

School Realities

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In 2020, there were 13 216 472 learners in ordinary public and independent schools (hereinafter collectively referred to as ordinary schools) in South Africa, who attended 25 199 schools and were served by 442 940 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 2020. Approximately 99.9% of functional ordinary schools were uploaded. The figures in this publication are preliminary, and the final figures will be published in the more comprehensive Education Statistics in South Africa 2020.

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 the ordinary school sector, by province, in 2020

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	1 768 040	59 279	5 213	75 257	3 368	239	1 843 297	14	62 647	14	5 452	22
FS	700 052	22 539	1 045	19 795	1 163	77	719 847	5	23 702	5	1 122	4
GT	2 186 156	69 719	2 071	322 231	19 678	834	2 508 387	19	89 397	20	2 905	12
KZN	2 808 976	92 800	5 853	58 295	3 898	338	2 867 271	22	96 698	22	6 191	25
LP	1 686 170	50 352	3 716	73 152	3 246	170	1 759 322	13	53 598	12	3 886	15
MP	1 079 687	35 062	1 666	28 203	1 756	116	1 107 890	8	36 818	8	1 782	7
NC	297 669	10 037	545	6 568	490	40	304 237	2	10 527	2	585	2
NW	839 859	26 296	1 447	23 212	1 365	85	863 071	7	27 661	6	1 532	6
WC	1 176 810	36 768	1 448	66 340	5 124	296	1 243 150	9	41 892	9	1 744	7
South Africa	12 543 419	402 852	23 004	673 053	40 088	2 195	13 216 472	100	442 940	100	25 199	100

Table 2 shows the number of ordinary public and independent schools, learners and educators there were in 2020. 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 (834) followed by the Western Cape with 296 schools.

Table 3: Number of learners, educators and schools in the ordinary school sector, by province, from 2018 to 2020

Province	Learners			Educators			Schools		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
EC	1 840 780	1 843 814	1 843 297	61 613	64 273	62 647	5 409	5 430	5 452
FS	707 166	716 080	719 847	23 741	24 027	23 702	1 187	1 156	1 122
GT	2 402 576	2 447 377	2 508 387	89 242	87 728	89 397	2 836	2 813	2 905
KZN	2 821 221	2 844 764	2 867 271	93 878	97 563	96 698	6 038	6 036	6 191
LP	1 724 791	1 753 819	1 759 322	54 729	54 019	53 598	4 006	3 931	3 886
MP	1 045 972	1 094 941	1 107 890	34 825	36 979	36 818	1 863	1 795	1 782
NC	295 339	298 888	304 237	10 603	10 653	10 527	582	583	585
NW	840 640	852 589	863 071	27 352	28 012	27 661	1 523	1 536	1 532
WC	1 141 057	1 188 926	1 243 150	40 466	41 603	41 892	1 710	1 718	1 744
South Africa	12 819 542	13 041 198	13 216 472	436 449	444 857	442 940	25 154	24 998	25 199

Sources:

2018/19: As published in School Realities 2018 and 2019

From the figures reflected in Table 3 it can be deduced that, from 2018 to 2020, the number of learners increased by 3.1% nationally, and the number of educators and schools increased by 1.5% and 0.2 respectively.

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Table 4: Number of learners in ordinary schools, by province, sector, gender and grade, in 2020

