

Enrolment, attendance and dropping out and learning losses arising during the pandemic

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What we know and levels of certainty

Enrolment

Enrolment in 2021 Q1 around **50,000 (0.4%)** ** lower than expected. Problem concentrated in lower grades.

Attendance

54%*** of contact time was lost in 2020 just due to closures and rotations. In the second half of 2021, **22%**** of contact time lost due to rotations and regular absenteeism. These averages hide huge inequalities across grades and schools.

Dropping out

Problem of around **45%** of youths not obtaining the NSC may actually have been tackled faster during the pandemic. **

Learning losses

In historically disadvantaged schools, around **70%***** of a year's worth of learning was lost in 2020. For every day of schooling lost, around **1.3***** days of learning are lost.

Enrolment and dropping out

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on school enrolments

Available on
DBE site

6 October 2021¹

Incomplete presence of national ID numbers remains a key constraint to analysing enrolment trends and dropping out.

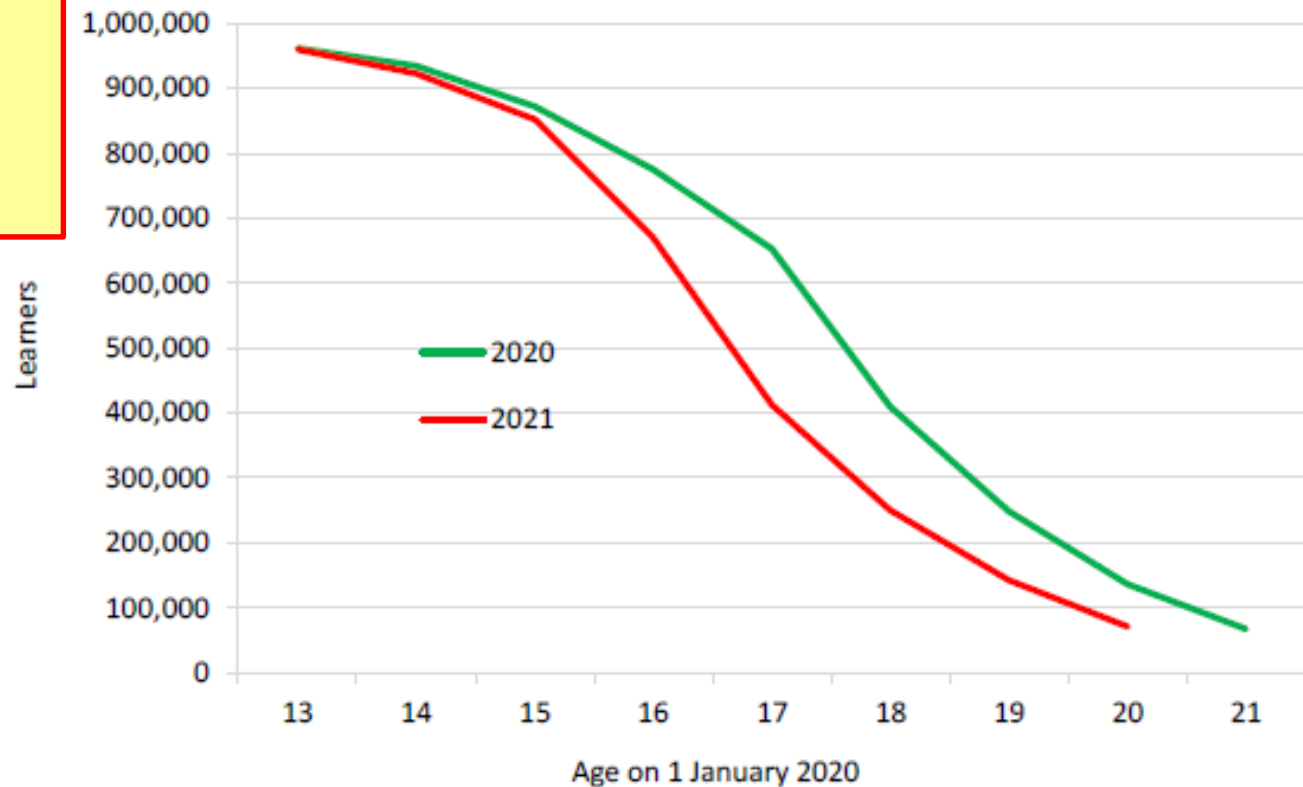
Table 7: Learners not linked to the other year using national ID

	% of 2020 learners aged 6 to 12 on 1 January 2020	% of 2021 learners aged 7 to 13 on 1 January 2021
EC	6.9	7.0
FS	6.9	6.5
GP	18.4	18.7
KN	8.0	8.1
LP	5.6	5.7
MP	8.5	9.0
NC	5.1	3.5
NW	6.9	6.7
WC	9.4	9.4
SA	9.6	9.7

Enrolment and dropping out (contd.)

