

West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)

2021 Sierra Leone Results Analysis

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Ministry of Basic and Senior
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Sierra Leone



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INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS

Introduction and highlights

The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is the transition exam after senior secondary school in Sierra Leone and other West African countries. It is administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). This report analyses the results obtained by Sierra Leonean students in 2021.

In Sierra Leone, students sat the 2021 WASSCE in September 2021.

The results, with with-held results excluded, were released in hard copy in December 2021.

A set of results, with with-held results excluded, were received in soft copy by the MBSSE on 25 February 2022

Students take up to nine subjects, and the best score is A1 (Excellent) and the worst is F9 (Fail). A credit is obtained if a student scores A1 – C6 on their subject exam, whereas D7-E8 constitutes a pass. Thus, anyone scoring E8 or better will pass an individual WASSCE subject. The different grades are awarded based on the percentage of marks obtained on an individual exam.

Grade	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	E8	F9
Interpretation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Credit	Credit	Credit	Pass	Pass	Fail
Numeric value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Percentage range	75-100%	70-74%	65-69%	60-64%	55-59%	50-54%	45-49%	40-44%	0-39%

Table 1: WASSCE grade scale

Individual student performance is compared using ‘average units’. For example, if a student sat 9 subjects and obtained four A1s, two B2s, one B3, and two C4s their average unit is computed thus:

$$\frac{1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 4}{9} = 2.11$$

In a table the student’s scores would look thus:

	Subjects Sat	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	Pass (D7-E8)	Fail (F9)	Avg. Unit
Example Student	9	4	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	2.11

Table 2: Example student results and avg. unit

It is important to underscore that the lower the average unit, the better the student performed. Students are aiming to get an average unit score as close to 1.0 as possible.

Different tertiary institutions have different entry requirements for WASSCE performance. Some institutions require 3 or 4 credits (i.e. higher grades than a pass in each subject) to enter. Full degree programs at university-level can require as much as 5 credits including e.g. a credit in English Language and/or Mathematics for entry to a first degree programme.



INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS

Overall: **Sierra Leonean students obtained the best 2021 WASSCE results in recent memory.**

Key highlights include:

- The number of candidates sitting WASSCE has increased by 354% 2018-21, reaching a **record 156,231 students**
- There are now **more female students than male students sitting WASSCE**, a first in recent Sierra Leonean history
- The **pass rate for individual papers has climbed from 38% in 2019 to 64% in 2021**
- The number of students obtaining the **benchmark 5 credits in a single sitting has increased by 979% 2018-21**. In 2021 more than 60,000 students obtained the benchmark score for WASSCE in 2021, which is more than the previous 5 years combined
- The **top student** sat and passed all 9 of his subjects with an average grade of 1.58, i.e. something better than a B2. He attended a government-assisted school and obtained 6 A1 grades
- Three of the **top six students** by average grade attended government-assisted schools. Across the districts, 67% of the top students by average grade attended government-assisted schools
- The **top school** saw 100% of its candidates obtain the benchmark 5 credits with an average grade of 2.90, i.e. approximately a B3. Among the top 5 schools, 3 are government-assisted
- The number of candidates achieving direct **university degree programme** entry requirements by obtaining 5 credits including a credit in English Language and/or Mathematics in a single sitting **has increased by 1,540% 2018-21**. In 2021 more than 50,000 students obtained the requirements, which is more than the previous 5 years combined. More females than males obtained these requirements
- The **pass rates for English Language and Mathematics are 45% and 66%** respectively. Males outperformed females in English Language in most districts and in the nation as a whole. For mathematics the opposite was true with females outperforming males in most districts and in the nation as a whole
- There remains **large variation in performance across subjects**. Of the ten subjects with most candidates sitting, Principles of Cost Accounting saw the highest pass rate (85%) and English Literature the lowest (10%)
- There remains a **large variation in performance across districts**, including for English and Mathematics pass rates, for obtaining the benchmark 5 credits, and for obtaining the university requirements for a full first degree programme



NUMBER OF CANDIDATES AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Number of candidates and overall performance

In 2021, 156,231 candidates sat the WASSCE, an all-time high. Since 2018, this number has increased by a total of 354%. For the first time in recent years, the female candidates sitting WASSCE outnumbered the male candidates.

**Students sitting WASSCE
(Total #)**

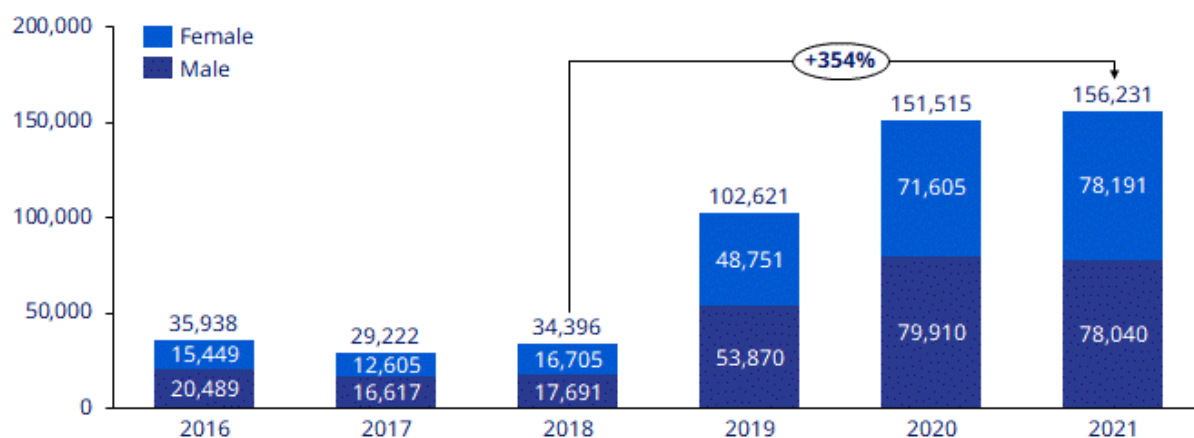


Figure 1: Total number of students sitting WASSCE 2016-2021 by sex

This increase can in large part be attributed to the Government's Free Quality School Education (FQSE) programme launched in 2018 which, among other things, extended the payment of school fees to the senior secondary level for students in government and government-assisted senior secondary schools.

Additionally, it should be noted that the government pays the WASSCE fees for candidates from government and government-assisted senior secondary schools as well as the WASSCE fees for students from these schools who re-sit the exam after not passing the immediately preceding year.