Province	Sector	Gender	Pre-Grade R	GET Band												Total GET Band	
				Foundation Phase					Intermediate Phase				Senior Phase				
				Grade R	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9		Total
EC	Independent	Female	310	2 485	3 829	3 690	3 793	13 797	3 626	3 347	3 113	10 086	2 741	2 718	2 389	7 848	31 731
		Total	596	5 031	7 721	7 567	7 662	27 981	7 308	6 708	6 184	20 200	5 484	5 407	4 517	15 408	63 589
	Public	Female	914	55 564	71 900	69 243	71 132	267 839	71 376	70 017	70 155	211 548	70 898	70 540	66 193	207 631	687 018
		Total	1 682	112 828	153 098	147 353	148 640	561 919	155 101	147 901	145 310	448 312	146 620	148 872	130 656	426 148	1 436 379
	Both	Female	1 224	58 049	75 279	72 933	74 925	281 636	75 002	73 364	73 268	221 634	73 639	73 258	68 582	215 479	718 749
		Male	1 054	59 810	85 090	81 987	81 377	308 264	87 407	81 245	78 226	246 878	78 465	81 021	66 591	226 077	781 219
Grand Total		2 278	117 859	160 819	154 920	156 302	589 900	162 409	154 609	151 494	468 512	152 104	154 279	135 173	441 556	1 499 968	
FS	Independent	Female	220	744	1 011	934	903	3 592	846	781	691	2 318	706	849	746	2 301	8 211
		Total	429	1 454	2 031	1 843	1 772	7 100	1 749	1 579	1 396	4 724	1 322	1 721	1 427	4 470	16 294
	Public	Female	642	19 299	28 631	28 407	27 421	103 758	29 502	28 256	27 688	85 446	28 054	31 675	26 886	86 615	275 819
		Total	1 209	38 889	60 182	58 340	56 277	213 688	61 886	58 035	56 270	176 191	58 579	65 688	52 106	176 373	566 252
	Both	Female	862	20 043	29 642	29 341	28 324	107 350	30 348	29 037	28 379	87 764	28 760	32 524	27 632	88 916	284 030
		Male	776	20 300	32 571	30 842	29 725	113 438	33 287	30 577	29 287	93 151	31 141	34 885	25 901	91 927	298 516
Grand Total		1 638	40 343	62 213	60 183	58 049	220 788	63 635	59 614	57 666	180 915	59 901	67 409	53 533	180 843	582 546	
GT	Independent	Female	2 703	8 178	15 137	15 710	15 038	54 063	14 082	13 413	12 313	39 808	11 207	12 760	11 890	35 857	129 728
		Total	5 383	16 335	30 809	31 525	30 176	108 845	28 299	26 468	24 483	79 250	22 226	25 062	23 199	70 487	258 582
	Public	Female	1 439	52 873	93 807	93 711	92 749	333 140	92 476	92 337	91 662	276 475	87 772	85 257	82 606	255 635	865 250
		Total	2 951	105 544	195 707	192 566	189 436	683 253	191 614	186 801	182 543	560 958	175 186	177 378	162 302	514 866	1 759 077
	Both	Female	4 142	61 051	108 944	109 421	107 787	387 203	106 558	105 750	103 975	316 283	98 979	98 017	94 496	291 492	994 977
		Male	4 192	60 828	117 572	114 670	111 825	404 895	113 355	107 519	103 051	323 925	98 433	104 423	91 005	293 861	1 062 681
Grand Total		8 334	121 879	226 516	224 091	219 612	792 098	219 913	213 269	207 026	640 208	197 412	202 440	185 501	585 353	2 017 659	
KZN	Independent	Female	794	2 026	2 757	2 662	2 574	10 019	2 444	2 254	2 192	6 890	2 088	2 514	2 310	6 912	23 821
		Total	1 506	3 980	5 500	5 270	5 002	19 752	4 818	4 420	4 298	13 536	3 948	4 581	4 126	12 655	45 943
	Public	Female	844	88 307	110 666	106 954	107 241	413 168	108 506	107 374	107 790	323 670	105 938	112 234	107 476	325 648	1 062 486
		Total	1 626	178 420	232 031	221 666	221 111	853 228	229 550	222 701	219 705	671 956	216 980	239 928	217 184	674 092	2 199 276
