

# 5-Year National Basic Education Transition Examination Analysis

2016-2021

Updated October 2021



**Ministry of Basic and Senior  
Secondary Education**

## Transition Exams



### 1. National Primary School Exam (NPSE)

- National examination taken in the sixth and final year of **primary school**
- Students take **five subjects**; with maximum score of 100 in each
- Total maximum score is 500; **minimum national pass mark is 230**
- Successful students transition into junior secondary school



### 2. Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)

- National examination taken in the third and final year of **junior secondary school**
- Students take **eight subjects**; best score is 1 (excellent), worst is 7 (fail)
- The **minimum national pass mark is 36**; with a score of 6 (pass) across 6 subjects
- Successful students transition into senior secondary school or technical and vocational education programs



### 3. West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)

- International examination taken in the third and final year of **senior secondary school**
- Students take up to **nine subjects**; best score is 1 (excellent), worst is 9 (fail)
- A credit score is C4-C6 and a pass is D7-E8
- Different requirements to transition into higher and technical institutions

There are **two national and one international transition exams** in Sierra Leone. These exams are developed, conducted and graded by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

This report will focus on basic education, that is, **NPSE and BECE results** for the period **2016-2021**

## *Today's focus*



### 1. National Primary School Exam (NPSE)

- Taken in the sixth and final year of **primary school**
- Students take **five subjects**, with maximum score of 100 in each
- Total maximum score is 500; **minimum pass mark is 230**
- Successful students transition into junior secondary school



### 2. Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)

- Taken in the third and final year of **junior secondary school**
- Students take **eight subjects**; best score is 1 (excellent); worst is 7 (fail)
- The **minimum pass mark is 36** with a score of 6 across 6 subjects
- Successful students transition into senior secondary school or TVETs

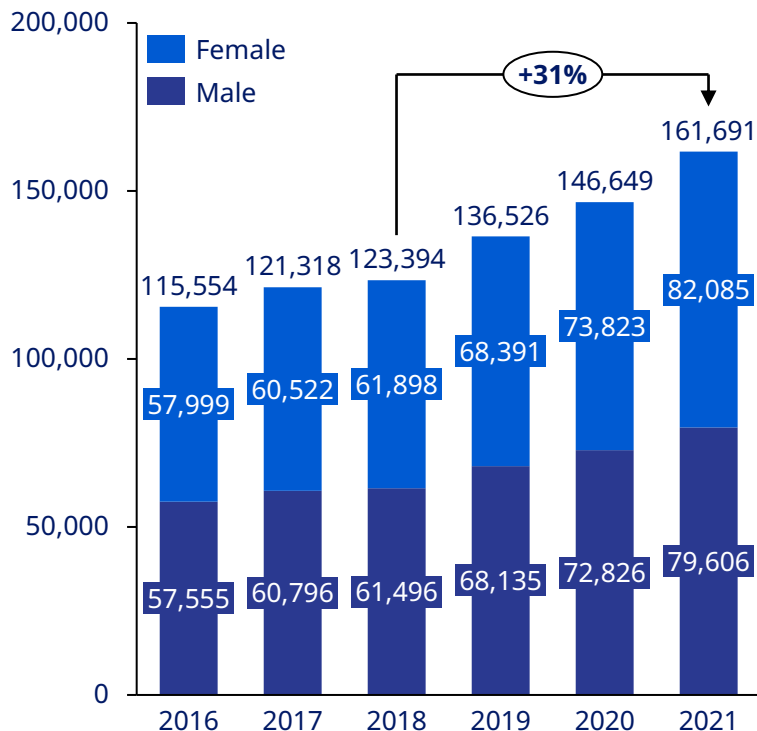
# 1. NPSE: Since 2018 the number of students passing has increased by 27%, or 26,815 students