Dropping out among older learners – no worsening evident from the data.

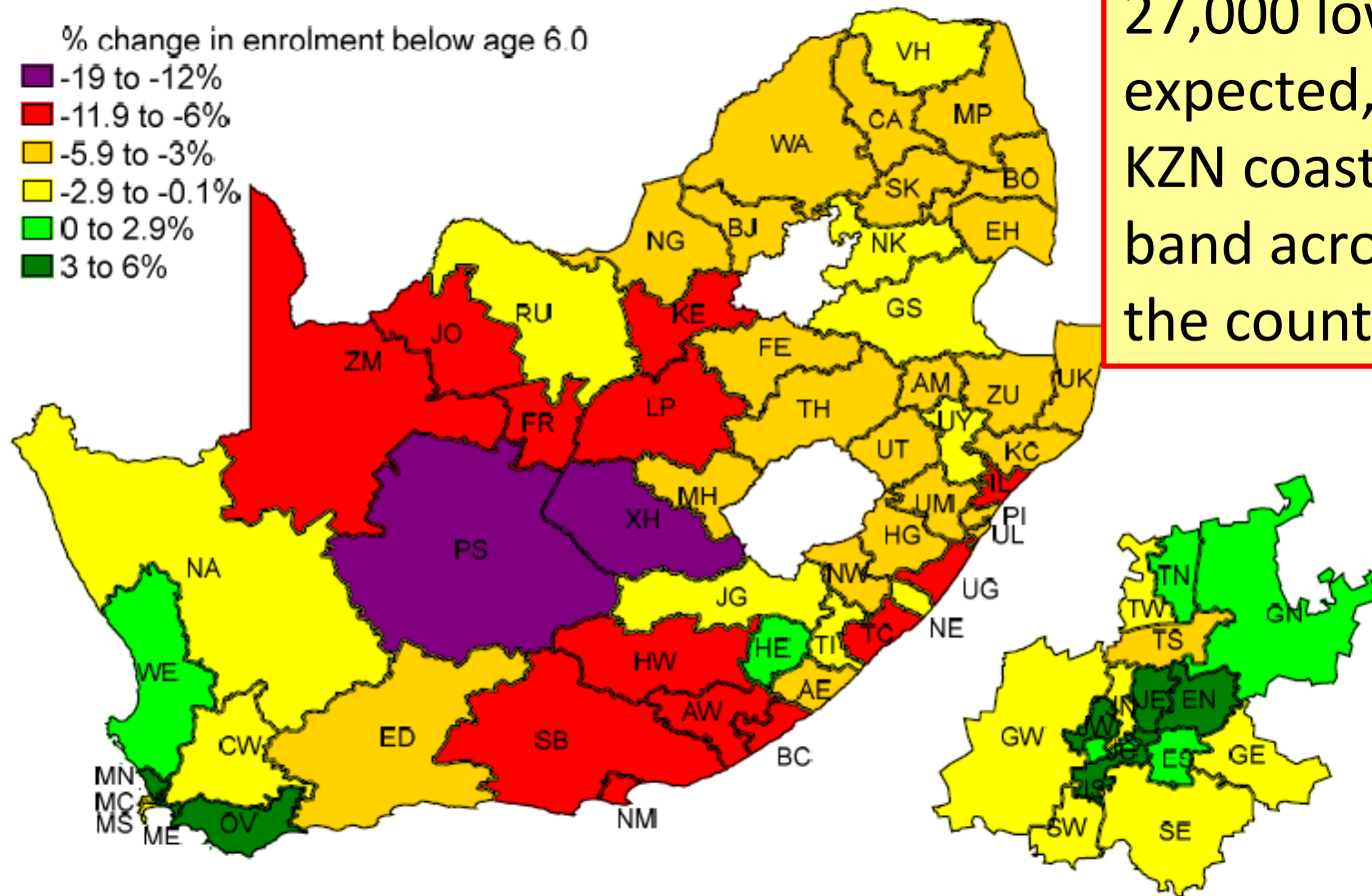
Figure 8: Trends for secondary-level birth cohorts



Enrolment and dropping out (contd.)

Dropping out among compulsory-aged learners – some evidence of this after taking into account mortality. A loss of around 19,000 (0.4%).

