

# School Realities 2021

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In 2021 there were 13 409 249 learners in ordinary public and independent schools (hereinafter collectively referred to as ordinary schools) in South Africa who attended 24 894 schools and were served by 447 123 educators (see Tables 2 and 3). These data are from databases uploaded to the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) and Provincial Data Warehouses as at July 2021. Approximately 99.9% of functional ordinary schools were uploaded. No imputation was done on the data. The figures in this publication are preliminary and the final figures will be published in the more comprehensive Education Statistics in South Africa 2021.

**Table 1: List of abbreviations**

<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development	<b>LER</b>	Learner-Educator Ratio
<b>ESR</b>	Educator-School Ratio	<b>LSR</b>	Learner-School Ratio
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training	<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>GET</b>	General Education and Training	<b>SNE</b>	Special Need Education

**Table 2: Number of learners educators and schools in the ordinary school sector by province in 2021**

Province	Public			Independent			Public and Independent					
	Learners	Educators	Schools	Learners	Educators	Schools	Learners	As % of National Total	Educators	As % of National Total	Schools	As % of National Total
EC	1 772 877	58 824	5 109	75 176	3 874	232	1 848 053	13.8	62 698	14.0	5 341	21.5
FS	706 269	22 686	990	20 444	1 181	81	726 713	5.4	23 867	5.3	1 071	4.3
GT	2 227 733	72 162	2 067	337 079	19 796	874	2 564 812	19.1	91 958	20.6	2 941	11.8
KZN	2 831 417	92 232	5 801	62 541	4 427	221	2 893 958	21.6	96 659	21.6	6 022	24.2
LP	1 723 583	50 021	3 675	75 547	3 561	180	1 799 130	13.4	53 582	12.0	3 855	15.5
MP	1 101 224	34 837	1 654	33 665	2 126	131	1 134 889	8.5	36 963	8.3	1 785	7.2
NC	298 253	9 984	545	6 313	502	40	304 566	2.3	10 486	2.3	585	2.3
NW	848 086	26 796	1 450	24 515	1 452	89	872 601	6.5	28 248	6.3	1 539	6.2
WC	1 196 715	37 508	1 449	67 812	5 154	306	1 264 527	9.4	42 662	9.5	1 755	7.0
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>12 706 157</b>	<b>405 050</b>	<b>22 740</b>	<b>703 092</b>	<b>42 073</b>	<b>2 154</b>	<b>13 409 249</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>447 123</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24 894</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows the number of ordinary public and independent schools learners and educators there were in 2021. It further shows that the highest and lowest percentages of learners educators and schools in the ordinary school sector occurred in KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape respectively. Majority of independent schools were situated in Gauteng (874) followed by the Western Cape with 306 schools.

**Table 3: Number of learners in ordinary public and independent schools by province and sector from 2019 to 2021**

Province	Learners			Educators			Schools		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
EC	1 843 814	1 843 297	1 848 053	64 273	62 647	62 698	5 430	5 452	5 341
FS	716 080	719 847	726 713	24 027	23 702	23 867	1 156	1 122	1 071
GT	2 447 377	2 508 387	2 564 812	87 728	89 397	91 958	2 813	2 905	2 941
KZN	2 844 764	2 867 271	2 893 958	97 563	96 698	96 659	6 036	6 191	6 022
LP	1 753 819	1 759 322	1 799 130	54 019	53 598	53 582	3 931	3 886	3 855
MP	1 094 941	1 107 890	1 134 889	36 979	36 818	36 963	1 795	1 782	1 785
NC	298 888	304 237	304 566	10 653	10 527	10 486	583	585	585
NW	852 589	863 071	872 601	28 012	27 661	28 248	1 536	1 532	1 539
WC	1 188 926	1 243 150	1 264 527	41 603	41 892	42 662	1 718	1 744	1 755
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>13 041 198</b>	<b>13 216 472</b>	<b>13 409 249</b>	<b>444 857</b>	<b>442 940</b>	<b>447 123</b>	<b>24 998</b>	<b>25 199</b>	<b>24 894</b>

Sources:

2019/20: As published in School Realities 2019 and 2020

From the figures reflected in Table 3 it can be deduced that from 2019 to 2021 the number of learners increased by 2.8% nationally and the number of educators increased by 0.5% while the number of schools decreased by 0.4%.