Since 2018, 31% more students have been able to sit the NPSE

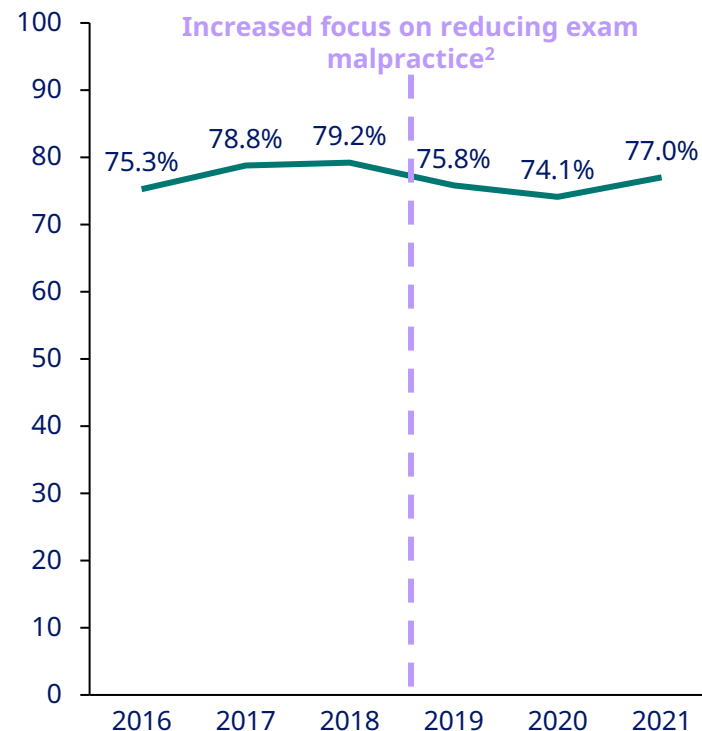
Pass rates dipped after focus on malpractice, but recovered since

As a result, 27% more students pass NPSE annually compared to 2018

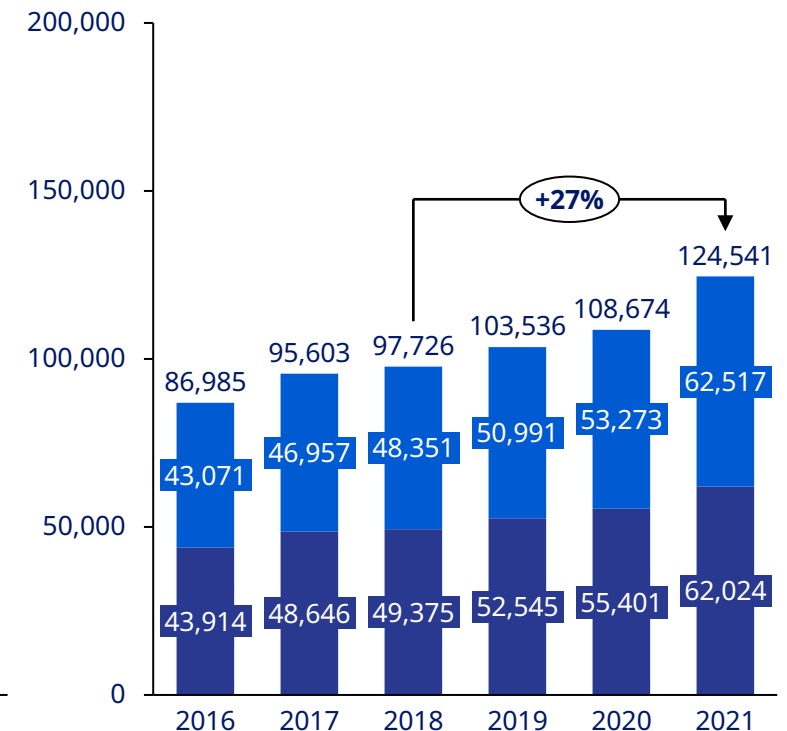
Students Sitting NPSE (Total number)



Students passing NPSE (minimum score 230<sup>1</sup>) (% of total sitting exam)