Figure 4: Declines age 6.0 and below by district



Declines in first entry at grades R and 1 level – 27,000 lower than expected, concentrated in KZN coastal districts and a band across the middle of the country.

Attendance

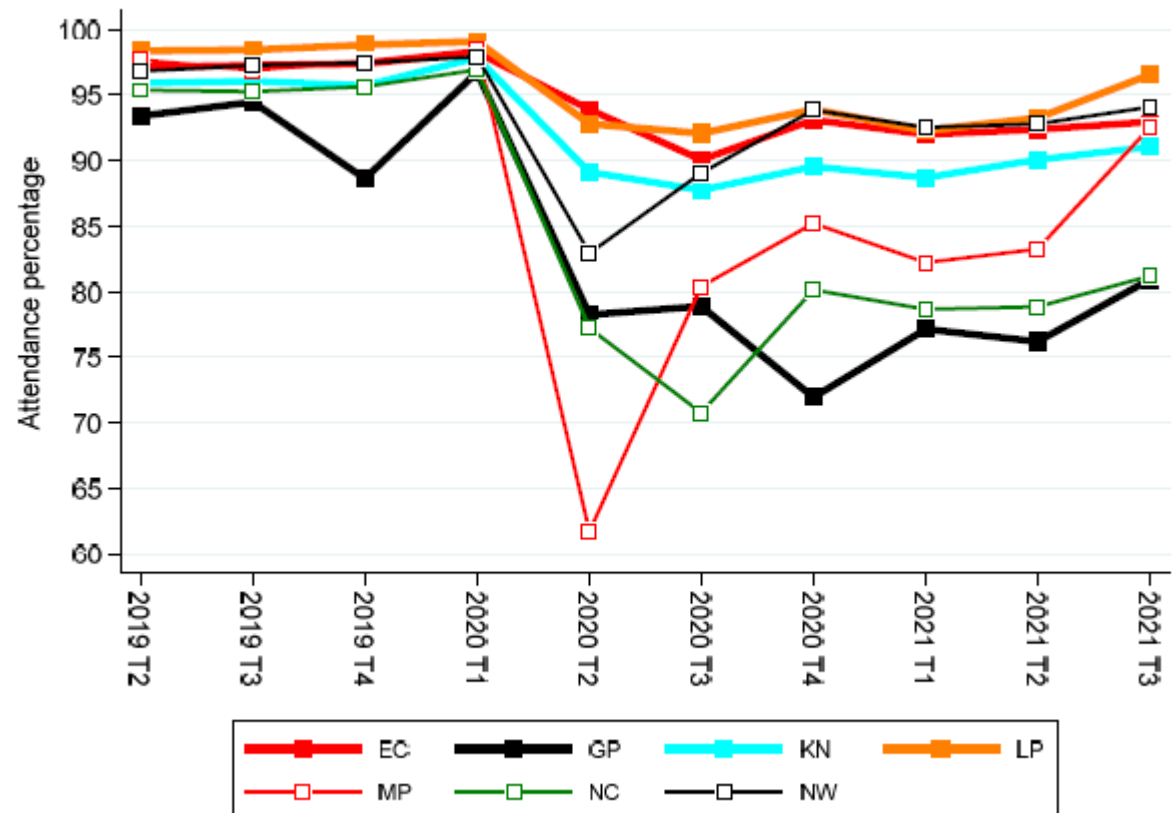
Pandemic-related losses in contact time across seven provinces according to SA-SAMS data

Martin Gustafsson
10 January 2022

Not yet
public

‘At face value’
statistics for 7
provinces.

Figure 6: Provincial Grade 3 attendance trends over time



Attendance (contd.)

Contact time loss in Grade 3, 2021 Q3 (similar in other grades)

Pre-pandemic loss

3%

'At face value' loss in 2021 Q3

10%

Loss after taking into account (1) around 10% of schools which enter no absenteeism in SA-SAMS and (2) non-entry of rotations. Effect of (1) negligible. For (2), patterns of regular absenteeism and separate NECT survey inform the statistic.