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# E M I S

**Table 4: Number of learners in ordinary schools by province sector gender and grade in 2021 (concluded)**

Province	Sector	Gender	FET Band				Other	Total Primary Gr1-7	Total Secondary Gr8-12	Total Gr1-12	Ordinary Schools Totals	
			Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total						
EC	Independent	Female	2 014	1 758	2 362	6 134	0	24 095	11 172	35 267	38 265	
		Total	3 760	3 280	4 066	11 106	0	48 300	20 879	69 179	75 176	
	Public	Female	70 031	65 619	53 833	189 483	0	484 769	328 334	813 103	868 054	
		Total	138 136	120 645	94 829	353 610	0	1 021 932	639 768	1 661 700	1 772 877	
	BOTH	Female	72 045	67 377	56 195	195 617	0	508 864	339 506	848 370	906 319	
		Total	69 851	56 548	42 700	169 099	0	561 368	321 141	882 509	941 734	
		Total	141 896	123 925	98 895	364 716	0	1 070 232	660 647	1 730 879	1 848 053	
FS	INDEPENDENT	Female	718	622	515	1 855	0	5 781	3 543	9 324	10 364	
		Total	1 410	1 094	872	3 376	0	11 721	6 676	18 397	20 444	
	PUBLIC	Female	30 938	25 804	19 889	76 631	0	195 528	135 423	330 951	349 650	
		Total	61 316	47 503	36 100	144 919	0	403 830	264 754	668 584	706 269	
	BOTH	Female	31 656	26 426	20 404	78 486	0	201 309	138 966	340 275	360 014	
		Total	31 070	22 171	16 568	69 809	0	214 242	132 464	346 706	366 699	
		Total	62 726	48 597	36 972	148 295	0	415 551	271 430	686 981	726 713	
GT	INDEPENDENT	Female	11 858	10 887	9 533	32 278	4	100 668	58 720	159 388	170 653	
		Total	22 974	20 884	17 686	61 544	14	201 690	112 904	314 594	337 079	
	PUBLIC	Female	89 796	80 645	65 982	236 423	92	648 146	408 829	1 056 975	1 112 065	
		Total	179 375	150 680	119 282	449 337	279	1 319 033	798 475	2 117 508	2 227 733	
	BOTH	Female	101 654	91 532	75 515	268 701	96	748 814	467 549	1 216 363	1 282 718	
		Total	100 695	80 032	61 453	242 180	197	771 909	443 830	1 215 739	1 282 094	
		Total	202 349	171 564	136 968	510 881	293	1 520 723	911 379	2 432 102	2 564 812	
KZN	Independent	Female	2336	2139	2333	6 808	8	18 502	11 920	30 422	33 514	
		Total	4 033	3 764	3 926	11 723	15	35 765	20 783	56 548	62 541	
	PUBLIC	Female	117795	122252	96635	336 682	0	750 168	556 310	1 306 478	1 391 365	
		Total	240 368	232 336	175 857	648 561	1	1 552 534	1 107 807	2 660 341	2 831 417	
	BOTH	Female	120 131	124 391	98 968	343 490	8	768 670	568 230	1 336 900	1 424 879	
		Total	124 270	111 709	80 815	316 794	8	819 629	560 360	1 379 989	1 469 079	
		Total	244 401	236 100	179 783	660 284	16	1 588 299	1 128 590	2 716 889	2 893 958	
LP	INDEPENDENT	Female	2 239	2 035	1 916	6 190	0	23 710	11 513	35 223	38 725	
		Total	4 175	3 862	3 391	11 428	0	47 273	21 416	68 689	75 547	
	PUBLIC	Female	70 894	68 257	56 918	196 069	0	457 923	325 093	783 016	839 692	
		Total	147 934	131 451	104 875	384 260	0	953 188	656 400	1 609 588	1 723 583	
	BOTH	Female	73 133	70 292	58 834	202 259	0	481 633	336 606	818 239	878 417	
		Total	78 976	65 021	49 432	193 429	0	518 828	341 210	860 038	920 713	
