

School Realities 2023

Published December 2023
Enquiries: 012 357 3676

In 2023, there were 13 439 683 learners in ordinary public and independent schools (hereinafter collectively referred to as ordinary schools) in South Africa, who attended 24 836 schools and were serviced by 454 749 educators (see Tables 2 and 3). These data are from databases uploaded on the Learner Unit

Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) and Provincial Data Warehouses as at July 2023. 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 2023*.

Table 1: List of abbreviations

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

Table 2: Number of learners, educators and schools in ordinary school sector, by province, in 2023

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
Eastern Cape	1 728 088	56 942	5 016	78 031	4 361	269	1 806 119	13.4	61 303	13.5	5 285	21.3
Free State	702 394	23 306	937	21 227	1 269	84	723 621	5.4	24 575	5.4	1 021	4.1
Gauteng	2 281 492	74 030	2 061	346 555	20 830	918	2 628 047	19.6	94 860	20.9	2 979	12.0
KwaZulu-Natal	2 813 108	91 816	5 790	62 750	4 591	230	2 875 858	21.4	96 407	21.2	6 020	24.2
Limpopo	1 714 068	51 227	3 622	85 226	4 095	217	1 799 294	13.4	55 322	12.2	3 839	15.5
Mpumalanga	1 113 279	34 807	1 632	37 077	2 336	139	1 150 356	8.6	37 143	8.2	1 771	7.1
Northern Cape	299 163	10 268	543	7 490	601	43	306 653	2.3	10 869	2.4	586	2.4
North West	850 644	27 199	1 443	29 436	1 508	106	880 080	6.5	28 707	6.3	1 549	6.2
Western Cape	1 199 339	39 893	1 467	70 316	5 670	319	1 269 655	9.4	45 563	10.0	1 786	7.2
South Africa	12 701 575	409 488	22 511	738 108	45 261	2 325	13 439 683	100.0	454 749	100.0	24 836	100.0

Table 2 shows the number of ordinary public and independent schools, learners and educators there were in 2023. 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 with 918 followed by the Western Cape with 319 schools.

Table 3: Number of learners in ordinary public and independent schools by sector and province, from 2021 to 2023

Province	LEARNERS			EDUCATORS			SCHOOLS		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Eastern Cape	1 848 053	1 826 150	1 806 119	62 698	61 404	61 303	5 341	5 311	5 285
Free State	726 713	728 844	723 621	23 867	24 343	24 575	1 071	1 029	1 021
Gauteng	2 564 812	2 611 641	2 628 047	91 958	93 453	94 860	2 941	2 991	2 979
KwaZulu-Natal	2 893 958	2 883 354	2 875 858	96 659	95 650	96 407	6 022	6 021	6 020
Limpopo	1 799 130	1 798 646	1 799 294	53 582	54 592	55 322	3 855	3 847	3 839
Mpumalanga	1 134 889	1 145 287	1 150 356	36 963	37 579	37 143	1 785	1 784	1 771
Northern Cape	304 566	306 056	306 653	10 486	10 667	10 869	585	586	586
North West	872 601	875 095	880 080	28 248	28 923	28 707	1 539	1 548	1 549
Western Cape	1 264 527	1 244 898	1 269 655	42 662	44 382	45 563	1 755	1 754	1 786
South Africa	13 409 249	13 419 971	13 439 683	447 123	450 993	454 749	24 894	24 871	24 836

Sources:

2021/2022 As published in School Realities 2021 and 2023

From the figures reflected in Table 3 it can be deduced that, from 2021 to 2023, the number of learners increased by 0.2% nationally, and the number of educators increased by 3.4%, while the number of schools decreased by 0.2%.

EMIS

www.education.gov.za

Click EMIS on the left menu, then STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



E M I S

Table 4: Number of learners in ordinary schools, by province, sector, gender and grade, in 2023