22%

Loss for about a third of learners, specifically those in schools with rotations

50%

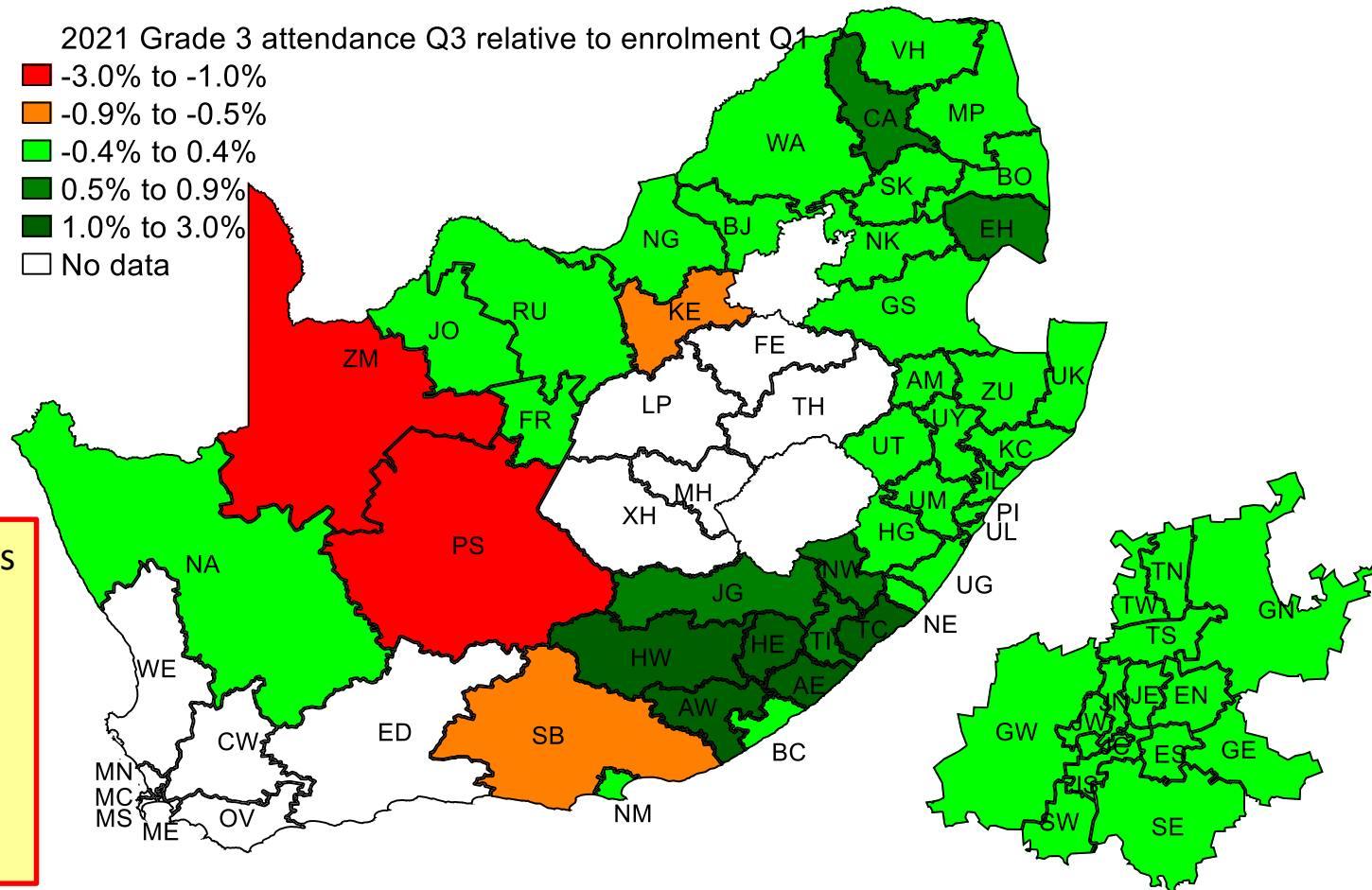
Attendance (contd.)

Critically important: attending (any number of days) in 2021
Quarter 3 relative to enrolment in Quarter 1:

Grade 3: 0.2% higher

Grade 6: 0.1% lower

Grade 9: **1.0% lower**



What about the NIDS-CRAM findings?

