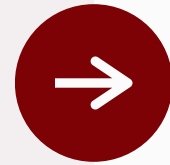


NSC RESULTS IN A TIME OF COVID

REBECCA SELKIRK



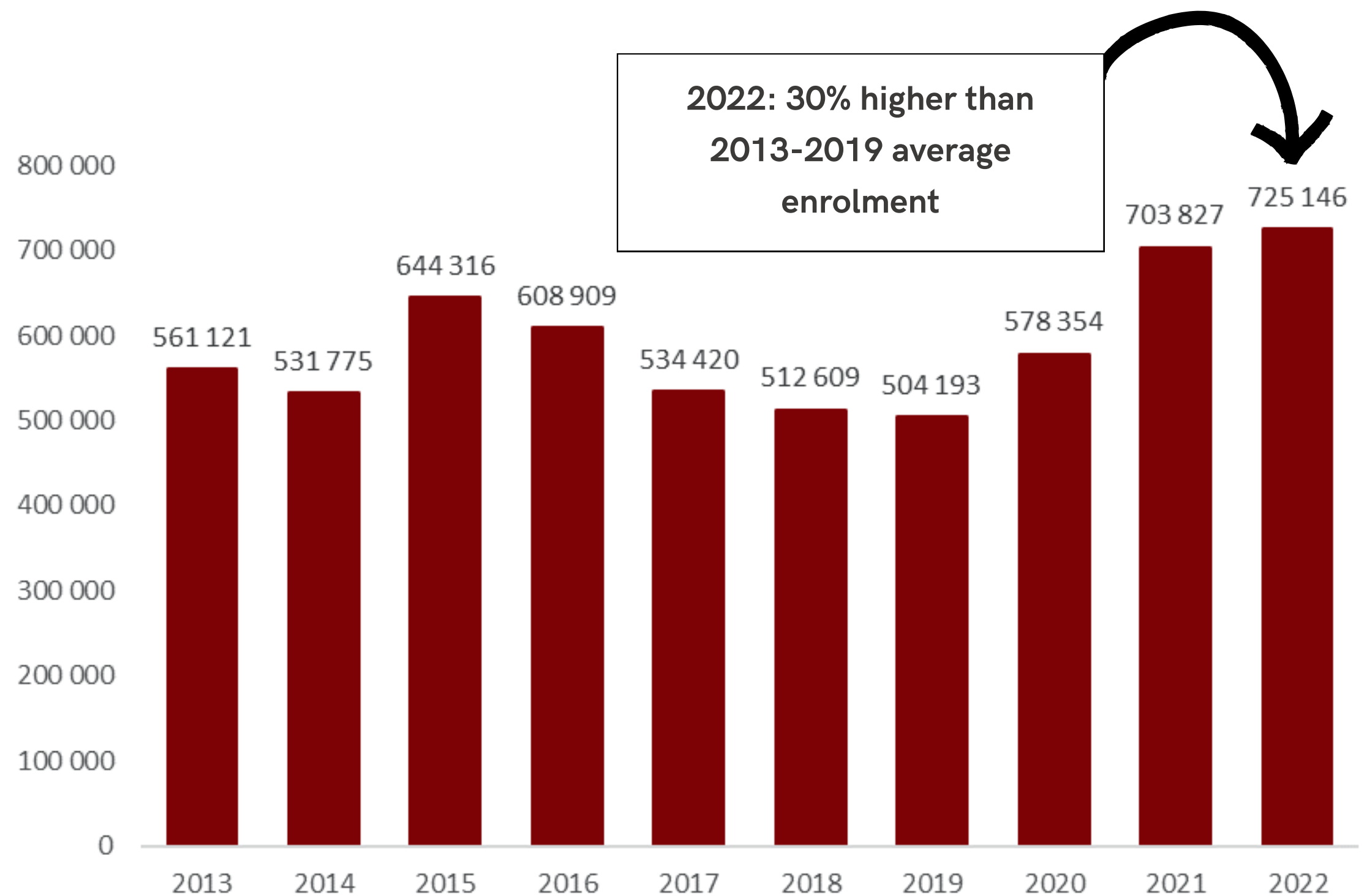
Why focus on the NSC?