Province	Sector	Gender	Pre-Grade R Phase	GET Band													GET Band
				Foundation Phase						Intermediate Phase				Senior Phase			
				Pre-Gr. R	Gr. R	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Total	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Total	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Gr. 9	
EC	Independent	Female	165	2 988	4 008	3 999	3 822	14 817	3 610	3 349	3 303	10 262	3 164	2 654	2 427	8 245	33 324
		Total	318	5 987	7 872	7 943	7 635	29 437	7 217	6 809	6 511	20 537	6 197	5 145	4 702	16 044	66 018
	Public	Female	826	52 889	61 153	63 145	66 583	243 770	66 218	65 320	67 586	199 124	67 336	69 033	66 619	202 988	645 882
		Total	1 718	107 137	128 904	132 542	138 647	507 230	141 243	138 609	139 851	419 703	142 126	149 144	136 412	427 682	1 354 615
	Both	Female	991	55 877	65 161	67 144	70 405	258 587	69 828	68 669	70 889	209 386	70 500	71 687	69 046	211 233	679 206
		Total	2 036	113 124	136 776	140 485	146 282	536 667	148 460	145 418	146 362	440 240	148 323	154 289	141 114	443 726	1 420 633
FS	Independent	Female	443	559	805	893	890	3 147	848	814	793	2 455	772	877	823	2 472	8 074
		Total	868	1 126	1 686	1 857	1 803	6 472	1 732	1 591	1 571	4 894	1 582	1 811	1 610	5 003	16 369
	Public	Female	638	18 489	25 201	25 879	27 367	96 936	27 952	27 197	26 857	82 006	27 984	31 349	27 948	87 281	266 223
		Total	1 398	37 250	52 080	53 606	56 148	199 084	59 385	55 706	54 278	169 369	57 679	66 793	55 699	180 171	548 624
	Both	Female	1 081	19 048	26 006	26 772	28 257	100 083	28 800	28 011	27 650	84 461	28 756	32 226	28 771	89 753	274 297
		Total	2 266	38 376	53 766	55 463	57 951	205 556	61 117	57 297	55 849	174 263	59 261	68 604	57 309	185 174	564 993
GP	Independent	Female	3 250	8 086	14 967	15 238	14 989	53 280	14 169	13 867	13 160	41 196	12 980	15 046	13 929	41 955	136 431
		Total	6 270	16 324	30 261	30 481	30 222	107 288	28 366	27 822	26 447	82 635	25 828	29 258	27 008	82 094	272 017
	Public	Female	1 970	56 649	92 777	92 190	94 942	336 558	93 297	92 687	92 598	278 582	91 292	93 138	88 747	273 177	888 317
		Total	3 976	113 021	191 780	188 805	192 765	686 371	191 339	187 409	186 931	565 679	183 988	195 812	174 842	554 642	1 806 692
	Both	Female	5 220	64 735	107 744	107 428	109 931	389 838	107 466	106 554	105 758	319 778	104 272	108 184	102 676	315 132	1 024 748
		Total	10 246	129 345	222 041	219 286	222 987	793 659	219 705	215 231	213 378	648 314	209 816	225 070	201 850	636 736	2 078 709
KZN	Independent	Female	786	1 998	2 735	2 915	2 821	10 469	2 549	2 502	2 404	7 455	2 346	2 633	2 447	7 426	25 350
		Total	1 679	3 903	5 464	5 626	5 499	20 492	5 025	4 900	4 670	14 595	4 615	4 958	4 494	14 067	49 154
	Public	Female	1 049	82 985	97 300	99 823	106 891	386 999	105 449	103 793	105 583	314 825	105 682	110 201	110 681	326 564	1 028 388
		Total	1 992	167 000	203 119	206 783	219 683	796 585	219 657	214 375	215 655	649 687	218 887	240 220	227 576	686 683	2 132 955
	Both	Female	1 835	84 983	100 035	102 738	109 712	397 468	107 998	106 295	107 987	322 280	108 028	112 834	113 128	333 990	1 053 738
		Total	1 836	85 920	108 548	109 671	115 470	419 609	116 684	112 980	112 338	342 002	115 474	132 344	118 942	366 760	1 128 371
LP	Independent	Female	515	3 633	4 315	4 125	3 910	15 983	3 886	3 743	3 459	11 088	3 238	2 902	2 767	8 907	35 978
		Total	1 008	7 110	8 624	8 239	7 897	31 870	7 804	7 346	6 765	21 915	6 367	5 704	5 172	17 243	71 028
	Public	Female	234	58 309	60 877	60 986	65 501	245 673	66 454	65 173	64 890	196 517	63 682	67 417	63 143	194 242	636 432
		Total	468	117 265	125 101	125 434	134 246	502 046	140 499	136 030	134 924	411 453	134 384	149 969	130 006	414 359	1 327 858