In 2021, students sat a total of 1,348,314 papers. This represents a 51% increase since 2019.

**Papers sat in 2021
(Total #)**

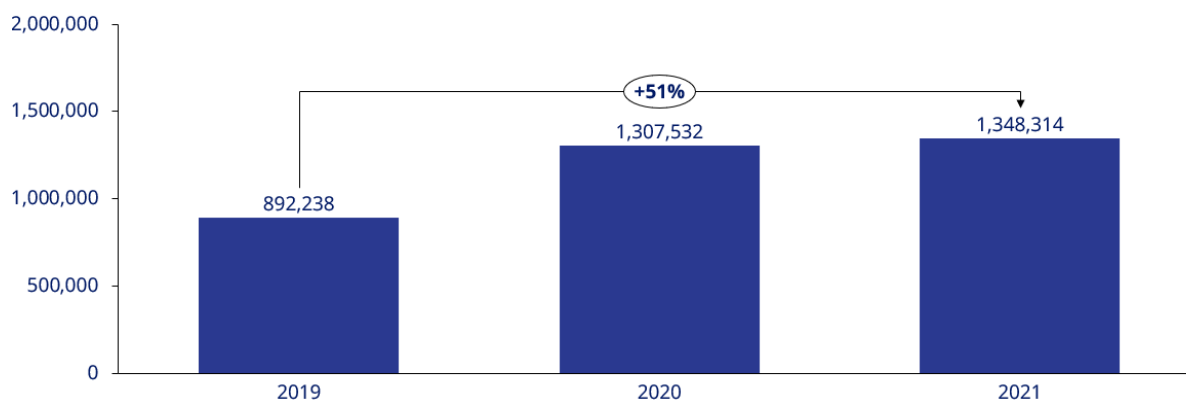


Figure 2: Total number of papers sat 2019-2021



NUMBER OF CANDIDATES AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Simultaneously, the number of passed papers increased to 857,130. This represents a 153% increase since 2019.

**Papers passed in 2021
(Total #)**

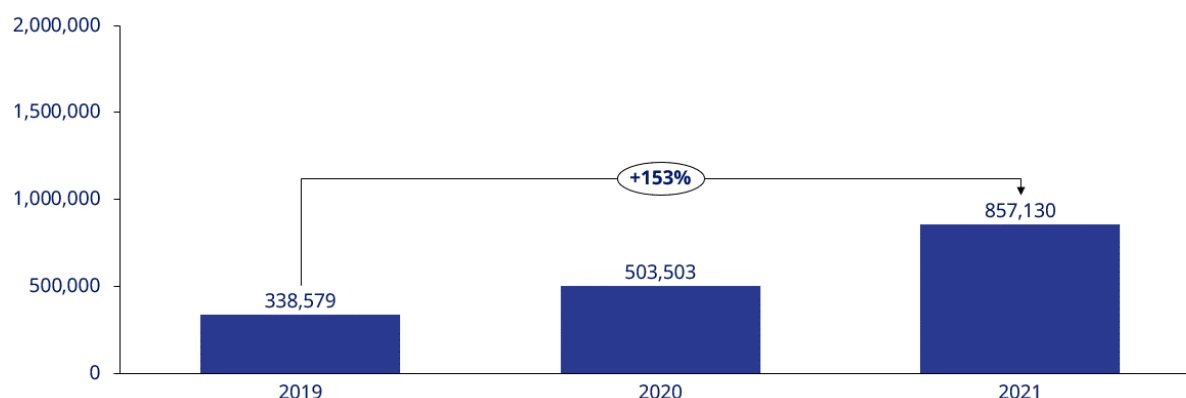


Figure 3: Total number of papers passed 2019-2021

As a result, the pass rate, i.e. the number of papers marked as E8 or better divided by the total number of papers, has increased by more than 20 %-points since 2019 to 64% for both males and females.

**Individual papers pass rate: males
(%)**

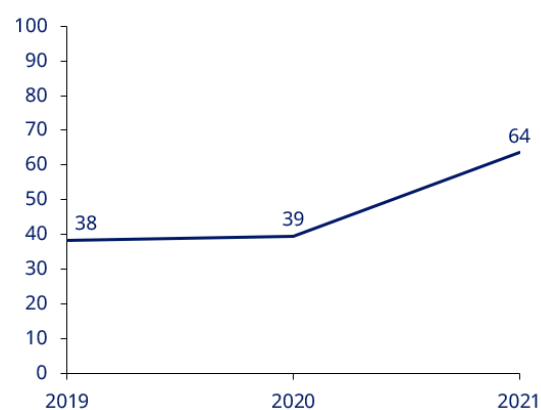


Figure 4: Individual paper pass rate for males 2019-21

**Individual papers pass rate: females
(%)**

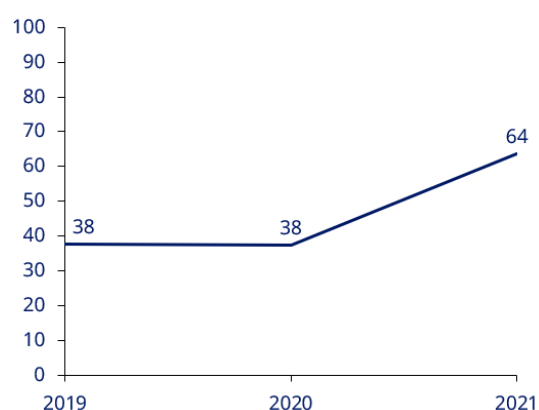


Figure 5: Individual paper pass rate for females 2019-21



NUMBER OF CANDIDATES AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Historically, obtaining 5 credits in any subjects in a single sitting has been used as a benchmark to compare aggregate student performance over the years for WASSCE in Sierra Leone.

In 2021, 62,559 students obtained 5 credits or more in a single sitting. This is more than a 10-fold increase over the 2018 performance, representing step change improvement.