- School-leaving examination
- Significant Covid disruptions
- Insight into STEM capacity building

Data used: learner-level NSC subject data 2013-2021
(full-time candidates); reported 2022 results

NSC candidate numbers rose substantially during Covid



Reasons for increased enrolment

Population changes

2003-2005 'baby boom'

- 13% increase in birth rates in 2003-2005 (Gustafsson, 2018), reflected in Grade 1 enrolments between 2009 and 2015.
- Effects somewhat delayed due to repetition

Increased flows

Pre-Covid

- Less dropout in lower grades

Covid-related

- Merging of 2020 Examinations
- Lower repetition and dropout in FET phase at the end of 2020 and 2021

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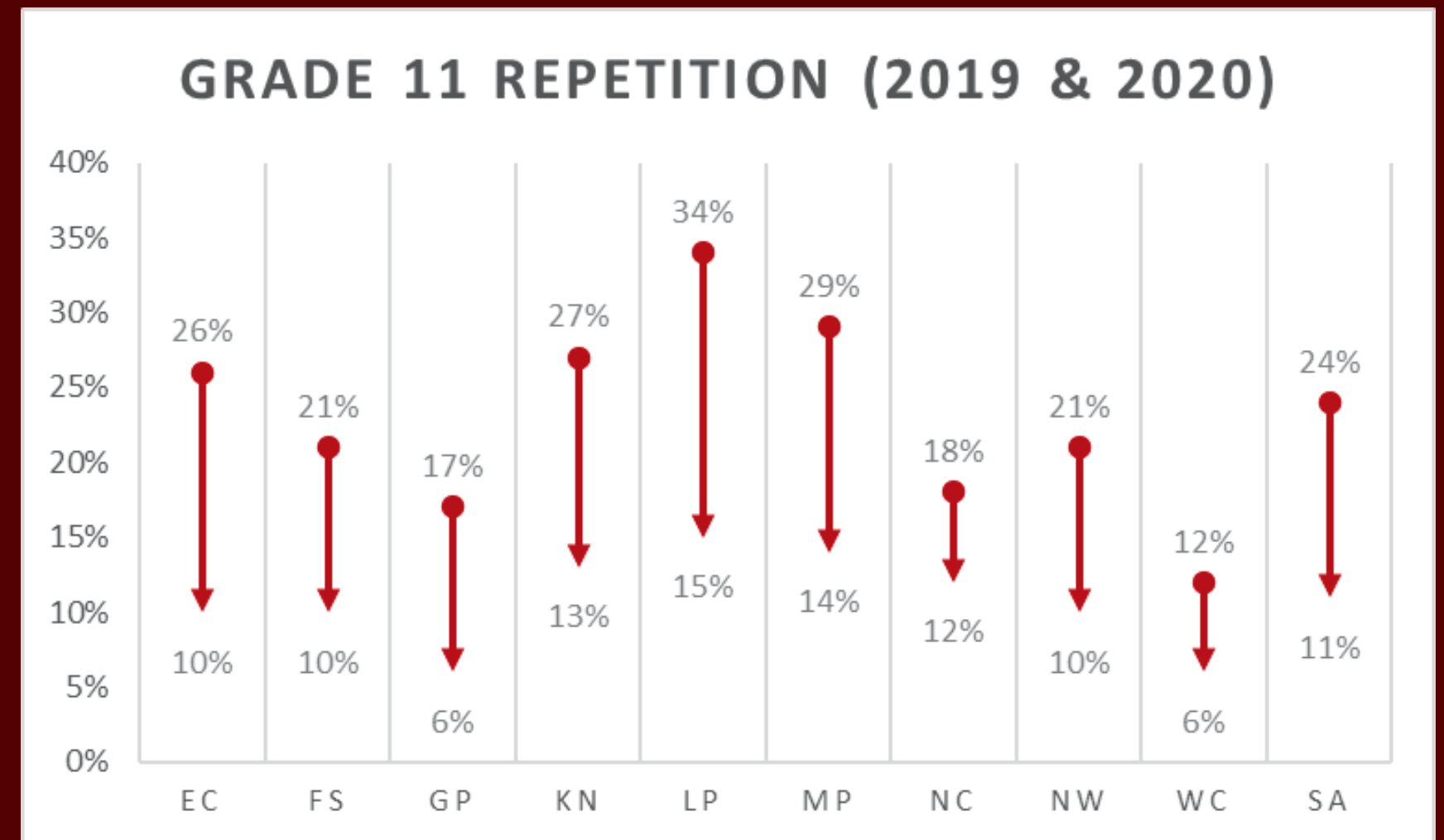
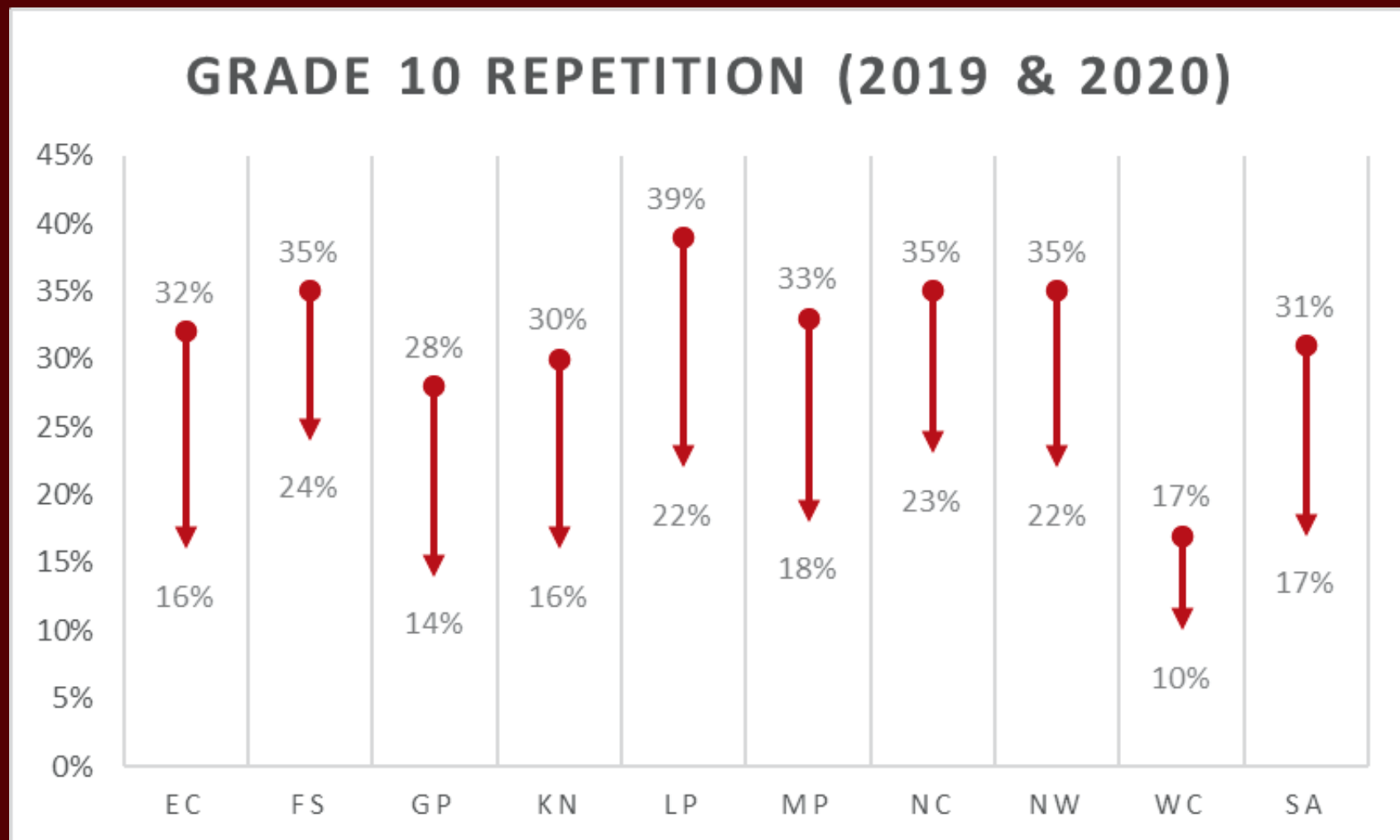
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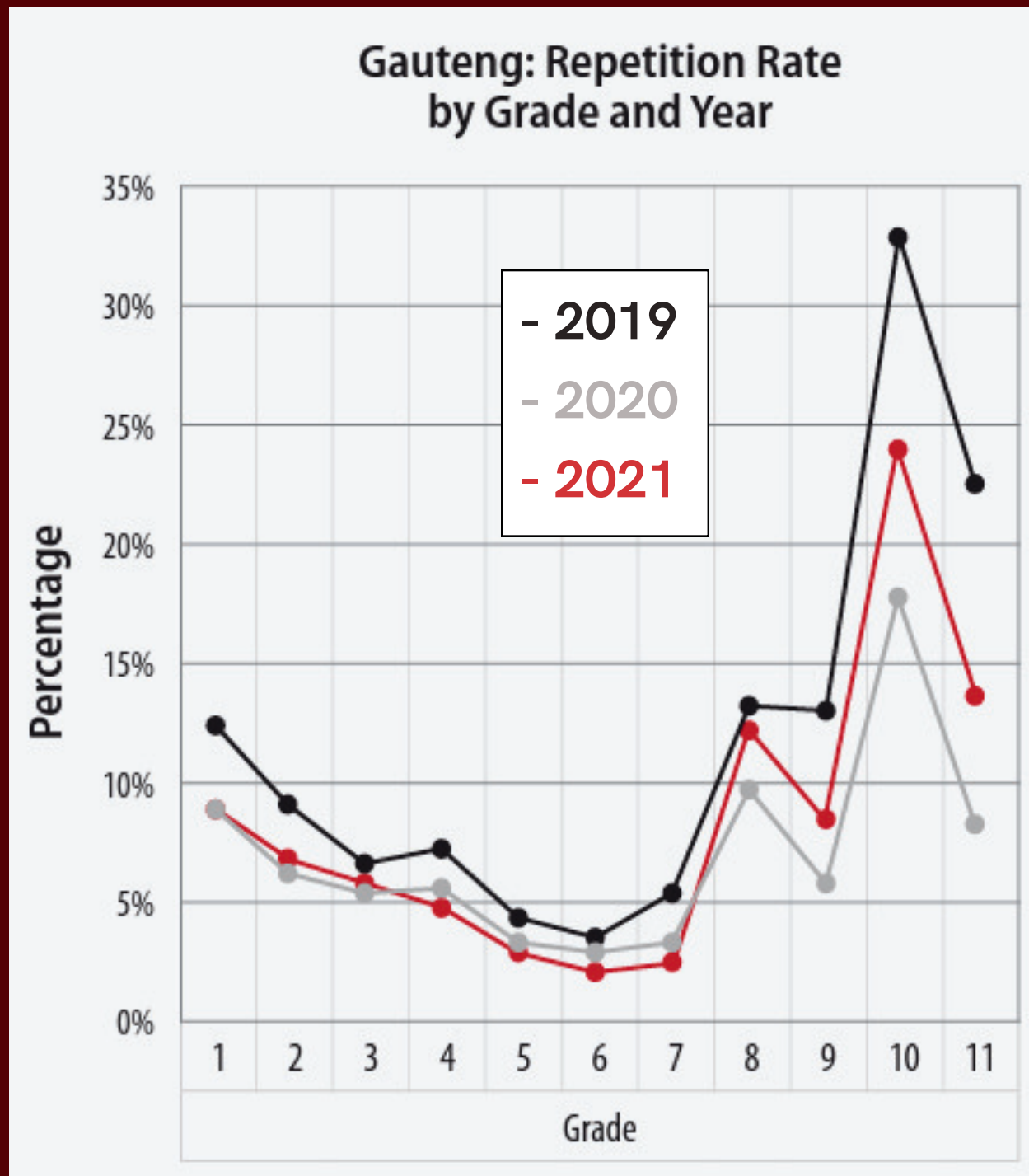
Repetition rates in Grades 10 & 11 dropped substantially at the end of 2020 compared to previous years