		Total	152 109	135 313	108 266	395 688	0	1 000 461	677 816	1 678 277	1 799 130	
MP	Independent	Female	817	885	1 517	3 219	0	10 529	4 987	15 516	16 712	
		Total	1 678	1 888	2 814	6 380	0	21 349	10 003	31 352	33 665	
	Public	Female	45 199	44 629	37 744	127 572	0	298 104	212 781	510 885	541 745	
		Total	92 596	85 490	68 103	246 189	0	615 590	424 102	1 039 692	1 101 224	
	BOTH	Female	46 016	45 514	39 261	130 791	0	308 633	217 768	526 401	558 457	
		Total	48 258	41 864	31 656	121 778	0	328 306	216 337	544 643	576 432	
		Total	94 274	87 378	70 917	252 569	0	636 939	434 105	1 071 044	1 134 889	
NC	INDEPENDENT	Female	246	176	139	561	0	1 596	1 062	2 658	3 214	
		Total	425	318	274	1 017	0	3 294	1 923	5 217	6 313	
	PUBLIC	Female	11 525	9 741	7 454	28 720	0	86 927	51 432	138 359	147 867	
		Total	22 775	17 833	13 279	53 887	0	179 706	99 394	279 100	298 253	
	BOTH	Female	11 771	9 917	7 593	29 281	0	88 523	52 494	141 017	151 081	
		Total	11 429	8 234	5 960	25 623	0	94 477	48 823	143 300	153 485	
		Total	23 200	18 151	13 553	54 904	0	183 000	101 317	284 317	304 566	
NW	INDEPENDENT	Female	725	618	554	1 897	16	7 884	3 503	11 387	12 302	
		Total	1 436	1 171	993	3 600	32	15 892	6 780	22 672	24 515	
	PUBLIC	Female	34 574	30 289	23 207	88 070	0	238 348	155 518	393 866	418 541	
		Total	69 689	56 443	41 985	168 117	0	492 378	306 271	798 649	848 086	
	BOTH	Female	35 299	30 907	23 761	89 967	16	246 232	159 021	405 253	430 843	
		Total	35 826	26 707	19 217	81 750	16	262 038	154 030	416 068	441 758	
		Total	71 125	57 614	42 978	171 717	32	508 270	313 051	821 321	872 601	
WC	INDEPENDENT	Female	2 503	2 217	2 124	6 844	11	19 186	12 343	31 529	34 273	
		Total	4 941	4 324	4 089	13 354	30	38 466	24 009	62 475	67 812	
	PUBLIC	Female	44 800	39 626	33 111	117 537	327	357 496	213 882	571 378	607 616	
		Total	84 597	71 103	58 057	213 757	862	726 028	398 926	1 124 954	1 196 715	
	BOTH	Female	42 300	33 694	27 070	103 064	546	387 718	197 387	585 105	623 372	
		Total	47 238	41 733	35 076	124 047	346	376 776	225 548	602 324	641 155	
		Total	89 538	75 427	62 146	227 111	892	764 494	422 935	1 187 429	1 264 527	
SA	INDEPENDENT	Female	23 456	21 337	20 993	65 786	39	211 951	118 763	330 714	358 022	
		Male	21 376	19 248	17 118	57 742	52	211 799	106 610	318 409	345 070	
		Total	44 832	40 585	38 111	123 528	91	423 750	225 373	649 123	703 092	
	PUBLIC	Female	515 552	486 862	394 773	1 397 187	419	3 517 409	2 387 602	5 905 011	6 276 595	
		Male	521 234	426 622	317 594	1 265 450	723	3 746 810	2 308 295	6 055 105	6 429 562	
		Total	1 036 786	913 484	712 367	2 662 637	1 142	7 264 219	4 695 897	11 960 116	12 706 157	
	BOTH	Female	534 005	500 050	407 601	1 441 656	666	3 740 396	2 477 527	6 217 923	6 616 100	
		Male	547 613	454 019	342 877	1 344 509	567	3 947 573	2 443 743	6 391 316	6 793 149	
			Grand Total	1 081 618	954 069	750 478	2 786 165	1 233	7 687 969	4 921 270	12 609 239	13 409 249