	Both	Female	749	61 942	65 192	65 111	69 411	261 656	70 340	68 916	68 349	207 605	66 920	70 319	65 910	203 149	672 410
		Total	1 476	124 375	133 725	133 673	142 143	533 916	148 303	143 376	141 689	433 368	140 751	155 673	135 178	431 602	1 398 886
MP	Independent	Female	330	1 059	1 767	1 802	1 790	6 418	1 606	1 579	1 451	4 636	1 293	1 102	1 029	3 424	14 478
		Total	669	2 141	3 584	3 499	3 611	12 835	3 265	3 150	2 888	9 303	2 660	2 261	2 130	7 051	29 189
	Public	Female	255	33 132	40 535	41 559	42 969	158 195	42 834	42 483	43 143	128 460	41 258	44 517	43 027	128 802	415 457
		Total	475	66 417	83 931	85 051	88 602	324 001	89 016	87 353	87 272	263 641	85 326	96 084	88 102	269 512	857 154
	Both	Female	585	34 191	42 302	43 361	44 759	164 613	44 440	44 062	44 594	133 096	42 551	45 619	44 056	132 226	429 935
		Total	1 144	68 558	87 515	88 550	92 213	336 836	92 281	90 503	90 160	272 944	87 986	98 345	90 232	276 563	886 343
NC	Independent	Female	220	340	345	394	324	1 403	304	241	239	784	238	275	236	749	2 936
		Total	430	675	687	748	658	2 768	619	567	517	1 703	440	495	424	1 359	5 830
	Public	Female	206	9 513	12 301	12 916	13 133	47 863	12 596	12 148	11 850	36 594	11 748	12 152	11 025	34 925	119 382
		Total	465	19 253	25 876	26 859	26 829	98 817	26 438	24 917	24 092	75 447	24 071	24 879	21 502	70 452	244 716
	Both	Female	426	9 853	12 646	13 310	13 457	49 266	12 900	12 389	12 089	37 378	11 986	12 427	11 261	35 674	122 318
		Total	895	19 928	26 563	27 607	27 487	101 585	27 057	25 484	24 609	77 150	24 511	25 374	21 926	71 811	250 546
NW	Independent	Female	81	968	1 507	1 366	1 351	5 192	1 311	1 269	1 192	3 772	1 143	1 121	1 047	3 311	12 275
		Total	164	1 928	3 009	2 818	2 793	10 548	2 677	2 537	2 443	7 657	2 274	2 228	2 051	6 553	24 758
	Public	Female	234	26 554	31 815	32 356	33 744	124 469	34 183	33 688	33 759	101 630	33 515	35 691	33 880	103 086	329 185
		Total	506	53 035	65 546	66 753	69 307	254 641	71 833	69 542	68 473	209 848	69 522	77 254	66 435	213 211	677 700
	Both	Female	315	27 522	33 322	33 722	35 095	129 661	35 494	34 957	34 951	105 402	34 658	36 812	34 927	106 397	341 460
		Total	670	54 963	68 555	69 571	72 100	265 189	74 510	72 079	70 916	217 505	71 796	79 482	68 486	219 764	702 458
WC	Independent	Female	848	1 949	2 963	3 067	2 935	10 914	2 817	2 784	2 641	8 242	2 519	2 941	2 896	8 356	27 512
		Total	1 556	3 708	5 988	6 168	5 926	21 790	5 608	5 418	5 197	16 223	5 031	5 721	5 626	16 378	54 391
	Public	Female	849	34 697	48 352	51 654	51 382	186 085	50 321	49 631	49 296	149 248	49 121	51 343	48 224	148 688	484 021
		Total	1 585	69 579	99 632	104 947	104 336	378 494	105 133	99 669	98 476	303 278	97 930	100 543	90 787	289 260	971 032
	Both	Female	1 697	36 646	51 315	54 721	54 317	196 999	53 138	52 415	51 937	157 490	51 640	54 284	51 120	157 044	511 533
		Total	1 444	36 641	54 305	56 394	55 945	203 285	57 603	52 672	51 736	162 011	51 321	51 980	45 293	148 594	513 890
National	Independent	Female	6 638	21 580	33 412	33 799	32 832	121 623	31 100	30 148	28 642	89 890	27 693	29 551	27 601	84 845	296 358
		Total	6 488	23 250	36 772	36 398	36 005	132 425	33 890	32 529	30 810	97 229	29 575	30 258	27 667	87 500	317 154
	Public	Female	13 126	44 830	70 184	70 197	68 837	254 048	64 990	62 677	59 452	187 119	57 268	59 809	55 268	172 345	613 512
		Total	6 261	373 217	470 311	480 508	502 512	1 826 548	499 304	492 120	495 562	1 486 986	491 618	514 841	493 294	1 499 753	4 813 287
	Both	Female	6 322	376 740	505 658	510 272	528 051	1 920 721	545 239	521 490	514 390	1 581 119	522 295	585 857	498 067	1 606 219	5 108 059
		Total	12 583	749 957	975 969	990 780	1 030 563	3 747 269	1 044 543	1 013 610	1 009 952	3 068 105	1 013 913	1 100 698	991 361	3 105 972	9 921 346