	Both	Female	1 638	90 333	113 423	109 616	109 815	423 187	110 950	109 628	109 982	330 560	108 026	114 748	109 786	332 560	1 086 307
		Male	1 494	92 067	124 108	117 320	116 298	449 793	123 418	117 493	114 021	354 932	112 902	129 761	111 524	354 187	1 158 912
Grand Total		3 132	182 400	237 531	226 936	226 111	872 980	234 368	227 121	224 003	685 492	220 928	244 509	221 310	686 747	2 245 219	
LP	Independent	Female	473	2 770	3 872	3 873	3 507	14 022	3 328	3 035	2 828	9 191	2 614	2 648	2 398	7 660	30 873
		Total	938	5 655	7 681	7 675	7 073	28 084	6 670	6 034	5 595	18 299	5 231	5 022	4 621	14 874	61 257
	Public	Female	94	59 918	66 807	66 561	65 973	259 259	66 863	63 340	63 021	193 224	61 269	65 551	61 677	188 497	640 980
		Total	210	119 863	139 229	137 501	137 328	533 921	145 334	132 278	128 621	406 233	125 581	141 845	125 600	393 026	1 333 180
	Both	Female	567	62 688	70 679	70 434	69 480	273 281	70 191	66 375	65 849	202 415	63 883	68 199	64 075	196 157	671 853
		Male	581	62 830	76 231	74 742	74 921	288 724	81 813	71 937	68 367	222 117	66 929	78 668	66 146	211 743	722 584
Grand Total		1 148	125 518	146 910	145 176	144 401	562 005	152 004	138 312	134 216	424 532	130 812	146 867	130 221	407 900	1 394 437	
MP	Independent	Female	156	838	1 160	1 519	1 394	5 311	1 237	1 084	1 039	3 360	946	689	632	2 267	10 938
		Total	338	1 740	3 520	3 041	2 764	10 665	2 594	2 290	2 124	7 008	1 858	1 485	1 355	4 698	22 371
	Public	Female	66	31 933	43 649	42 958	43 403	161 943	41 895	42 078	41 793	125 766	41 208	42 493	41 000	124 701	412 410
		Total	126	64 103	91 307	88 933	88 739	333 082	89 090	87 394	85 308	261 792	84 675	90 756	82 776	258 207	853 081
	Both	Female	222	32 771	45 209	44 477	44 797	167 254	43 132	43 162	42 832	129 126	42 154	43 182	41 632	126 968	423 348
		Male	242	33 072	49 218	47 497	46 706	176 493	48 552	46 522	44 600	139 674	44 379	49 059	42 499	135 937	452 104
Grand Total		464	65 843	94 427	91 974	91 503	343 747	91 684	89 684	87 432	268 800	86 533	92 241	84 131	262 905	875 452	
NC	Independent	Female	303	294	340	299	245	1 178	254	173	173	600	152	286	262	700	2 478
		Total	575	589	681	665	525	2 460	500	409	363	1 272	313	498	449	1 260	4 992
	Public	Female	205	10 241	13 200	12 758	12 148	48 347	12 953	12 227	11 901	37 081	11 873	11 938	11 039	34 850	120 278
		Total	385	20 470	27 669	26 132	25 105	99 376	27 959	25 088	24 037	77 084	24 290	24 531	21 032	69 853	246 313
	Both	Female	508	10 535	13 540	13 057	12 393	49 525	13 207	12 400	12 074	37 681	12 025	12 224	11 301	35 550	122 756
		Male	452	10 524	14 810	13 740	13 237	52 311	15 252	13 097	12 326	40 675	12 578	12 805	10 180	35 563	128 549
Grand Total		960	21 059	28 350	26 797	25 630	101 836	28 459	25 497	24 400	78 356	24 603	25 029	21 481	71 113	251 305	
NW	Independent	Female	70	834	1 220	1 195	1 189	4 438	1 136	1 056	929	3 121	852	735	714	2 301	9 860
		Total	139	1 655	2 484	2 403	2 484	9 026	2 335	2 106	1 855	6 296	1 772	1 420	1 440	4 632	19 954
	Public	Female	169	25 411	34 203	34 334	34 488	128 436	35 436	34 506	34 341	104 283	32 694	34 507	31 626	98 827	331 546
		Total	319	50 914	70 797	71 069	71 326	264 106	76 202	71 867	69 156	217 225	66 020	72 150			