Note 1: Data exclude learners at stand-alone ECD sites and special schools.

Note 2: Owing to a shortage of space in the table the male enrolment figures for ordinary public and independent schools are intentionally omitted in the provincial data but are included in the national data.

- 1) Learners not grouped in any of the grades provided

**Figure 1: Percentage distribution of learners in ordinary schools by phase in 2021**

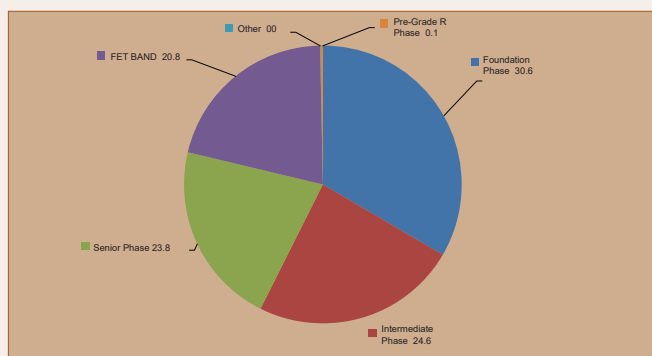


Figure 1 reveals that the highest proportion of learners in ordinary schools nationally was located in the foundation phase (30.6%) followed by the intermediate phase and the senior phase with 24.6% and 23.8%.

**Figure 2: Percentage distribution of female learners in ordinary schools by grade in 2021**

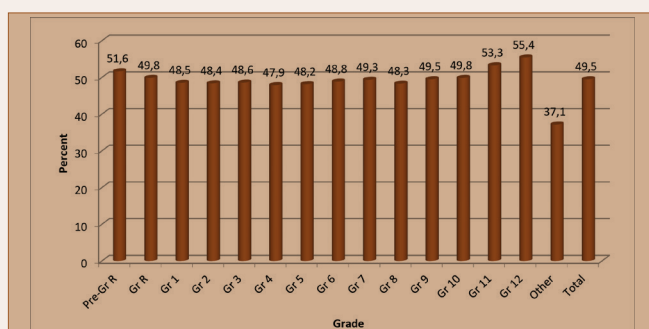


Figure 2 shows that in the schooling system there were more male than female (49.5%) learners. The lowest percentage of female learners in ordinary schools nationally was in Grades 4 (47.9%) and the highest percentage was in Grades 11 and 12 (53.3 and 55.4% respectively).

**Figure 3: Percentage distribution of learners in ordinary schools by grade in 2021**

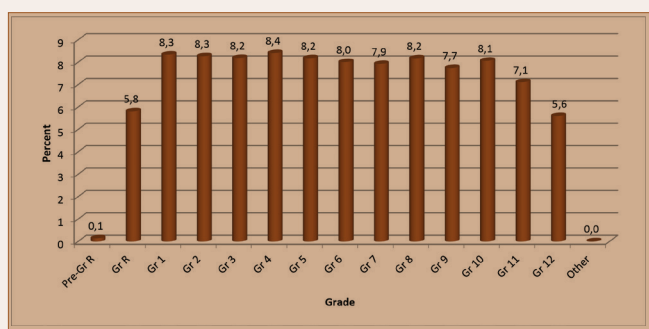


Figure 3 indicates that enrolment is generally very high in Grades 1 2 and 4 (8.3% and 8.4% respectively) and declines as learners move to higher grades within the schooling system with 5.6% in Grade 12.