E M I S

Table 4: Number of learners in ordinary schools, by province, sector, gender and grade, in 2023 (concluded)

Province	Sector	Gender	FET Band				Other	Total Primary (Gr. 1-7)	Total Secondary (Gr. 8-12)	Total (Gr. 1-12)	Grand Total
			Gr. 10	Gr. 11	Gr. 12	Total					
EC	Independent	Female	2 028	2 028	2 371	6 427	6	25 255	11 508	36 763	39 922
		Total	3 776	3 806	4 082	11 664	31	50 184	21 511	71 695	78 031
	Public	Female	74 432	67 015	55 239	196 686	4	457 341	332 338	789 679	843 398
		Total	150 454	125 037	96 249	371 740	15	961 922	657 296	1 619 218	1 728 088
	Both	Female	76 460	69 043	57 610	203 113	10	482 596	343 846	826 442	883 320
		Total	154 230	128 843	100 331	383 404	46	1 012 106	678 807	1 690 913	1 806 119
FS	Independent	Female	819	692	593	2 104	0	5 815	3 804	9 619	10 621
		Total	1 585	1 327	1 078	3 990	0	11 822	7 411	19 233	21 227
	Public	Female	32 461	25 562	22 924	80 947	0	188 437	140 244	328 681	347 808
		Total	65 019	47 447	39 906	152 372	0	388 882	274 864	663 746	702 394
	Both	Female	33 280	26 254	23 517	83 051	0	194 252	144 048	338 300	358 429
		Total	66 604	48 774	40 984	156 362	0	400 704	282 275	682 979	723 621
GP	Independent	Female	13 007	12 071	10 661	35 739	5	99 370	64 714	164 084	175 425
		Total	25 131	23 335	19 789	68 255	13	199 427	124 521	323 948	346 555
	Public	Female	97 892	82 829	66 002	246 723	55	649 783	428 608	1 078 391	1 137 065
		Total	198 367	154 497	117 764	470 628	196	1 323 017	841 282	2 164 299	2 281 492
	Both	Female	110 899	94 900	76 663	282 462	60	749 153	493 322	1 242 475	1 312 490
		Total	112 599	82 932	60 890	256 421	149	773 291	472 481	1 245 772	1 315 557
KZN	Independent	Female	2 218	2 127	2 273	6 618	6	18 272	11 698	29 970	32 760
		Total	4 041	3 926	3 941	11 908	9	35 799	21 360	57 159	62 750
	Public	Female	127 120	127 453	97 210	351 783	7	724 521	572 665	1 297 186	1 381 227
		Total	266 736	241 681	169 732	678 149	12	1 498 159	1 145 945	2 644 104	2 813 108
	Both	Female	129 338	129 580	99 483	358 401	13	742 793	584 363	1 327 156	1 413 987
		Total	141 439	116 027	74 190	331 656	8	791 165	582 942	1 374 107	1 461 871
LP	Independent	Female	2 563	2 185	2 565	7 313	0	26 676	12 982	39 658	43 806
		Total	4 771	4 092	4 327	13 190	0	53 042	24 066	77 108	85 226
	Public	Female	78 989	66 203	51 444	196 636	0	447 563	327 196	774 759	833 302
		Total	167 137	127 195	91 410	385 742	0	930 618	665 717	1 596 335	1 714 068
	Both	Female	81 552	68 388	54 009	203 949	0	474 239	340 178	814 417	877 108
		Total	90 356	62 899	41 728	194 983	0	509 421	349 605	859 026	922 186
MP	Independent	Female	985	1 020	1 629	3 634	0	11 288	5 765	17 053	18 442
		Total	2 012	2 143	3 064	7 219	0	22 657	11 610	34 267	37 077
	Public	Female	48 638	45 155	37 549	131 342	11	294 781	218 886	513 667	547 065
		Total	101 857	87 287	66 477	255 621	29	606 551	439 807	1 046 358	1 113 279
	Both	Female	49 623	46 175	39 178	134 976	11	306 069	224 651	530 720	565 507
		Total	54 246	43 255	30 363	127 864	18	323 139	226 766	549 905	584 849
NC	Independent	Female	242	215	224	681	0	2 085	1 192	3 277	3 837
		Total	422	422	386	1 230	0	4 236	2 149	6 385	7 490
	Public	Female	12 223	8 982	7 305	28 510	0	86 692	51 687	138 379	148 098
		Total	24 330	16 679	12 973	53 982	0	179 082	100 363	279 445	299 163
	Both	Female	12 465	9 197	7 529	29 191	0	88 777	52 879	141 656	151 935
		Total	12 287	7 904	5 830	26 021	0	94 541	49 633	144 174	154 718
NW	Independent	Female	845	777	666	2 288	11	9 139	4 456	13 595	14 655
		Total	1 794	1 447	1 248	4 489	25	18 551	8 768	27 319	29 436
	Public	Female	37 538	29 386	23 334	90 258	0	233 060	159 829	392 889	419 677
		Total	75 802	54 741	41 895	172 438	0	480 976	316 127	797 103	850 644
	Both	Female	38 383	30 163	24 000	92 546	11	242 199	164 285	406 484	434 332
		Total	39 213	26 025	19 143	84 381	14	257 328	160 610	417 938	445 748
WC	Independent	Female	2 697	2 518	2 197	7 412	12	19 726	13 249	32 975	35 784
		Total	5 240	4 810	4 289	14 339	30	39 336	25 686	65 022	70 316
	Public	Female	47 388	41 360	34 828	123 576	355	349 757	223 143	572 900	608 801
		Total	88 994	74 845	61 956	225 795	927	710 123	417 125	1 127 248	1 199 339
	Both	Female	50 085	43 878	37 025	130 988	367	369 483	236 392	605 875	644 585
		Total	44 149	35 777	29 220	109 146	590	379 976	206 419	586 395	625 070
National	Independent	Female	25 404	23 633	23 179	72 216	40	217 626	129 368	346 994	375 252
		Total	50 566	46 755	43 452	140 773	133	453 605	255 850	709 455	767 544
	Public	Female	556 681	493 945	395 835	1 446 461	432	3 431 935	2 454 596	5 886 531	6 266 441
		Total	1 138 696	929 409	698 362	2 766 467	1 179	7 079 330	4 858 526	11 937 856	12 701 575
	Both	Female	582 015	435 464	302 527	1 320 006	747	3 647 395	2 403 930	6 051 325	6 435 134
		Total	605 383	457 139	321 552	1 384 074	815	3 864 823	2 521 644	6 386 467	6 797 990
Both	Female	582 085	517 578	419 014	1 518 677	472	3 649 561	2 583 964	6 233 525	6 641 693	
	Total	1 187 468	974 717	740 566	2 902 751	1 287	7 514 384	5 105 608	12 619 992	13 439 683	