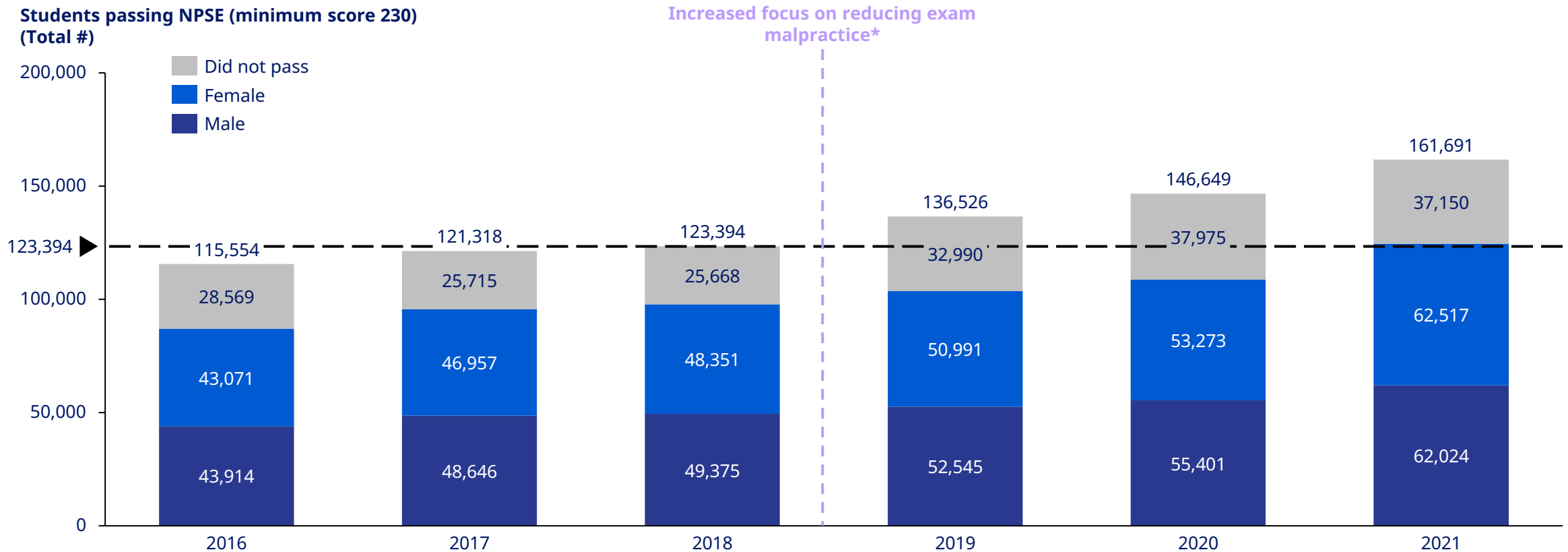
Students passing NPSE (minimum score 230<sup>1</sup>) (Total number)



1) Students take five subjects, with maximum score of 100 in each. Total maximum score is 500. Minimum passing score is 230 to go to junior secondary school.

2) Including Presidential Taskforce on Examination Malpractice (2018), Anti-Corruption Commission arrests of teachers (2018), Tougher measures on malpractice, including immediate prosecution, firing of convicted teachers and canceling of all results from implicated examination centers (2019), Communiqué based on high-level consultations (2019-20)

# 1. NPSE: 124,541 students passed the exam in 2021, more than the total number of students who attempted it in 2018



*\*) Including Presidential Taskforce on Examination Malpractice (2018), Anti-Corruption Commission arrests of teachers (2018), Tougher measures on malpractice, including immediate prosecution, firing of convicted teachers and canceling of all results from implicated examination centers (2019), Communiqué based on high-level consultations (2019-20)*

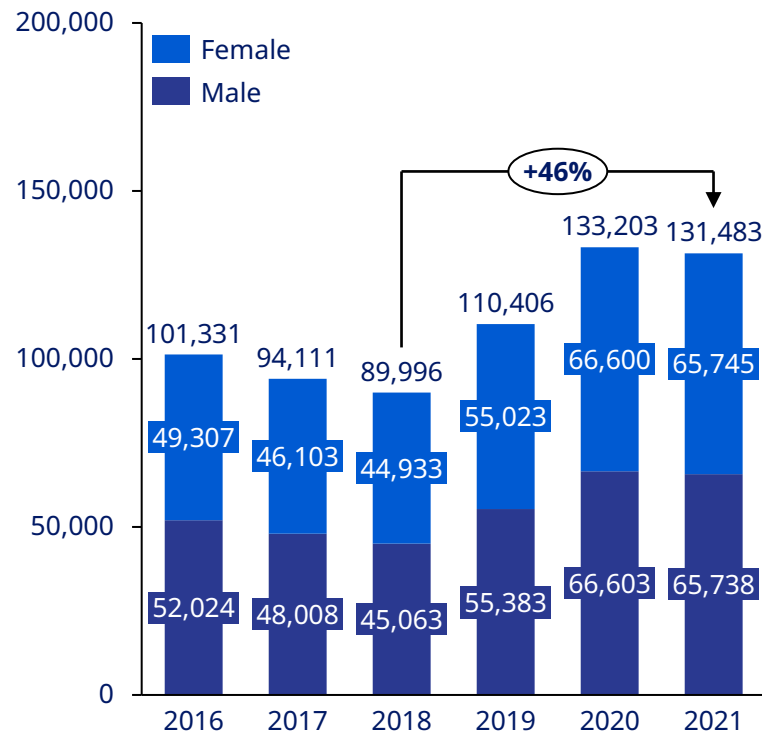
## 2. BECE: Since 2018 the number of students passing has increased by 60%, or 39,029 students

