over 100 students sharing a single working toilet.

By comparison, according to the Wits Justice Project, 65 men share a single toilet at the unacceptably overcrowded Johannesburg Medium A prison reports EE.

The audit also revealed that one out of every five toilets in primary and secondary schools are locked or broken, and nearly 70% of students do not have soap in their schools while more than 40% of students do not have any access to toilet paper or sanitary pads.

This problem is particularly acute in secondary schools, where funds are stretched in overcrowded schools.

## Progress is being made

While the results show a continued emergency, they also indicate that EE's Gauteng Sanitation Campaign has yielded tangible victories.

The Sanitation Campaign started in August 2013. EE's audit of the sanitation conditions of Tembisa high schools at that time showed that more than half of schools had 100 students sharing a single working toilet.

This audit, which covered a broader range of schools, indicates the situation has improved.

This is largely because, in response to EE's 2 000 member march in September 2014, Gauteng MEC for Education Panyaza Lesufi promised to spend R150 million to upgrade the sanitation conditions at 580 schools serving over 500 000 students.

All upgrades were meant to have been completed by 30 November last year. The movement's Gauteng-wide social audit examined this initiative as well as the state of schools more generally.

While MEC Lesufi's R150 million initiative has helped improve conditions, the audit shows there is still a long way to go.

On 16 May, MEC Lesufi will directly address the audit results and community demands at The Schools Social Audit Summit at the YMCA on Radebe St in Orlando, Soweto.

– *Equal Education*

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