Table 5 reflects the following indicators:

(a) When counting all educators the LER for ordinary public schools nationally was 31.4 while when counting only state-paid educators in these schools the LER increased to 34.1.

**Table 5: Indicators for ordinary PUBLIC schools by province in 2021**

Province	LER		LSR	ESR
	State-paid and SGB-paid Educators	State-Paid Educators <sup>1)</sup>		
Eastern Cape	30.1	34.7	347	11.5
Free State	31.1	33.9	713	22.9
Gauteng	30.9	33.6	1078	34.9
KwaZulu-Natal	30.7	31.9	488	15.9
Limpopo	34.5	35.5	469	13.6
Mpumalanga	31.6	33.9	666	21.1
Northern Cape	29.9	33.3	547	18.3
North West	31.6	33.5	585	18.5
Western Cape	31.9	39.8	826	25.9
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>17.8</b>

1) Underlying data not shown in the publication.

(b) The LSR for ordinary public schools nationally was 559 with five provinces (Free State Gauteng Mpumalanga North West and the Western Cape) higher than the national average.

(c) The ESR for ordinary public schools nationally was 17.8 with six provinces (the Free State Gauteng Mpumalanga the Northern Cape North West and the Western Cape) higher than the national average.

**Figure 4: Frequency distribution of learners in ordinary PUBLIC schools in 2021**

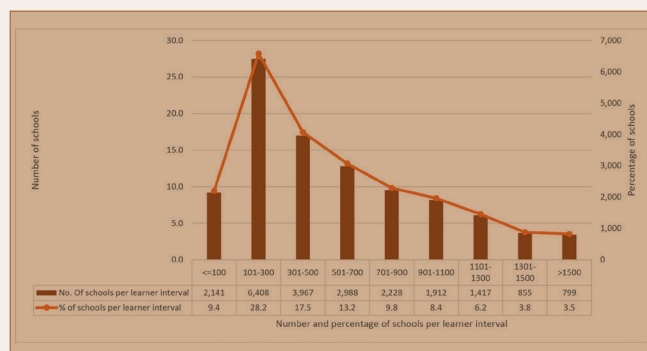


Figure 4 a histogram shows that the highest number of ordinary public schools nationally (6 408 or 28.2%) was in the 101 to 300 learner interval. Furthermore there were 2 141 schools (9.4%) and 799 schools (3.5%) in respectively the 100 and below learner interval and the above 1 500 learner interval.

**Figure 5: Frequency distribution of LER in ordinary PUBLIC schools in 2021**

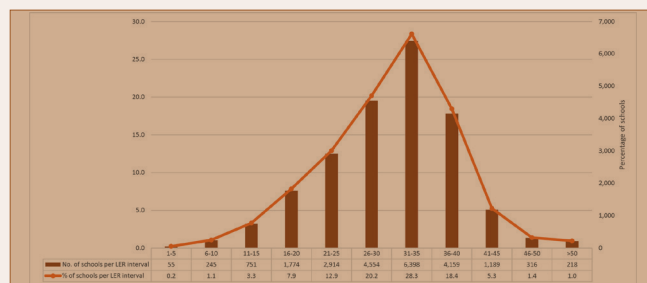


Figure 5 a histogram reflects that the highest number of ordinary public schools nationally (6 398 or 28.3%) was in the 31 to 35 LER interval. Furthermore there were 55 schools (0.2%) and 218 schools (1.0) in respectively the one to five LER interval and the above 50 LER interval.