Benchmark Score (5 credits or better in any subjects)
(Total #)

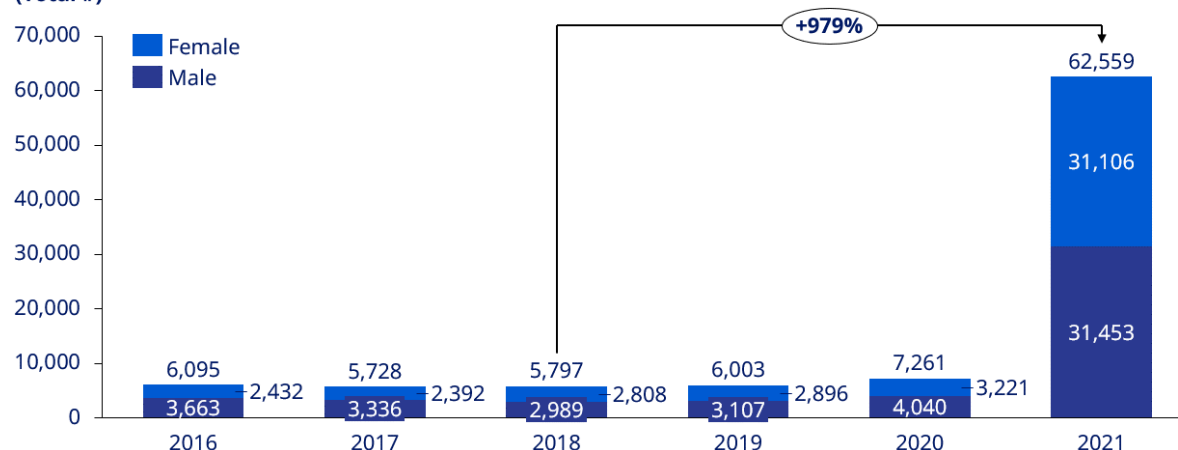


Figure 6: Total number of students obtaining benchmark 2016-21 by sex

For direct entry to a first full-degree programme in Sierra Leone, universities require a minimum of 5 credits of which one must be English Language and/or Mathematics. In this regard results are also vastly improved. The number of students meeting these requirements has increased fifteen-fold to 51,748 students. More females than males now meet university requirements.

Students meeting university requirements (5 credits including English language and/or mathematics)
(Total #)

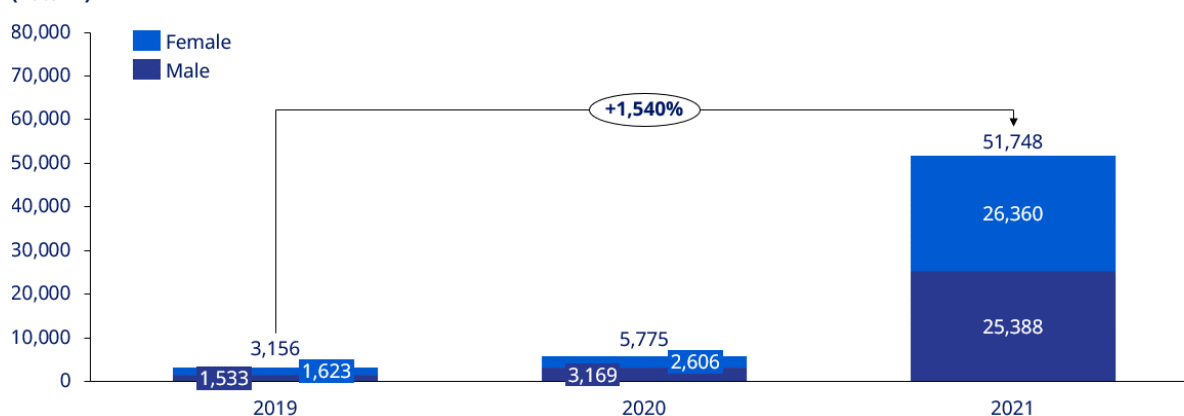


Figure 7: Total number of students meeting requirements for first full degree at university 2019-21 by sex

This represents a momentous achievement for Sierra Leonean students. As many more are eligible for entry to degree awarding institutions, Sierra Leone can expect a surge in students seeking tertiary education.



TOP STUDENTS

Top students

This section initially looks at the top students nationally and by district in terms of average unit. Next, it look at the top students in terms of the number of A1 grades obtained.

The top-6 students nationally by avg. grade/unit are listed in the table below. Only those with 5 and above subjects, including English Language and Mathematics, at credit or better are included.

District	Candidate	School	School support type	Sex	# of subjects Sat	E. Lang. and/or Math credit	Avg. Unit
Port Loko	Momoh Sankoh	Murialdo Secondary School, yar	Government-assisted	M	9	Yes	1.56
Kenema	Patrick Nabieu Morie	The Door International Academy, Kenema	Private	M	8	Yes	1.63
West-Rural	Augustina Thomas	Liverpool Islamic Community SSC, Benguema	Government-assisted	F	9	Yes	1.78
West-Urban	Isata Jalloh	High Tech Int. Senior School, Wellington	Government-assisted	F	8	Yes	1.88
Falaba	Alie Dawoh	Falaba Senior Secondary School, Falaba	Government-assisted	M	9	Yes	1.89
West-Urban	Ayesha Saheed Kamara	The International School Ltd., Freetown	Private	F	9	Yes	1.89

Table 3: Top WASSCE students in Sierra Leone 2021 by average unit

The top-6 students are split 3/3 among males and females and represent 6 different schools and 5 different districts. Four attended a government-assisted school and 2 attended a private school.

The top-3 students by district are listed in the table below. When candidates are tied in terms of average grade, all candidates with that grade are shown.

District	Candidate	School	School support type	Sex	# subjects sat	E. Lang. and/or Math credit	Avg. Unit
Bo	Abubakarr J. Idriss	Zenith International Academy, Bo	Private	M	9	Yes	2.44
Bo	Mohamed K. Baidina	Government Secondary School, Bo	Gov't owned- and -assisted	M	8	Yes	2.50
Bo	Mojama varney Kanneh	Zenith International Academy, Bo	Private	F	9	Yes	2.89
Bom-bali	Lucia Kanu	International College of Makeni	Private	F	9	Yes	2.11
Bom-bali	Ketima Kanu	International College of Makeni	Private	M	9	Yes	2.22
Bom-bali	Tenneh Conteh	International College of Makeni	Private	F	9	Yes	2.44
Bom-bali	Anthony P. Kamara	International College of Makeni	Private	M	9	Yes	2.44
Bom-bali	Pakwan Turay	International College of Makeni	Private	M	9	Yes	2.44