The impact of COVID-19 in education - more than a year of disruption

Debra Shepherd - University of Stellenbosch

Nompumelelo Mohohlwane - Department of Basic Education

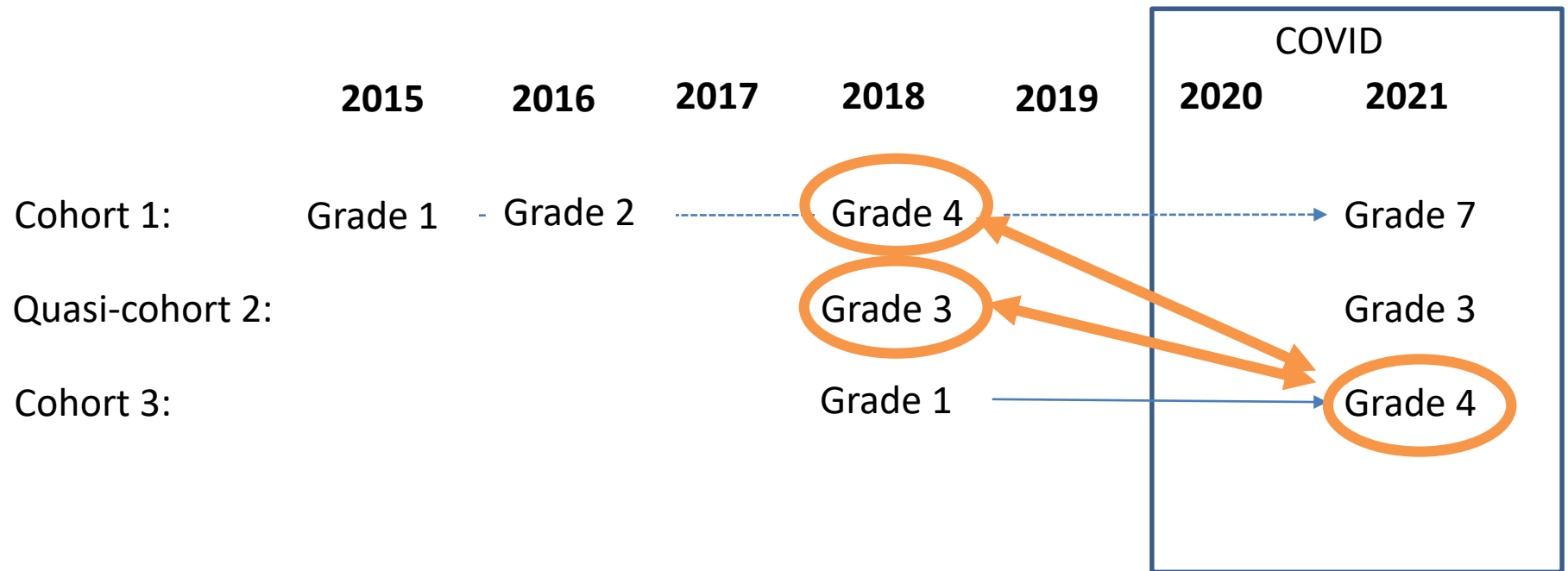
- Finding that by April 2021 attendance of any kind was around 500,000 (5 percentage points) lower than normal.
- NIDS-CRAM is valuable, yet a difficult dataset to use to gauge attendance. Survey question is open to different interpretations and only $\pm 8,000$ respondents over the phone.

F2 <i>eduatt_2w</i>	In the past two weeks, how many young people in your household attended school? Interviewer: This should refer to the last two weeks that schools were open this year.	Number
		None
		Not sure but at least one attended
		Refused
		Don't know

Learning Loss & the pandemic school context



DBE Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS): Sample



We compare pre-COVID-19 Grade 3 outcomes to Grade 4 reading outcomes during COVID-19

How much have learners lost?