Compared to 2018, 46% more students sit BECE annually

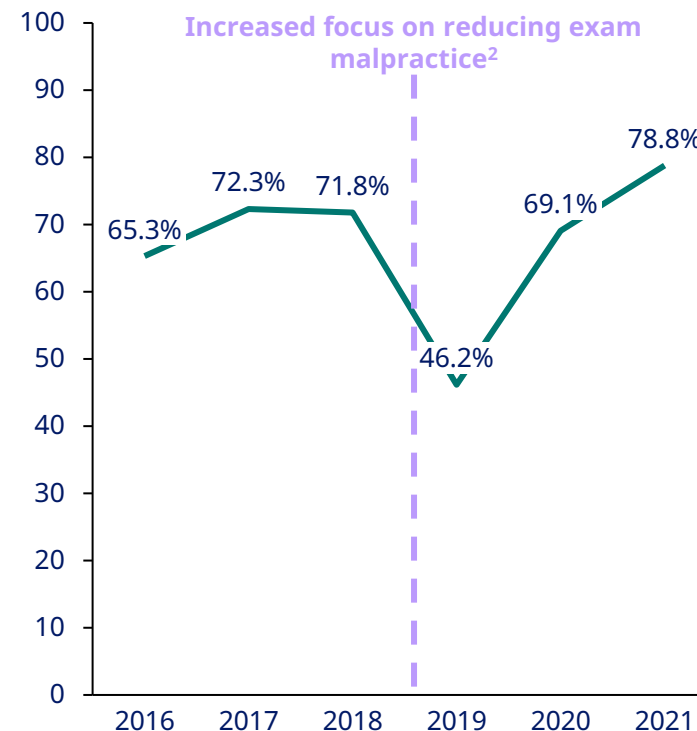
Pass rates dipped after focus on malpractice, but climbed to 5-year high

Compared to 2018, 60% more students pass BECE annually

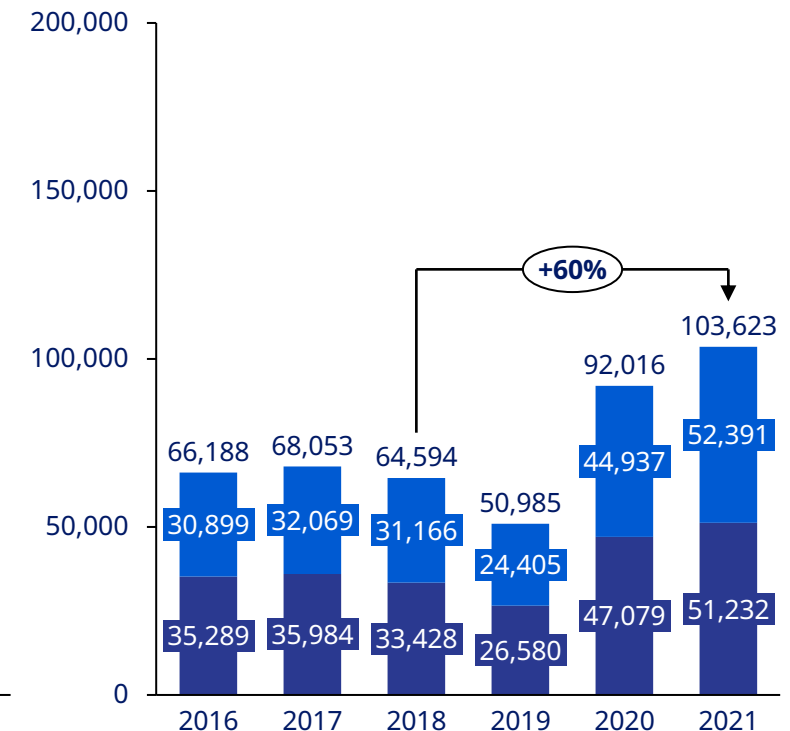
Students Sitting BECE (Total number)