TOP STUDENTS

Bonthe	Mohamed Bockarie	Islamic Call Society Senior Secondary School	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	4.00
Bonthe	Foday Bongulor	Islamic Call Society Senior Secondary School	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	4.00
Bonthe	Hawa Sitta	Islamic Call Society Senior Secondary School	Gov't-assisted	F	8	Yes	4.75
Falaba	Alie Dawoh	Falaba Senior Secondary School, Falaba	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	1.89
Falaba	Mariama Tenneh Turay	Falaba Senior Secondary School, Falaba	Gov't-assisted	F	9	Yes	2.00
Falaba	Peter M Sesay	Falaba Senior Secondary School, Falaba	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	2.33
Guinea	Musa Jawara	Princess Diana International School, Conakry	TBD	M	9	Yes	4.44
Guinea	Sire Sano	Jubilee International School, Conakry	TBD	F	9	Yes	4.89
Guinea	Fatim Sonomou	Open Gate International School, Conakry	TBD	F	8	Yes	5.88
Kaila-hun	Kellyna Koroma	Njaluahun Methodist Sec. School, Njaluahun	Gov't-assisted	F	8	Yes	2.50
Kaila-hun	Gloria Hawa Musa	Njaluahun Methodist Sec. School, Njaluahun	Gov't-assisted	F	9	Yes	2.67
Kaila-hun	Thrisha Silliah Saidatu	Njaluahun Methodist Sec. School, Njaluahun	Gov't-assisted	F	9	Yes	2.67
Kambia	Alhassan Thaimu Kamara	Movement of Faith Senior Secondary School, Kassirie	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	3.00
Kambia	Mariam Bangura	Fatima Memorial Academy SSS, Bamoi Luma	Public, non-assisted	F	9	Yes	3.44
Kambia	Foday Nicho Conteh	Fatima Memorial Academy SSS, Bamoi Luma	Public, non-assisted	M	9	Yes	3.44
Karene	Deborah S Momoh	Madam Alice Senior Sec. School, Makomray	Gov't-assisted	F	9	Yes	2.44
Karene	Michael Mbayoh	Evangelical Senior Secondary School, Bat Kanu	Gov't-assisted	M	7	Yes	2.57
Karene	Sallieu Samuel Komba	Evangelical Senior Secondary School, Bat Kanu	Gov't-assisted	M	7	Yes	2.86
Kenema	Patrick Nabieu Morie	The Door International Academy, Kenema	Private	M	8	Yes	1.63
Kenema	Tenneh Tina Songa	The Door International Academy, Kenema	Private	F	9	Yes	2.11
Kenema	Najah el-Ali	Kamboi(Lebanese) Senior Secondary School, Kenema	Private	F	8	Yes	2.13
Koina-dugu	Aminata Kallay	Fadugu Agricultural Secondary School, Fadugu	Gov't-assisted	F	8	Yes	2.50
Koina-dugu	Foday M. Mansaray	Kabala Christian Secondary, Kabala	Public, non-assisted	M	9	Yes	2.78
Koina-dugu	Bridgett Jariatu Sesay	Kabala Christian Secondary, Kabala	Public, non-assisted	F	9	Yes	3.22



TOP STUDENTS

Kono	Daniel Tamba Momoh	Assemblies of God Senior Secondary School, Sukudu	Gov't-assisted	M	7	Yes	3.57
Kono	Mohamed Fofanah	Yengema Secondary School, Yengema	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	4.00
Kono	Sumaila Beretay	Supreme Islamic Senior Sec. School, Bumpah Nimikoro	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	4.22
Moyamba	Alex Peacock	St. Michael's Secondary School, Moyamba	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	2.88
Moyamba	Tatoh F. Nemahun	Njala University Int. SSS, Njala, Kori Chiefdom	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	2.88
Moyamba	Kalokoh Alusine	Dasse Agricultural Sen. Sec. School, Mano, Moyamba	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	3.25
Port Loko	Momoh Sankoh	Murialdo Secondary School, Lunsar	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	1.56
Port Loko	Musa Kanu	Murialdo Secondary School, Lunsar	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	2.33
Port Loko	Ibrahim Khalu	Murialdo Secondary School, Lunsar	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	2.44
Puje-hun	Alimamy Bangura	Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School, Bandajuma	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	5.50
Puje-hun	Abdulai m. Fortune	St. Stephen's Technical Secondary School, Gobaru	Gov't-assisted	M	8	Yes	3.88
Puje-hun	Mohamed Hamid Rogers	Ahmadiyya Agric. Senior Sec. School, Fairo, Sorogbema	Gov't-assisted	M	9	Yes	4.67
Tonko-lili	Peter e. Kalokoh	Government Secondary School for Boys, Magburaka	Gov't - owned and - assisted	M	9	Yes	2.11
Tonko-lili	Mohamed i. Sesay	Government Secondary School for Boys, Magburaka	Gov't - owned and - assisted	M	9	Yes	2.22
Tonko-lili	Mohamed Jalloh	Government Secondary School for Boys, Magburaka	Gov't - owned and - assisted	M	9	Yes	2.44
West-Rural	Augustina Thomas	Liverpool Islamic Community SSS, Benguema	Gov't-assisted	F	9	Yes	1.78
West-Rural	Margaret Sia Bindi	The Imam Sadiq Secondary School, Freetown	Gov't-assisted	F	8	Yes	2.25
West-Rural	Regina Tharm	Wamagriso Secondary School, Mambo	Private	F	8	Yes	2.25
West-Rural	Theresa Mamie Kpulun	Liverpool Islamic Community SSS, Benguema	Gov't-assisted	F	8	Yes	2.25
West-Urban	Isata Jalloh	High Tech Int. Senior School, Wellington	Gov't-assisted	F	8	Yes	1.88
West-Urban	Ayesha Saheed Kamara	The International School Ltd., (Secondary), Freetown	Private	F	9	Yes	1.89
West-Urban	Effuah Feimus B Russell	The International School Ltd., (Secondary), Freetown	Private	F	9	Yes	2.11

Table 4: Top WASSCE students by district 2021 by average unit

The top students across the districts are split 31/23 (57%/43%) among males and females and represent 33 senior secondary schools. Excluding the schools in Guinea, 34 (67%) out of the 51



TOP STUDENTS

students in Sierra Leone attended government-assisted schools. 13 (25%) attended private schools and the remaining 4 (8%) attended public schools that do not receive government assistance.