LURITS repetition rates (Gustafsson, 2022)

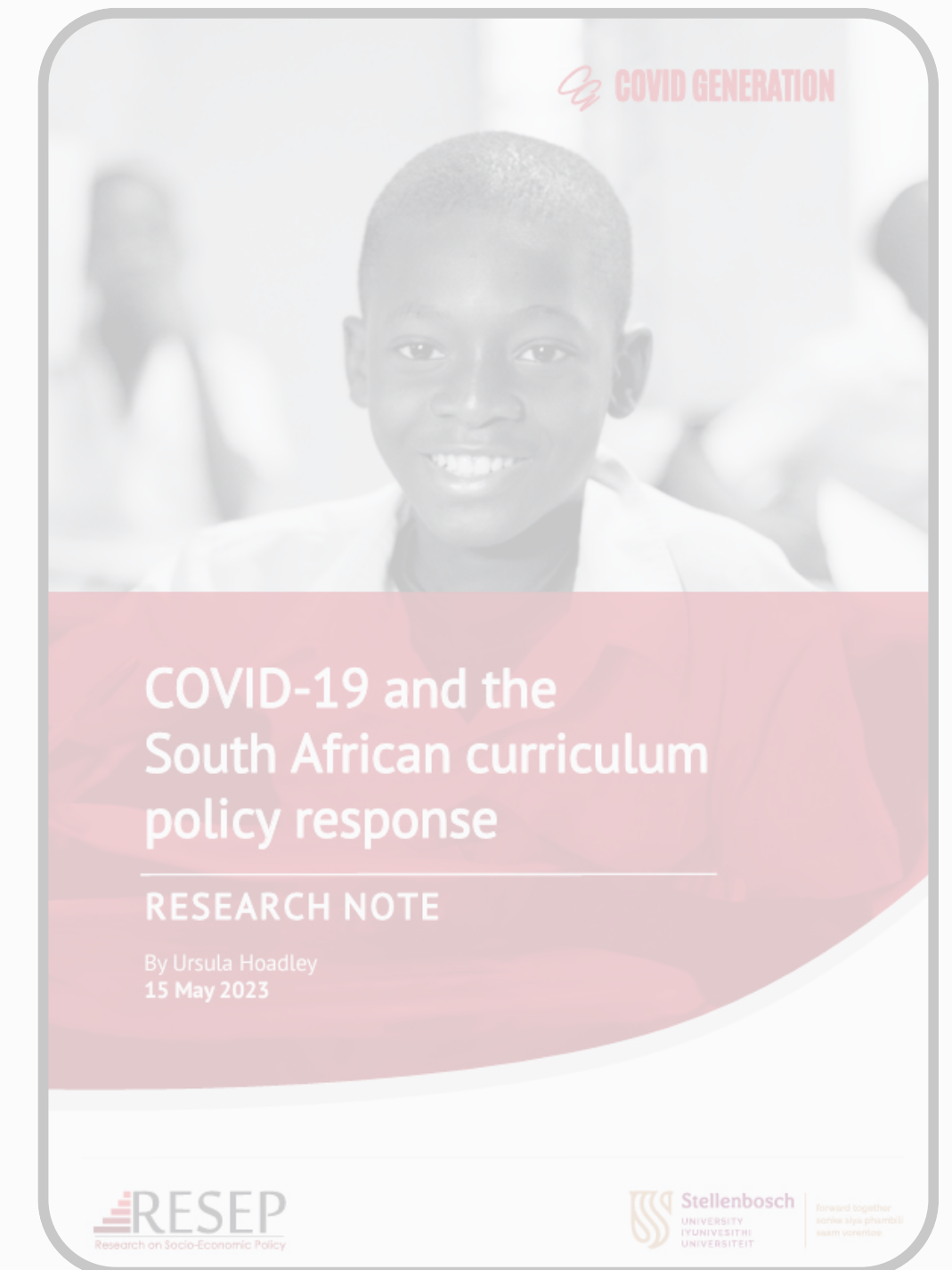
2021's repetition rates were closer to 2019 levels...

...but many of the policies affecting repetition persisted



- Controlled tests
- Revised weightings
- Subject condonations
- Curriculum trimming