Students passing BECE (minimum pass mark 36<sup>1</sup>) (% of total sitting exam)



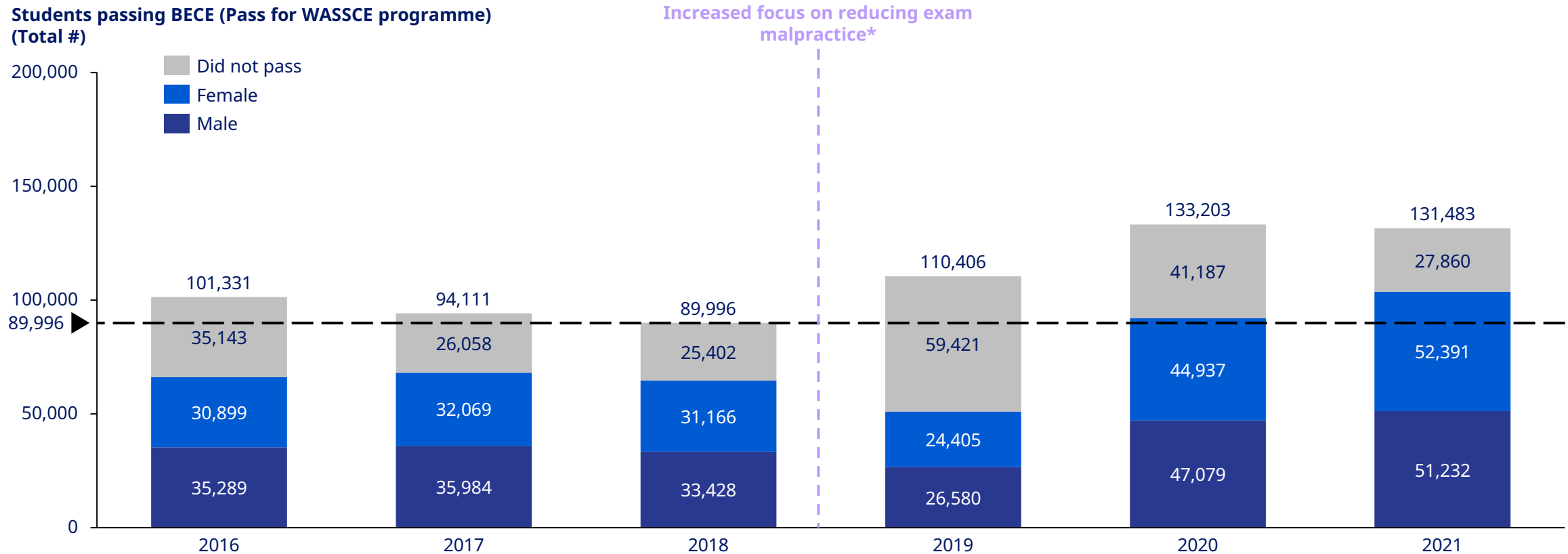
Students passing BECE (minimum pass mark 36<sup>1</sup>) (Total number)



1) Students take eight subjects; best score is 1 (excellent); worst is 7 (fail). The minimum pass mark is 36 with a score of 6 across 6 subjects.

2) Including Presidential Taskforce on Examination Malpractice (2018), Anti-Corruption Commission arrests of teachers (2018), Tougher measures on malpractice, including immediate prosecution, firing of convicted teachers and canceling of all results from implicated examination centers (2019), Communiqué based on high-level consultations (2019-20)

## 2. BECE: 103,623 students passed the exam in 2020 and 2021, more than the total number who attempted it in 2018



*\*) Including Presidential Taskforce on Examination Malpractice (2018), Anti-Corruption Commission arrests of teachers (2018), Tougher measures on malpractice, including immediate prosecution, firing of convicted teachers and canceling of all results from implicated examination centers (2019), Communiqué based on high-level consultations (2019-20)*