A different way of looking at the top students is to count the number of subjects in which they obtain the top grade A1. In the table Below candidates who obtained 4 A1s or more are ranked by number of A1s, then B2s, then B3s, then C4-C6s and finally D7-E8s. It is worth noting that the number of A1s may not reflect the overall performance of the candidate which is better reflected by the avg. unit. Only students fulfilling the requirements for entry into a degree program at university are included.

District	Candidate Name	School Name	School support type	Sex	Sat	A1	B2	B3	C4-C6	D7-E8	Avg. Unit
Port Loko	Momoh Sankoh	Murialdo Secondary School, Lunsar	Gov't-assisted	M	9	6	1	2	0	0	1.56
Kenema	Patrick Nabieu Morie	The Door International Academy, Kenema	Private	M	8	5	1	2	0	0	1.63
West-Urban	Hawanatu Sesay	Ambassador Umar Bon Wurie Sen. Sec. Sch.,	Gov't-assisted	F	8	5	0	2	1	0	2.13
West-Rural	Augustine Thomas	Liverpool Islamic Community SSS, Benguema	Gov't-assisted	F	9	4	3	2	0	0	1.78
West-Urban	Ayesha Saheed Kamara	The International School Ltd.,(Secondary), Freetown	Private	F	9	4	2	3	0	0	1.89
West-Urban	Effuah Feimus B Russell	The International School Ltd.,(Secondary), Freetown	Private	F	9	4	1	3	1	0	2.11
West-Rural	Sia Bindi Margaret	The Imam Sadiq Secondary School, Freetown	Gov't-assisted	F	8	4	1	1	2	0	2.25
West-Urban	Mohamed Koroma	United Mission Senior Sec. School, Allen Town	Gov't-assisted	M	9	4	1	0	4	0	3.22
Tonko-lili	Salman Sesay	Government Secondary School for Boys, Magburaka	Gov't - owned and - assisted	M	9	4	1	0	3	1	3.22
Port Loko	Abdul Salam Kabia	Murialdo Secondary School, Lunsar	Gov't-assisted	M	9	4	0	3	2	0	2.78
Port Loko	Hawanatu Sowa	Madrasatu Hakeem Isl. Sen. Sec. Sch., Port Loko	Public, non-assisted	F	9	4	0	3	2	0	2.56
Port Loko	Emmanuel P. Domba	Murialdo Secondary School, Lunsar	Gov't-assisted	M	9	4	0	3	1	1	2.78
Port Loko	Hassanatu Kamara	Bullom Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School, Lungi	Gov't-assisted	F	9	4	0	3	1	1	3.00
West-Urban	Gimmy Batilo Jr. Songa	Divine Mission Academy, Freetown	Private	M	8	4	0	3	1	0	2.13
Bo	Mohamed K. Bainda	Government Secondary School, Bo	Gov't - owned and - assisted	M	8	4	0	2	2	0	2.50
West-Rural	Yusuf M. Nabay	Zulaika Modern Academy, Yams Farm	Private	M	9	4	0	1	4	0	3.00

Table 5: Top WASSCE students in Sierra Leone 2021 by number of A1 grades

The top 16 students ranked this way are split 9/7 (56%/44%) among males and females and represent 13 senior secondary schools. 10 (63%) of the 16 students attended government-assisted schools. 5 (31%) attended private schools and the remaining 1 (6%) attended a public school that does not receive government assistance



TOP SCHOOLS

Top schools

The top 10 schools in terms of percentage obtaining university requirements are ranked below. Only schools where 100% of the students obtain the benchmark (obtaining 5 credits in any subject) are included in the top-10.

District	School	School Support Type	# Students sitting	% Obtaining benchmark	% Obtaining University requirements	Avg. Unit
Kenema	Kamboi (Lebanese) SSS, Kenema	Private	6	100.0%	100.0%	2.90
Tonkolili	Government SS for Boys, Magburaka	Government-owned and -assisted	95	100.0%	100.0%	3.48
Koinadugu	Kabala Christian Secondary, Kabala	Private (mission).	52	100.0%	100.0%	3.82
West-Rural	Pathway Academy SS, Benguema	Government-assisted	38	100.0%	100.0%	4.52
West-Urban	St. Ambrose SSS, Allen Town	Government-assisted	37	100.0%	94.6%	4.63
West-Urban	International Islamic SSS, Freetown	Private	41	100.0%	92.7%	4.85
West-Urban	EducAid Sierra Leone SS, Freetown	Private	52	100.0%	92.3%	4.51
Bombali	International College of Makeni	Private	37	100.0%	89.2%	3.55
West-Rural	Dele-Peddle Int. High School, Freetown	Private	24	100.0%	87.5%	4.21
West-Urban	Browndel High School, Freetown	Private	14	100.0%	78.6%	4.21

Table 6: Top WASSCE schools in Sierra Leone 2021 by % obtaining university requirements

Together the 10 schools represent 6 districts. Three of the top-10 schools are government-assisted, all three of which are in the top-5.



DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

District performance

Below are the rates of obtaining the benchmark score of 5 credits in any subjects by district in 2021.

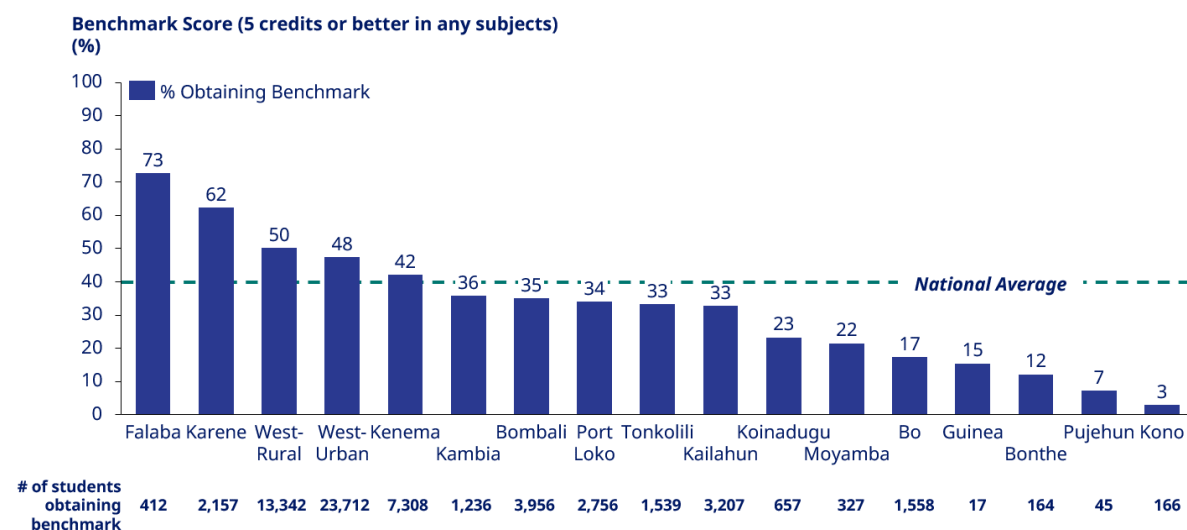


Figure 8: Percentage obtaining benchmark by district 2021

It is evident that the distribution of candidates on and above the benchmark across districts in Sierra Leone varies greatly. Falaba district sees 73% or 412 candidates obtaining the benchmark score or better whereas Kono district only sees 3% or 166 candidates obtaining a minimum of 5 credits.