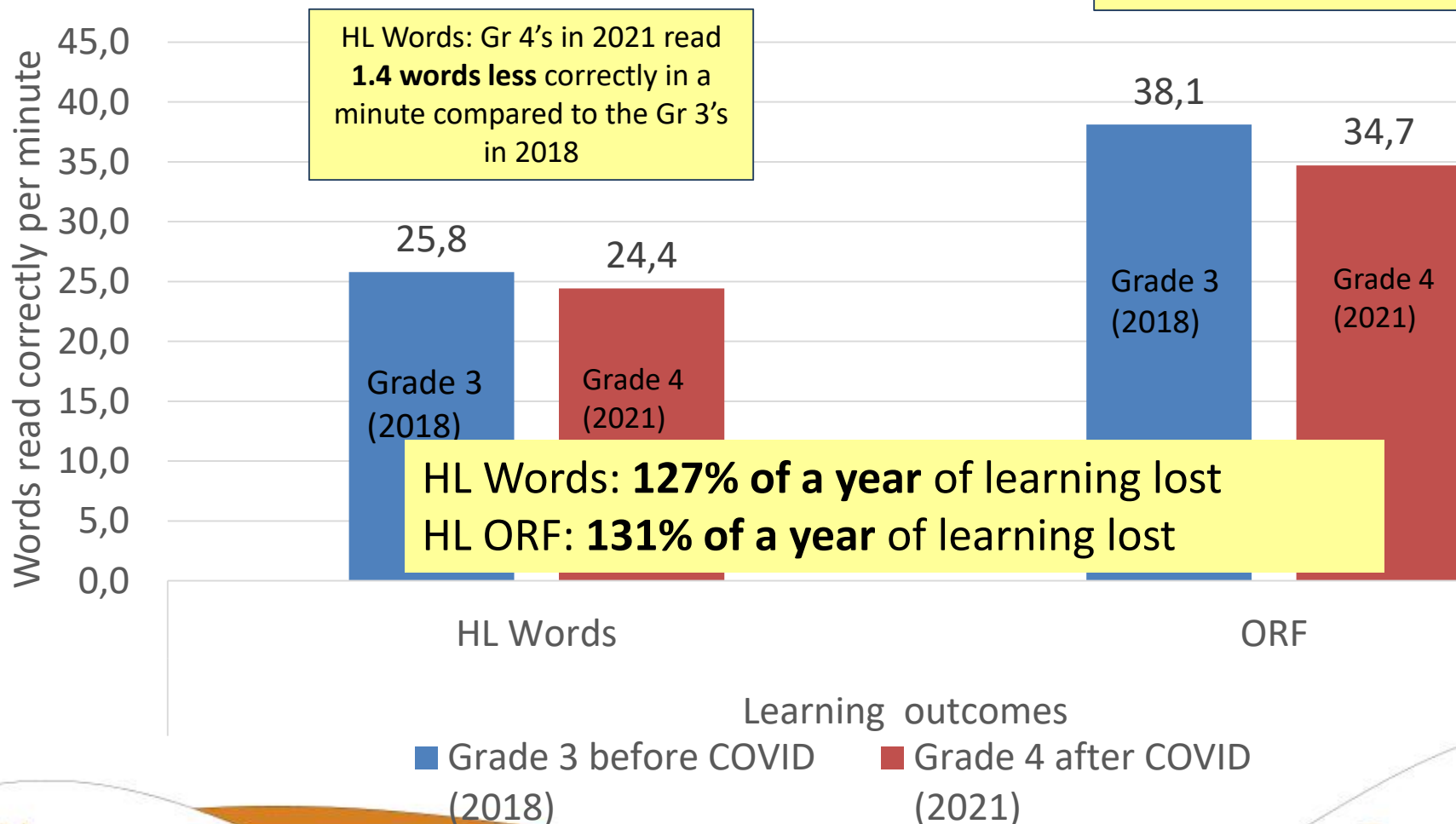
DBE EGRS: Comparability

		Grade 3	Grade 4	Gr 3 & 4 Comparable?
2018	HL Words	70 words	70 words	Yes
	HL ORF	Tshoswane le lephoi (159 w)	Tshoswane le lephoi (159 w)	Yes
	EFAL Words	104 words	104 words	Yes
	EFAL ORF	Elephant (126 w)	Elephant (142 w)	Mostly
2021	HL Words	72 words	72 words	Yes
	HL ORF	Pule le Mosidi (58 w)	Tshoswane le lephoi (130 w)	No
	EFAL Words	Dec + Sight	104 w	No
	EFAL ORF	Jabu (71 w)	Elephant (126 w)	No
2018 vs 2021 Comparable?	HL Words			
	HL ORF	Mostly	Yes	Yes
	EFAL Words	No	Yes	Yes
	EFAL ORF	No	Yes	Yes

We only compare tasks that are exactly the same, or have the majority of the words as the same