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Table 4: Number of learners in ordinary schools, by province, sector, gender and grade, in 2020 (concluded)

Province	Sector	Gender	FET Band				Other	Total Primary Gr1-7	Total Secondary Gr8-12	Total Gr1-12	Grand Total
			Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total					
EC	Independent	Female	1 989	1 871	2 146	6 006	4	24 139	11 113	35 252	38 051
		Total	3 750	3 448	3 854	11 052	20	48 634	20 976	69 610	75 257
	Public	Female	72 401	60 687	44 269	177 357	0	494 721	314 090	808 811	865 289
		Total	141 583	109 893	78 503	329 979	0	1 044 023	609 507	1 653 530	1 768 040
	Both	Female	74 390	62 558	46 415	183 363	4	518 860	325 203	844 063	903 340
		Male	70 943	50 783	35 942	157 668	16	573 797	305 280	879 077	939 957
Grand Total			145 333	113 341	82 357	341 031	20	1 092 657	630 483	1 723 140	1 843 297
FS	Independent	Female	667	556	460	1 683	0	5 872	3 278	9 150	10 114
		Total	1 281	1 006	785	3 072	0	11 692	6 220	17 912	19 795
	Public	Female	31 581	22 750	16 005	70 336	0	197 959	128 897	326 856	346 797
		Total	61 640	41 971	28 980	132 591	0	409 569	250 385	659 954	700 052
	Both	Female	32 248	23 306	16 465	72 019	0	203 831	132 175	336 006	356 911
		Male	30 673	19 671	13 300	63 644	0	217 430	124 430	341 860	362 936
Grand Total			62 921	42 977	29 765	135 663	0	421 261	256 605	677 866	719 847
GT	Independent	Female	11 140	10 295	9 025	30 460	2	96 900	55 110	152 010	162 893
		Total	21 715	19 705	16 835	58 255	11	193 986	106 516	300 502	322 231
	Public	Female	92 945	73 230	58 402	224 577	71	644 514	392 440	1 036 954	1 091 337
		Total	185 096	135 012	103 783	423 891	237	1 313 853	763 571	2 077 424	2 186 156
	Both	Female	104 085	83 525	67 427	255 037	73	741 414	447 550	1 188 964	1 254 230
		Male	102 726	71 192	53 191	227 109	175	766 425	422 537	1 188 962	1 254 157
Grand Total			206 811	154 717	120 618	482 146	248	1 507 839	870 087	2 377 926	2 508 387
KZN	Independent	Female	2 030	1 919	2 166	6 115	6	16 971	10 939	27 910	30 736
		Total	3 678	3 395	3 762	10 835	11	33 256	19 542	52 798	58 295
	Public	Female	121 550	115 145	81 228	317 923	0	754 469	537 633	1 292 102	1 381 253
		Total	249 041	215 386	143 647	608 974	0	1 563 744	1 065 186	2 628 930	2 808 976
	Both	Female	123 580	117 064	83 394	324 038	6	771 440	548 572	1 320 012	1 411 989
		Male	129 139	101 717	64 015	294 871	5	825 560	536 156	1 361 716	1 455 282
Grand Total			252 719	218 781	147 409	618 909	11	1 597 000	1 084 728	2 681 728	2 867 271
LP	Independent	Female	2 130	1 962	1 917	6 009	0	23 057	11 055	34 112	37 355
		Total	4 069	3 560	3 328	10 957	0	45 959	20 600	66 559	73 152
	Public	Female	74 306	62 715	44 232	181 253	4	453 834	308 481	762 315	822 331
		Total	153 360	119 526	79 889	352 775	5	945 872	620 220	1 566 092	1 686 170
	Both	Female	76 436	64 677	46 149	187 262	4	476 891	319 536	796 427	859 686
		Male	80 993	58 409	37 068	176 470	1	514 940	321 284	836 224	899 636
Grand Total			157 429	123 086	83 217	363 732	5	991 831	640 820	1 632 651	1 759 322
MP	Independent	Female	671	803	1 233	2 707	0	8 779	4 028	12 807	13 801
		Total	1 491	1 716	2 287	5 494	0	17 791	8 334	26 125	28 203
	Public	Female	46 507	41 187	30 896	118 590	113	296 984	202 083	499 067	531 179
		Total	94 077	77 034	55 078	226 189	291	615 446	399 721	1 015 167	1 079 687
	Both	Female	47 178	41 990	32 129	121 297	113	305 763	206 111	511 874	544 980
		Male	48 390	36 760	25 236	110 386	178	327 474	201 944	529 418	562 910
Grand Total			95 568	78 750	57 365	231 683	291	633 237	408 055	1 041 292	1 107 890
NC	Independent	Female	209	155	198	562	0	1 636	1 110	2 746	3 343
		Total	368	325	308	1 001	0	3 456	1 948	5 404	6 568
	Public	Female	11 965	8 468	6 916	27 349	0	87 060	50 326	137 386	147 832
		Total	23 250	15 414	12 307	50 971	0	180 280	96 534	276 814	297 669
	Both	Female	12 174	8 623	7 114	27 911	0	88 696	51 436	140 132	151 175
		Male	11 444	7 116	5 501	24 061	0	95 040	47 046	142 086	153 062
Grand Total			23 618	15 739	12 615	51 972	0	183 736	98 482	282 218	304 237
NW	Independent	Female	633	557	450	1 640	0	7 577	3 089	10 666	11 570
		Total	1 203	1 049	867	3 119	0	15 439	5 979	21 418	23 212
	Public	Female	35 521	26 535	20 867	82 923	0	240 002	149 056	389 058	414 638
		Total	71 066	49 086	37 715	157 867	0	496 437	292 189	788 626	839 859
	Both	Female	36 154	27 092	21 317	84 563	0	247 579	152 145	399 724	426 208
		Male	36 115	23 043	17 265	76 423	0	264 297	146 023	410 320	436 863
Grand Total			72 269	50 135	38 582	160 986	0	511 876	298 168	810 044	863 071
WC	Independent	Female	2 235	2 238	1 958	6 431	13	19 162	11 471	30 633	33 486
		Total	4 387	4 307	3 798	12 492	30	38 337	22 385	60 722	66 340
	Public	Female	44 645	36 941	29 899	111 485	330	356 480	205 094	561 574	597 413
		Total	83 397	65 950	52 464	201 811	881	724 189	381 391	1 105 580	1 176 810
	Both	Female	46 880	39 179	31 857	117 916	343	375 642	216 565	592 207	630 899
		Male	40 904	31 078	24 405	96 387	568	386 884	187 211	574 095	612 251
Grand Total			87 784	70 257	56 262	214 303	911	762 526	403 776	1 166 302	1 243 150
South Africa	Independent	Female	21 704	20 356	19 553	61 613	25	204 093	111 193	315 286	341 349
		Male	20 238	18 155	16 271	54 664	47	204 457	98 365	305 764	331 704
	Total	41 942	38 511	35 824	116 277	72	408 550	209 558	621 050	673 053	
		Public	Female	531 421	447 658	332 714	1 311 793	518	3 526 023	2 159 203	5 814 123
	Male		531 089	381 614	259 652	1 172 355	896	3 767 390	2 069 116	5 957 994	6 345 350
	Total	1 062 510	829 272	592 366	2 484 148	1 414	7 293 413	4 228 319	11 772 117	12 543 419	
Both		Female	553 125	468 014	352 267	1 373 406	543	3 730 116	2 270 396	6 129 409	6 539 418
	Male	551 327	399 769	275 923	1 227 019	943	3 971 847	2 167 481	6 263 758	6 677 054	
Grand Total			1 104 452	867 783	628 190	2 600 425	1 486	7 701 963	4 437 877	12 393 167	13 216 472