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.

Note 3: Data will be provided on request.

1) Learners not grouped in any of the grades provided

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of learners in ordinary schools, by phase, in 2023

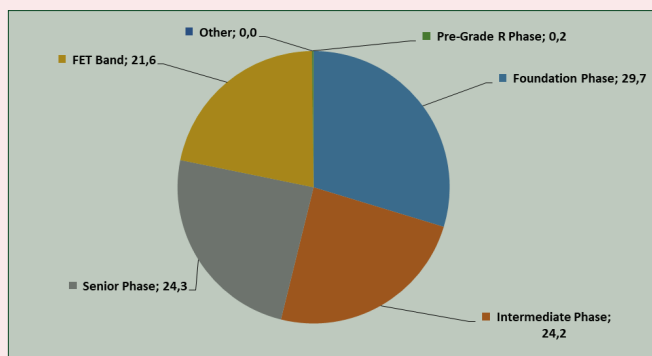


Figure 1 reveals that the highest proportion of learners in ordinary schools nationally was located in the foundation phase (29.7%) followed by the senior phase and the intermediate phase with 24.3% and 24.2%, respectively.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of female learners in ordinary schools, by grade, in 2023

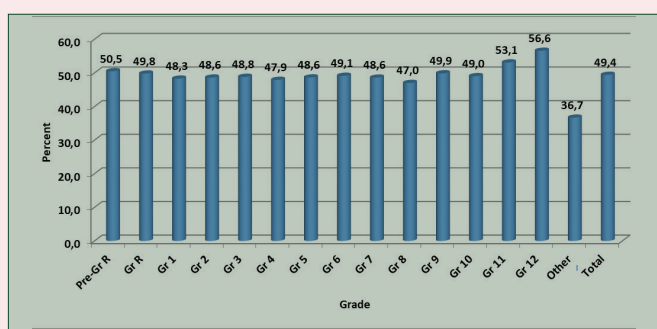


Figure 2 shows that, in the schooling system, there were more male than female (49.4%) learners. The lowest percentage of female learners in ordinary schools nationally was in Grades 8 (47.0%) and the highest percentage was in Grade 12 (56.6%).