When comparing historic rates of obtaining the benchmark, all districts except Kono show a clear improvement between 2019 and 2021. Bombali, Falaba, Kailahun, Karene, Koinadugu, Moyamba, Port Loko, Tonkolili, Western Urban and Western Rural all improve by 20 percentage points or more.

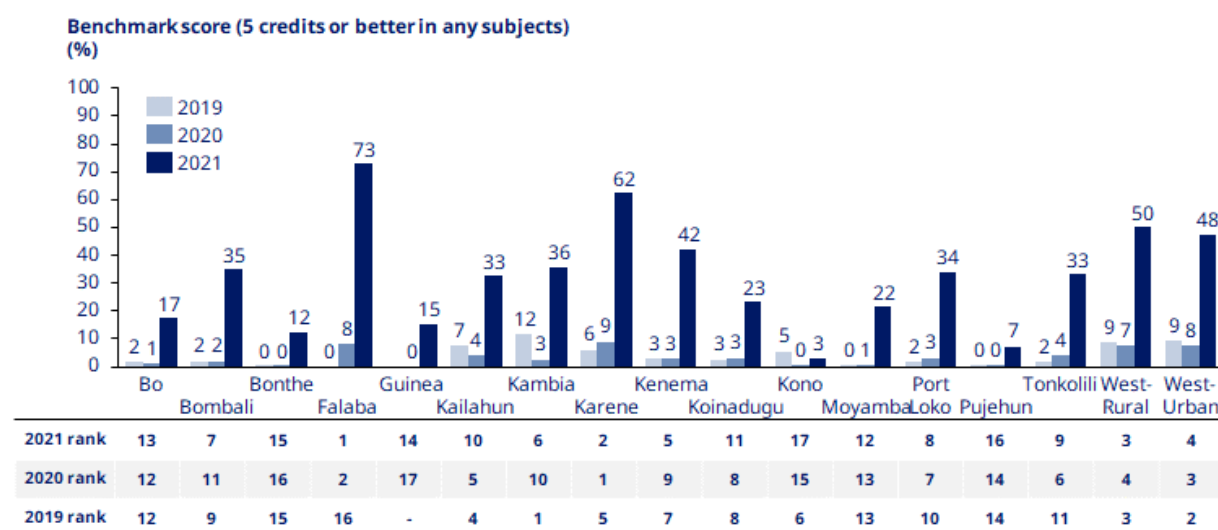


Figure 9: Percentage obtaining benchmark by district 2019-21

When comparing the “rank” of the districts in terms of the rate of obtaining the benchmark, 10 of the districts are somewhat consistently ranked; from 2019 to 2021 they neither rose nor fell more than 2 places. In contrast, Falaba rose from 16th to 1st in two years. Karene rose from 5th to 2nd in the same period. At the other end, Kambia has dropped from 1st to 6th, Kailahun dropped from 4th to 10th, Kono dropped from 6th to 17th, and Koinadugu dropped from 8th to 11th.



INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT PERFORMANCE

Individual subject performance

Below is the distribution of scores in the ten subjects with the most candidates sitting.

Subject	Total candidates sitting	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	E8	F9	Pass or better	Credit or better
English Language (core)	155,332	15	88	2,279	3,813	5,617	18,804	17,889	20,618	86,209	69,123	30,616
<i>English Language (core)</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>20%</i>
Mathematics (core)	154,958	1,081	2,618	11,499	9,876	10,088	24,772	20,332	22,749	51,943	103,015	59,934
<i>Mathematics (core)</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>39%</i>
Agricultural Science	138,293	129	1,100	19,946	13,277	14,632	31,165	14,822	12,029	31,193	107,100	80,249
<i>Agricultural Science</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>58%</i>
Economics	118,401	36	379	10,676	10,554	13,935	29,328	12,211	12,072	29,210	89,191	64,908
<i>Economics</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>55%</i>
Health Science	91,525	2,041	4,955	24,733	7,554	9,431	14,146	6,435	5,153	17,077	74,448	62,860
<i>Health Science</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>69%</i>
Biology	69,055	71	45	1,283	2,785	4,082	16,393	13,355	13,256	17,785	51,270	24,659
<i>Biology</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>36%</i>
Literature in English	60,401	5	13	149	142	239	1,058	1,071	3,193	54,531	5,870	1,606
<i>Literature in English</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>3%</i>
History	56,415	454	1,561	10,986	6,666	5,165	12,368	2,592	3,469	13,154	43,261	37,200
<i>History</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>66%</i>
Financial Accounting	56,327	185	465	3,870	3,153	2,721	7,829	7,638	8,888	21,578	34,749	18,223
<i>Financial Accounting</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>32%</i>
Principles of Cost Accounting	54,548	10,463	4,850	10,875	2,390	3,396	6,011	4,433	3,791	8,339	46,209	37,985
<i>Principles of Cost Accounting</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>70%</i>

Table 7: Results distribution for 10 subjects with most candidates

The table above shows that there is high variation in the percentage of students obtaining a passing grade or better. The subject in which candidates performed best is Principles of Cost Accounting where 85% of candidates obtained a pass or better and 70% obtained a credit or better. The subject in which candidates performed the worst is Literature in English where only 10% obtained a pass grade or better and only 3% obtain a credit or better.

English Language and Mathematics are the two core subjects that almost all WASSCE candidates sit. A credit in either or both is also often required for entry into first, full-degree programs in university. For English Language, 45% obtained a pass grade or better, but only 20% obtained a credit or better. For Mathematics, 66% obtained a pass grade or better and 39% obtained a credit or better.



INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT PERFORMANCE

Below we look closer at the distribution of results among the districts in Sierra Leone and among the sexes. First, we look at pass rates for both sexes for English Language by district.

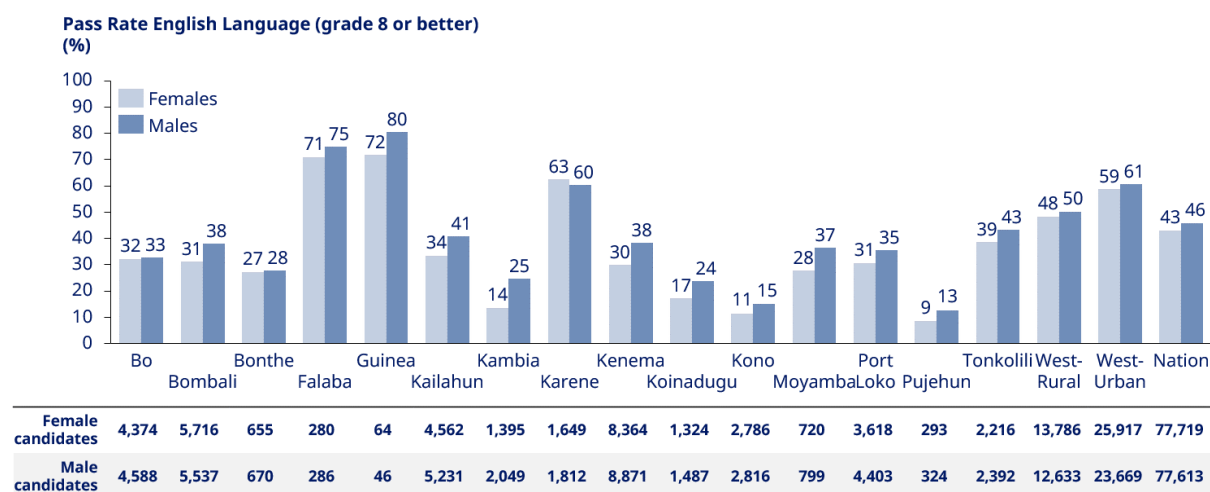


Figure 10: Pass rates for English Language by district and sex 2021

Males pass English language at a higher rate than females in every single district except Karene. The pass rate for females ranges from 72% in Guinea and 71% in Falaba to 11% in Kono and 9% in Pujehun. In 7 districts the pass rate is 5% points or higher for males than for females. Nationwide, the pass rate for males is 46% compared to 43% for females

If we also look at the rate of obtaining a credit or better in English Language for both sexes by district, a similar picture emerges.

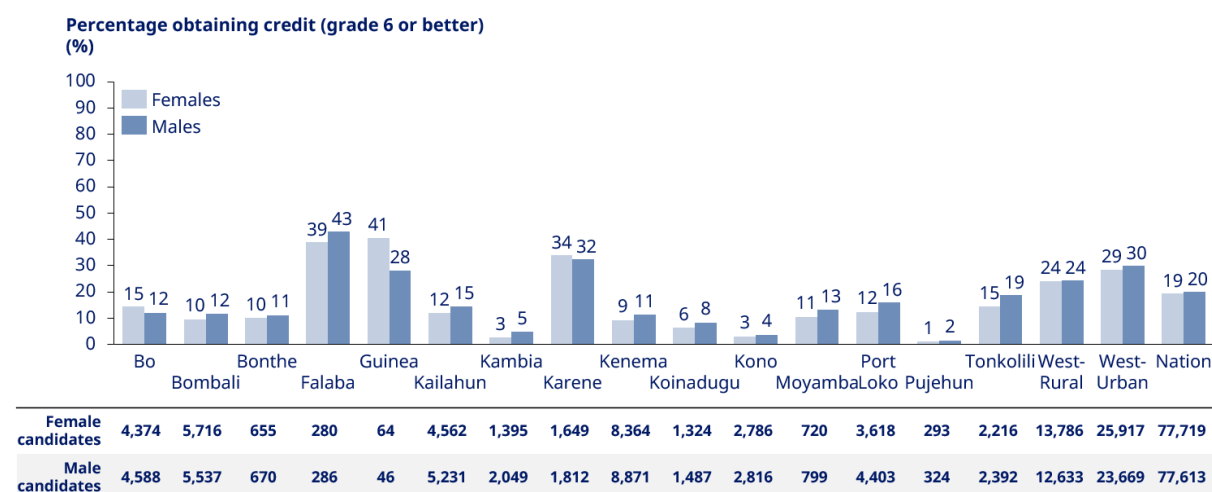


Figure 11: Rates of obtaining a credit for English Language by district and sex 2021

Now, a greater percentage of males pass English language with a credit or better than females in every single district except Bo, Guinea and Karene. The rate of obtaining a credit or better for females ranges from 41% in Guinea and 39% in Falaba to 3% in Kono and Kambia and 1% in Pujehun. Nationwide, the gap narrows to 20% for males compared to 19% for females.



INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT PERFORMANCE

Next, we look at pass rates for both sexes for Mathematics by district.