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 2020

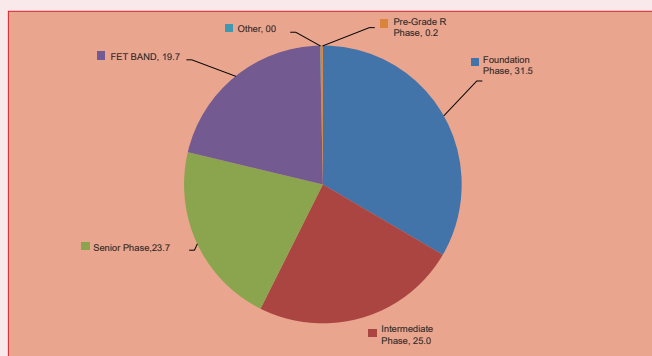


Figure 1 reveals that the highest proportion of learners in ordinary schools nationally was located in the foundation phase (31.5%) followed by the intermediate phase and the senior phase with 25.0% and 23.7%.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of female learners in ordinary schools, by grade, in 2020

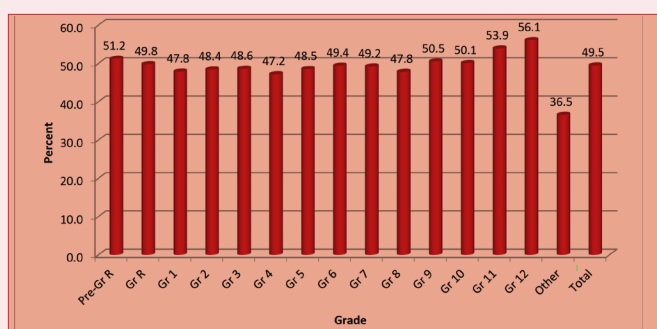


Figure 2 shows that, in the schooling system, there were more male than female (49.5%) learners. The lowest percentage of female learners in ordinary schools nationally was in Grade 4 (47.2%) and the highest percentage was in Grades 11 and 12 (53.9 and 56.1% respectively).