DBE EGRS: Learning losses in Setswana Home Language Reading

Grade 3 pre-COVID vs Grade 4 post-COVID
HL Reading Outcomes



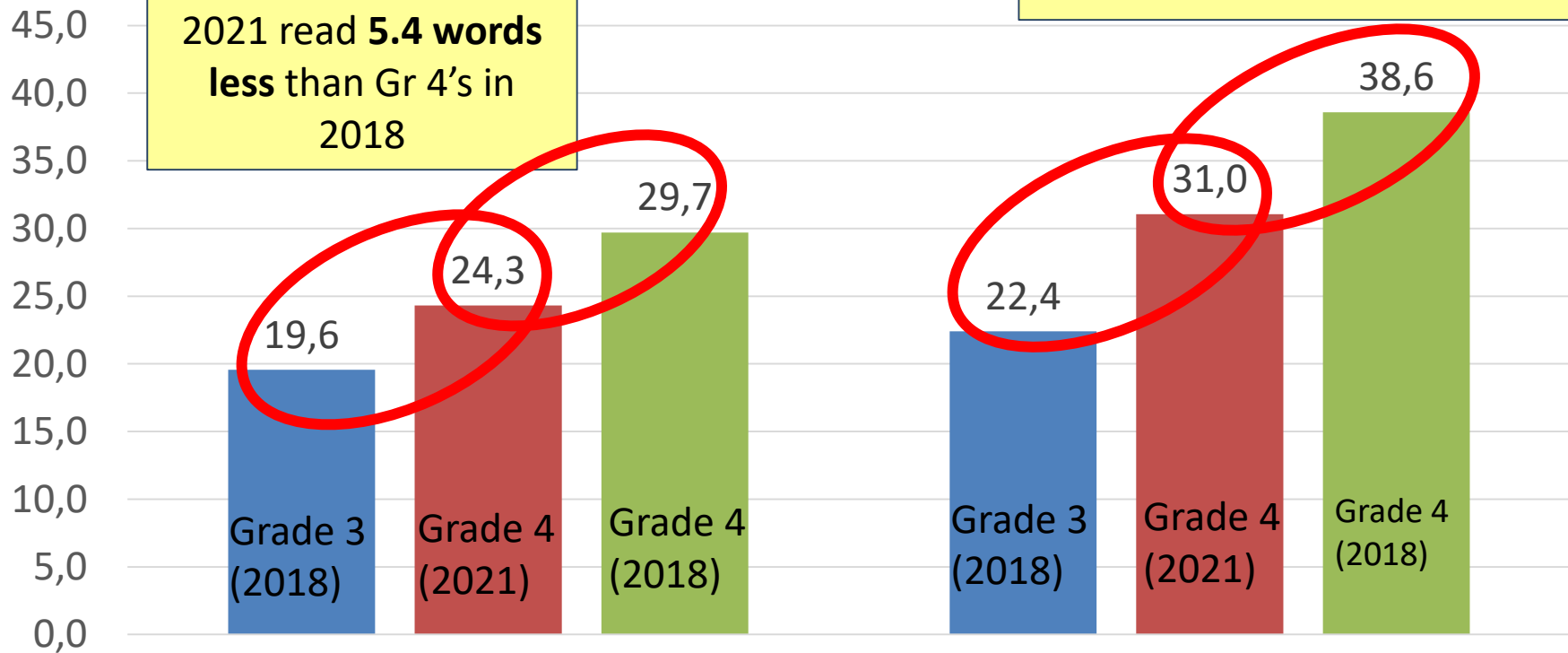
DBE EGRS: Learning losses in English FAL

Grade 3 pre-COVID vs Grade 4 post-COVID

EFAL Reading Outcomes

EFAL Words: Gr 4's in 2021 read **5.4 words less** than Gr 4's in 2018

EFAL Words: Gr 4's in 2021 read **7.5 words less** than Gr 4's in 2018



EFAL Words

EFAL ORF

■ Grade 3 before COVID (2018) ■ Grade 4 after COVID (2021) ■ Grade 4 before COVID (2021)

EFAL Words: **53.1% of a year of learning lost**
EFAL ORF: **46.6% of a year of learning lost**

DBE EGRS: Lost Learning Time 2021

		North West (EGRS I): Grade 3			North West (EGRS I): Grade 7		
Term	Dates	Maximum possible school days per DBE regulations	Typical school days after accounting for discretionary early school closure	Average school days taking rotational and early closures into account	Maximum possible school days per DBE regulations	Typical school days after accounting for discretionary early school closure	Average school days taking rotational and early closures into account
1	15 Feb– 23 Apr	47	47	30	47	47	30
2	3 May - 9 July	49	49	32	49	49	32
3	26 July - 1 Oct	48	48	36	48	48	37
4	11 Oct - 15 Dec	48	41	30	48	41	32
Total school days		192	185	128	192	185	131
% of 2019* days (199 days)				64%			66%
% of 2019 school days lost				36%			34%
Ave. school days after other school closures reported				126			127
% of 2019 school days lost				37%			36%

DBE EGRS: Lost Learning Time 2021

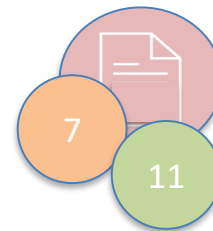
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4	11 Oct - 15 Dec	48	41	30	48	41	32
Total school days		192	185	128	192	185	131
<p>24% of schools closed by 27 November in 2020, expect the same for 2021</p> <p>24% closed on the last day of school 15 December 2020, expect the same for 2021</p>							
% of 2019 school days lost				37%			36%