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of learners in ordinary schools, by grade, in 2023

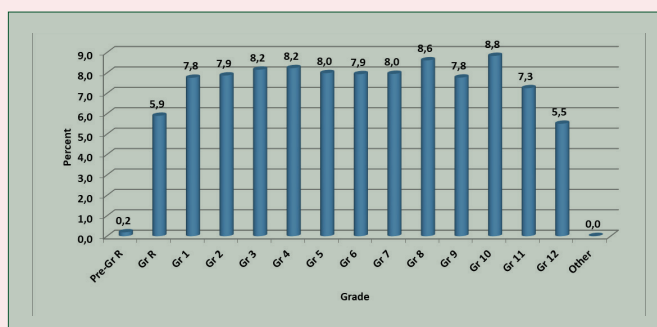


Figure 3 indicates that enrolment distribution is generally very high in Grades 10 (8.8%) and declines as learners move to higher grades within the schooling system with 5.5% in Grade 12.

Table 5 reflects the following indicators:

(a) When counting all educators, the LER for ordinary public schools nationally was 30.8%, while, when counting only state-paid educators in these schools, the LER increased to 34.2.

Table 5: Indicators for ordinary PUBLIC schools, by province, in 2023

Province	LER		LSR	ESR
	State-paid and SGB-paid Educators	State-Paid Educators ¹⁾		
Eastern Cape	29,1	34,9	345	11,5
Free State	29,3	33,9	750	25,4
Gauteng	25,8	35,8	1107	36,8
KwaZulu-Natal	29,8	33,5	486	16,2
Limpopo	31,8	34,9	473	14,4
Mpumalanga	30,9	35,4	682	21,7
Northern Cape	28,2	32,0	551	19,5
North West	30,0	34,1	589	19,2
Western Cape	26,8	36,7	818	27,5
South Africa	30,8	34,2	564	18,5

1) Underlying data not shown in the publication.

(b) The LSR for ordinary public schools nationally was 564, where five provinces (Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, and the Western Cape) were higher than the national average.

(c) The ESR for ordinary public schools nationally was 18.5, where 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 2023

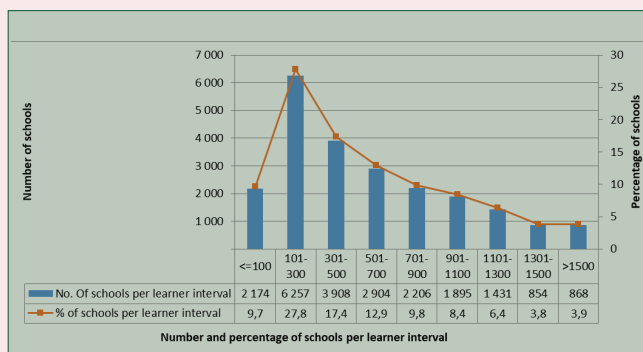


Figure 4, a histogram, shows that the highest number of ordinary public schools nationally (6 257, or 27.8%) was in the 101 to 300 learner interval. Furthermore, there were 2 174 schools (9.7%) and 868 schools (3.9%) in, the 100 and below learner interval and the above 1 500 learner interval, respectively.

Figure 5: Frequency distribution of LER in ordinary PUBLIC schools in 2023

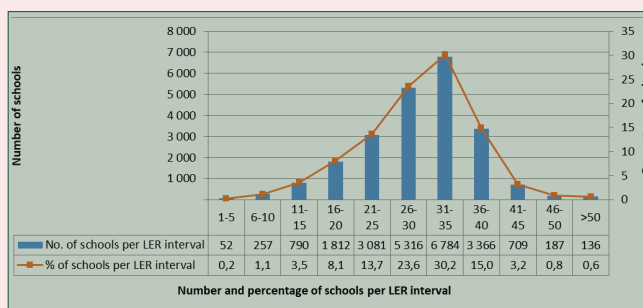


Figure 5, a histogram, reflects that the highest number of ordinary public schools nationally (6 784, or 30.2%) was in the 31 to 35 LER interval. Furthermore, there were 52 schools (0.2%) and 136 schools (0.6%) in, the one to five LER interval and the above 50 LER interval, respectively.