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of learners in ordinary schools, by grade, in 2020

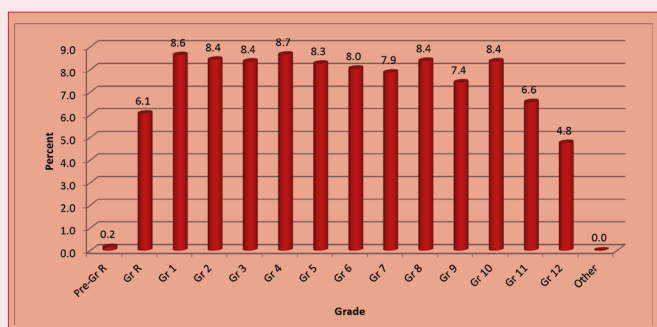


Figure 3 indicates that enrolment is generally very high in Grades 1 and 4 (8.6% and 8.7% respectively) and declines as learners move to higher grades within the schooling system with 4.8% in Grade 12.

Table 5 reflects the following indicators:

(a) When counting all educators, the LER for ordinary public schools nationally was 31.1, while, when counting only state-paid educators in these schools, the LER increased to 34.8.

Table 5: Indicators for ordinary PUBLIC schools, by province, in 2020

Province	LER		LSR	ESR
	State-paid and SGB-paid Educators	State-Paid Educators ¹⁾		
Eastern Cape	29.8	34.1	341	11.4
Free State	31.1	34.6	670	21.6
Gauteng	31.4	36.9	1056	33.7
KwaZulu-Natal	30.3	32.7	480	15.9
Limpopo	33.5	34.8	454	13.6
Mpumalanga	30.8	33.3	648	21.0
Northern Cape	29.7	33.0	546	18.4
North West	31.9	34.7	580	18.2
Western Cape	32.0	40.5	813	25.4
South Africa	31.1	34.8	546	17.5

1) Underlying data not shown in the publication.

(b) The LSR for ordinary public schools nationally was 546, with six provinces (Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape, North West and the Western Cape) higher than the national average.

(c) The ESR for ordinary public schools nationally was 17.5, 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 2020

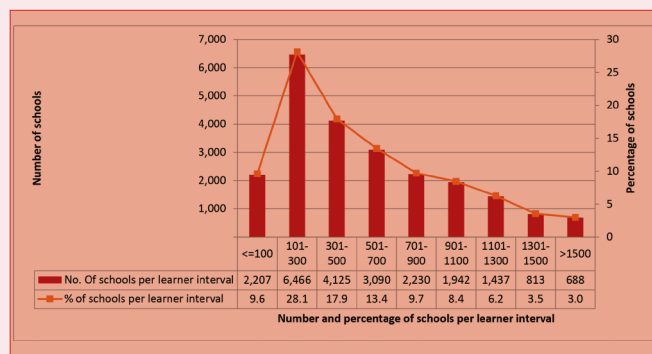


Figure 4, a histogram, shows that the highest number of ordinary public schools nationally (6 466 or 28.1%) was in the 101 to 300 learner interval. Furthermore, there were 2 207 schools (9.6%) and 688 schools (3.0%) in, respectively, the 100 and below learner interval and the above 1 500 learner interval.

Figure 5: Frequency distribution of LER in ordinary PUBLIC schools in 2020

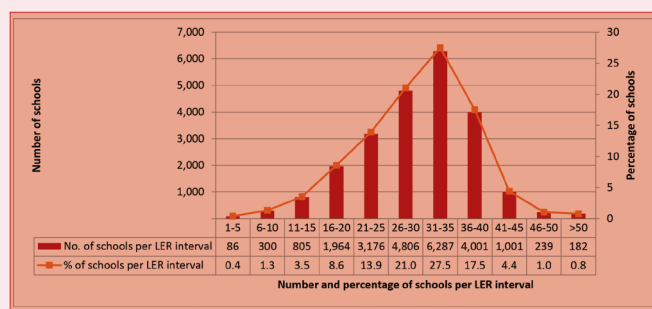


Figure 5, a histogram, reflects that the highest number of ordinary public schools nationally (6 287, or 27.5%) was in the 31 to 35 LER interval. Furthermore, there were 86 schools (0.4%) and 182 schools (0.8%) in, respectively, the one to five LER interval and the above 50 LER interval.