DBE EGRS: Workbook curriculum coverage

Average no of pages with
any work completed

Average no of pages with
one sentence of writing

Average no of pages with
paragraph writing



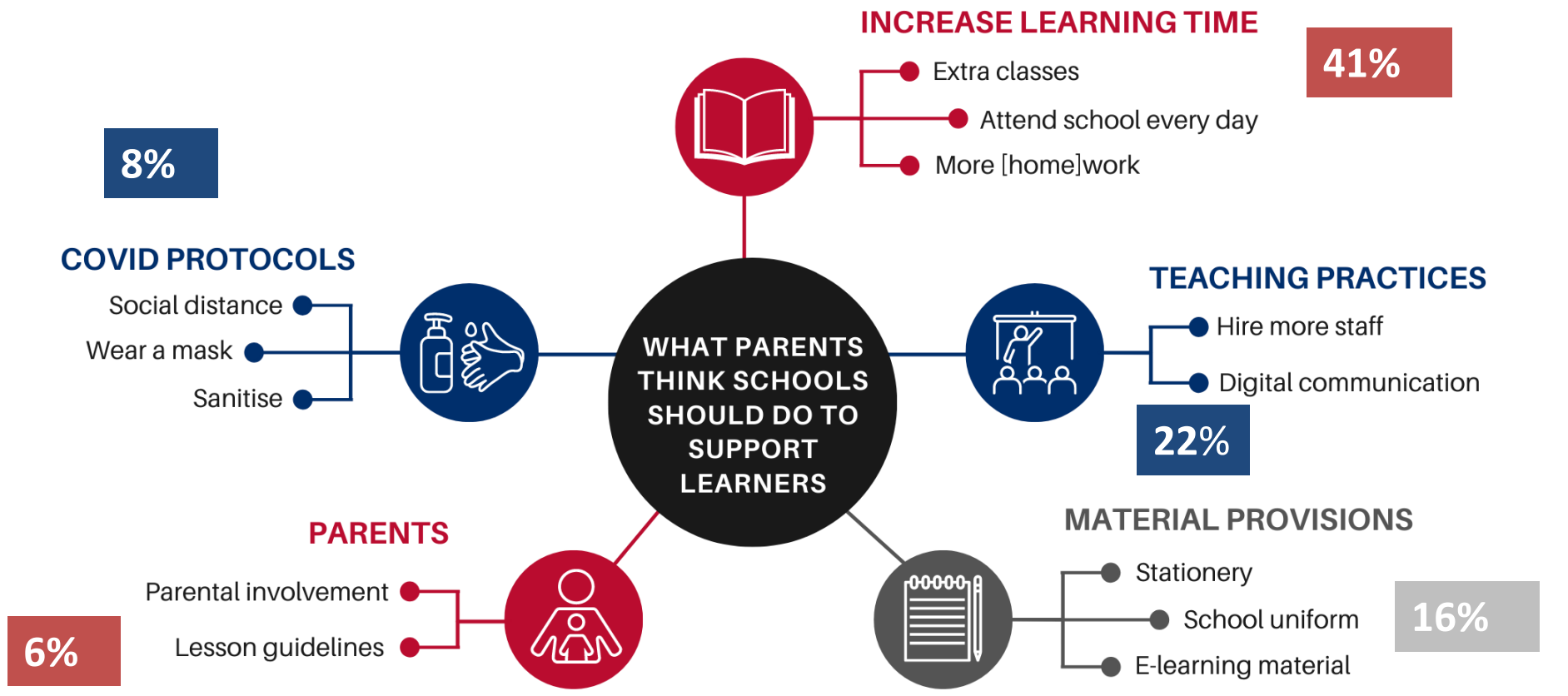
Grade 3
Home Language

Grade 3 learners did slightly fewer pages of work in workbooks in term 3 of 2021 than pre-COVID-19, but they are doing **significantly less writing**.

Curriculum coverage is challenged due to reduction in time, but also because teachers need to re-teach content.

Teachers indicate a large proportion of learners' reading ability is behind what it is supposed to be.

DBE EGRS: Caregiver feedback



Conclusion & Recommendations

- Learners in Grade 4 Home Language are more than 1 and a quarter year behind – effectively in Grade 3
- Learners in Grade 4 English FAL are half a year behind
- DBE workbooks are a key resource for learners
- BUT learners are writing much less
- The main intervention supported by parents is returning to school – extended school day, etc

Recommendations

- Ensuring more access to schooling – ONLY place for meaningful learning
- Detailed interventions to address the extensive learning losses
- Teacher training to equip teachers to cope with the learner ability changes
- Support to parents for active and practical participation