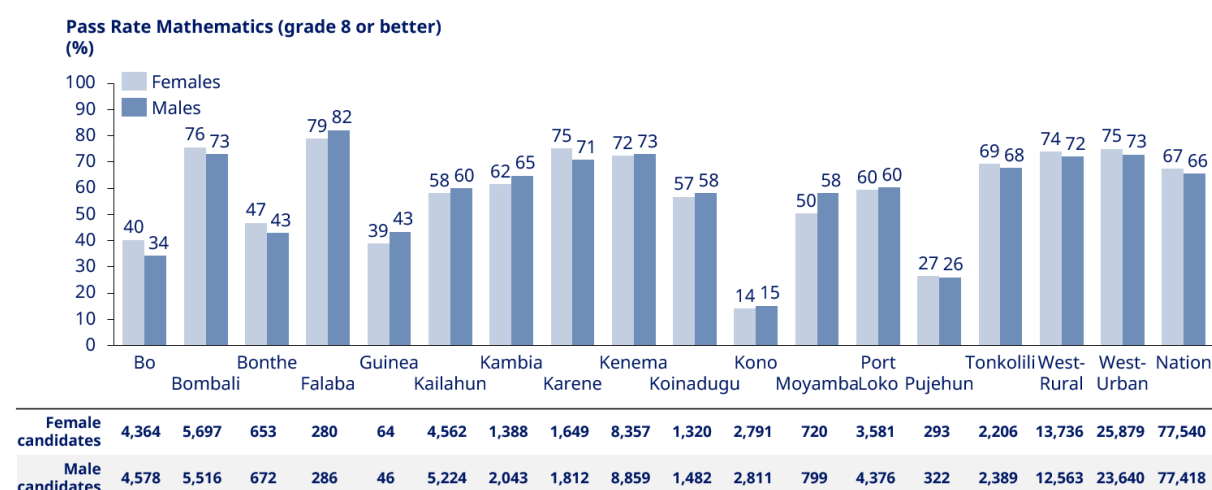


Figure 12: Pass rates for Mathematics by district and sex 2021

The picture is now flipped – females outperform males nationwide and in several districts, including Bo, Bombali, Bonthe, Karene, Pujehun, Tonkolili, Western Rural and Western Urban.

Among the districts, the pass rate for females ranges from 79% in Falaba to 14% in Kono.

If we also look at the obtaining of a credit or better in mathematics for both sexes by district, a similar picture emerges.

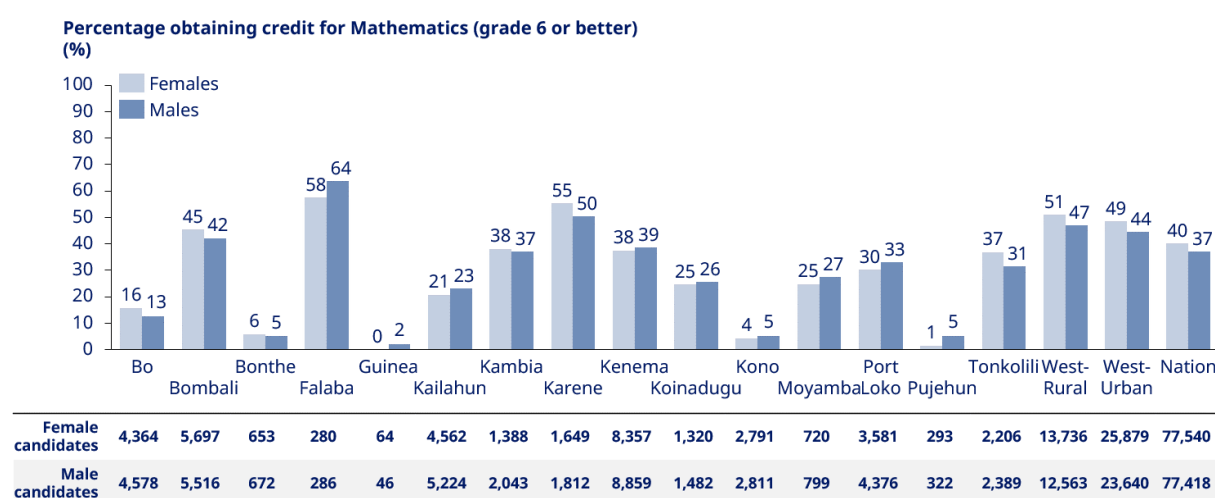


Figure 13: Rates of obtaining a credit for Mathematics by district and sex 2021

The situation is the same as for the pass rate across districts, except that females also now outperform males in Kambia, and females no longer outperform males in Pujehun.

Among the districts, the rate of obtaining a credit or better for females ranges from 58% in Falaba to 1% in Pujehun.



Discussion: Toward radical inclusion and further improvement in learning outcomes

Overall, the WASSCE results obtained by Sierra Leonean students are the best in recent memory. It is therefore important to consider the factors that at first glance may have contributed to this achievement so that the progress is sustained in the coming years. A full analysis will have to follow after this initial report.

The first factor is the Free Quality School Education (FQSE), which has greatly expanded access to Senior Secondary School by paying for school fees in government and government-assisted schools. It has also expanded access to sit the WASSCE by paying the WASSCE fees from the same set of schools. The FQSE also invested in quality by for example supplying teaching and learning materials, including teacher textbooks and pupil handbooks for English Language and Mathematics.

Simultaneously, the Government of Sierra Leone has invested heavily in hiring new teachers, re-assessing the current ones, and increased salaries by 30%. Tens of thousands of teachers have been rolled in continuous professional development programs.

In all, the senior secondary school graduating class of 2021 is the first to benefit from three full years of Free Quality School Education.

Furthermore, during the covid-related school closures, the education radio dedicated an entire month for exam preparation. The closures also led to the postponement of the WASSCE exam until after the summer of 2021, which afforded the graduating class several additional months to prepare.

In addition, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education has partnered with the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the Secondary Schools Improvement Initiative (Leh we Lan) since 2016, which has specifically targeted reducing dropout and improving learning in secondary schools.

Moreover, it is likely that the strong performance in Mathematics, especially for females, contributed to many more students obtaining the requirements for entry into a full first degree at university.

However, it is also clear that there is a lot of variation in achievement between schools and between districts. For some subjects such as English Language and Mathematics there is an additional performance gap between the sexes.

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education launched its Radical Inclusion policy specifically to target the groups of students who may not reap the full benefit of the country's education system, namely children with disabilities; children from low-income families; children in rural and underserved areas; and girls - especially girls who are currently pregnant and in school or are parent learners.

Ensuring that these groups achieve on par with the rest of the country will be the MBSSE's focus. For example, the Teaching Service Commission has previously provided support to underperforming Primary and Junior Secondary Schools. That support could now be extended to Senior Secondary Schools.

In addition, specific action needs to be taking in some subjects that are lagging across the board. The MBSSE will continue to provide materials for these subjects, including through the Learning Passport launched in January 2022, which gives students access to past WASSCE papers. The Ministry will also explore how to support these subjects through additional digital resources and the Education Radio.



INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT PERFORMANCE

In addition, the Ministry will work to ensure that subject associations are established and functioning in all districts and explore establishing a team of expert teachers that are available for temporary support where needed.

Finally, the Ministry will direct partners supporting secondary education to focus particularly on underperforming schools and districts.

All in all, Sierra Leone's students, teachers, parents and communities can rejoice at a **historic achievement**, and the nation as a whole can direct the energy from this achievement to **further improve education outcomes across the country**.