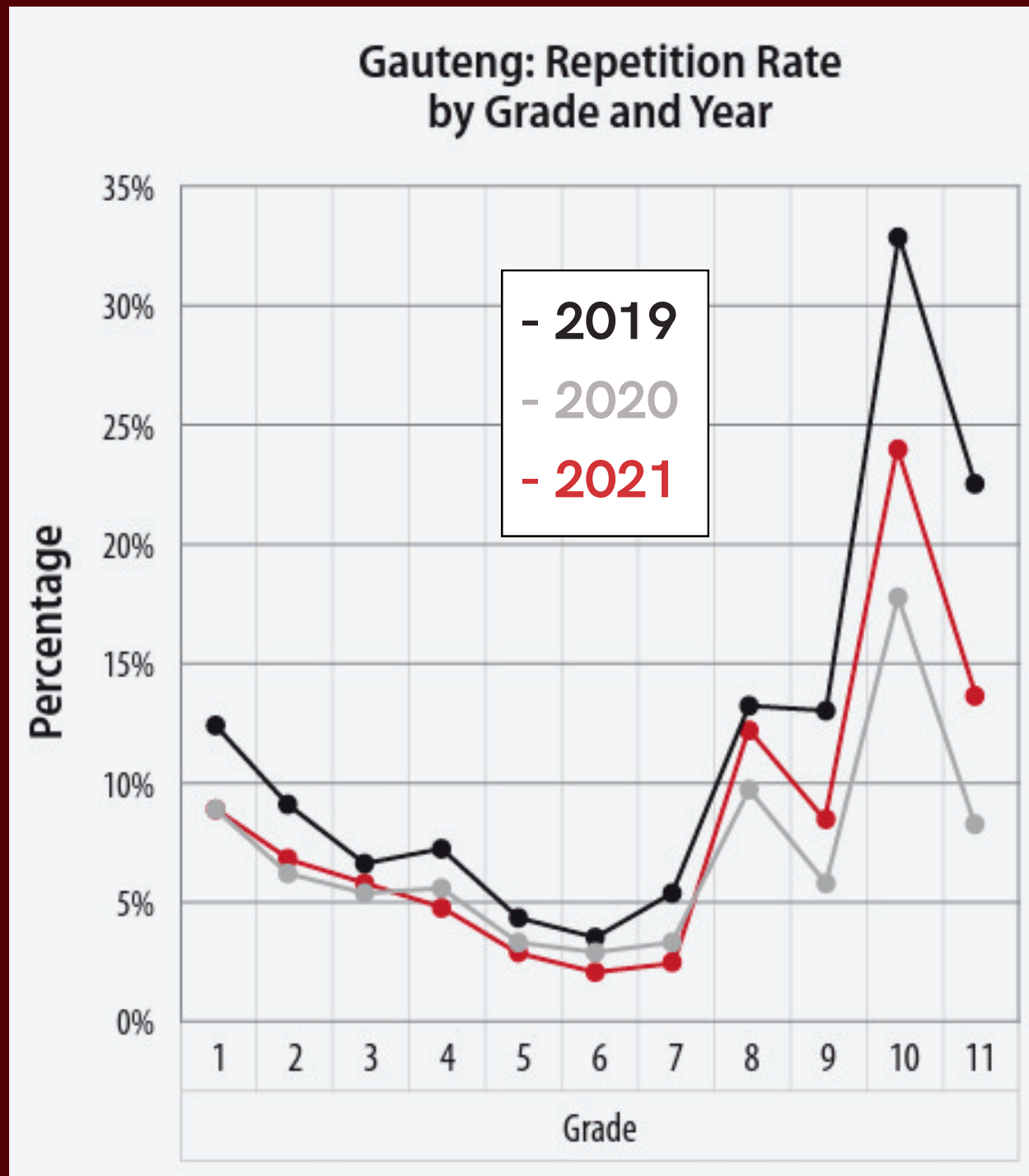
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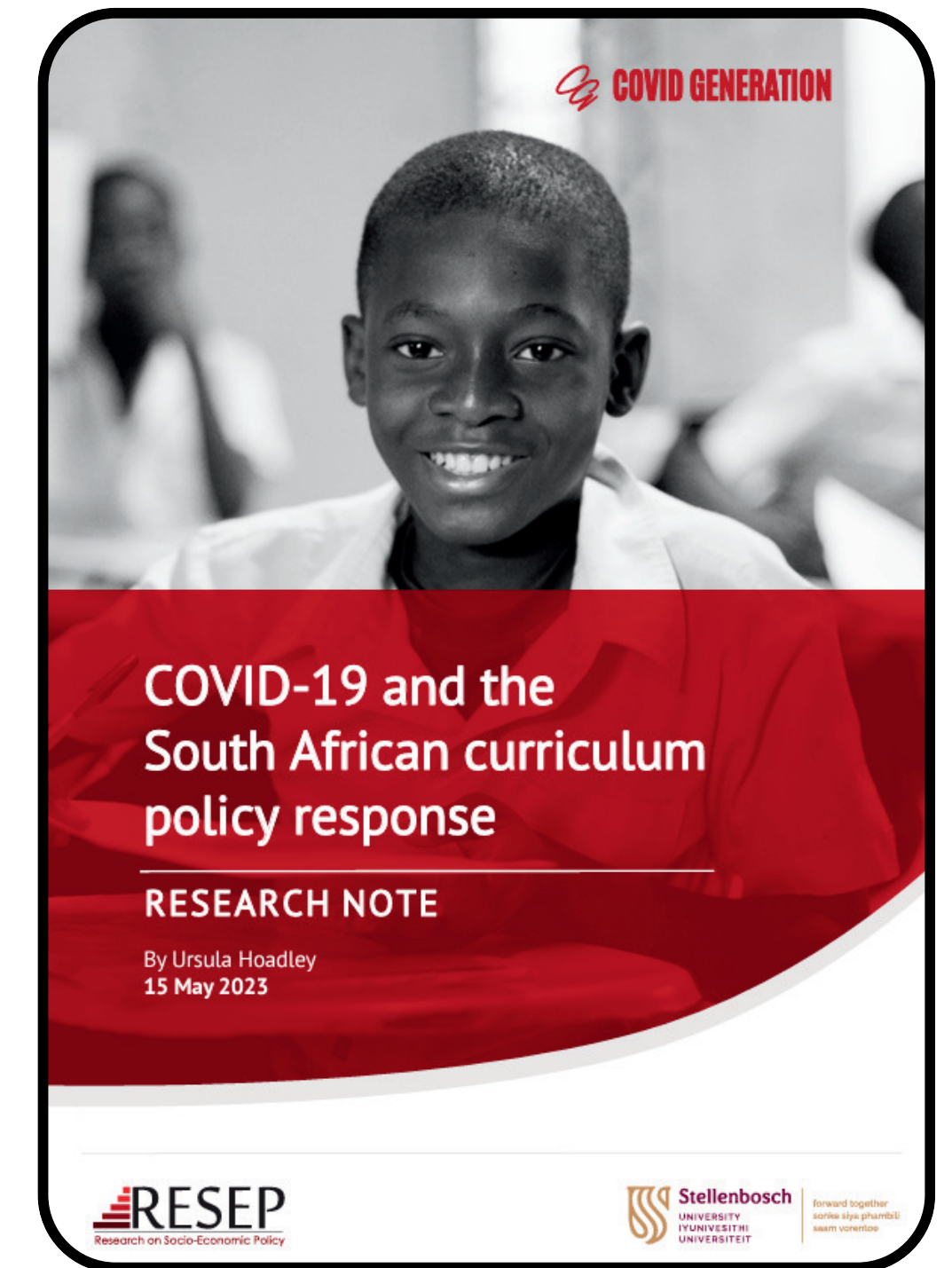
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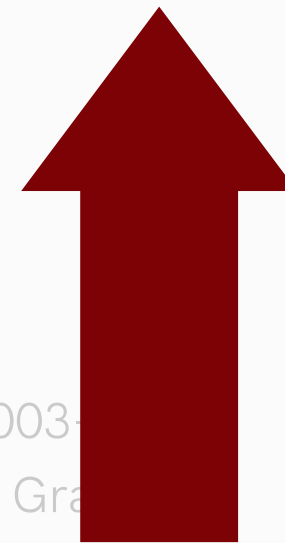


Going forward, enrolment is likely to remain higher than pre-Covid levels

Population changes

2003-2005 'baby boom'

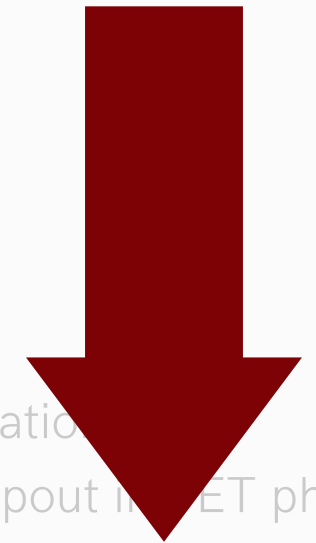
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Increased flows

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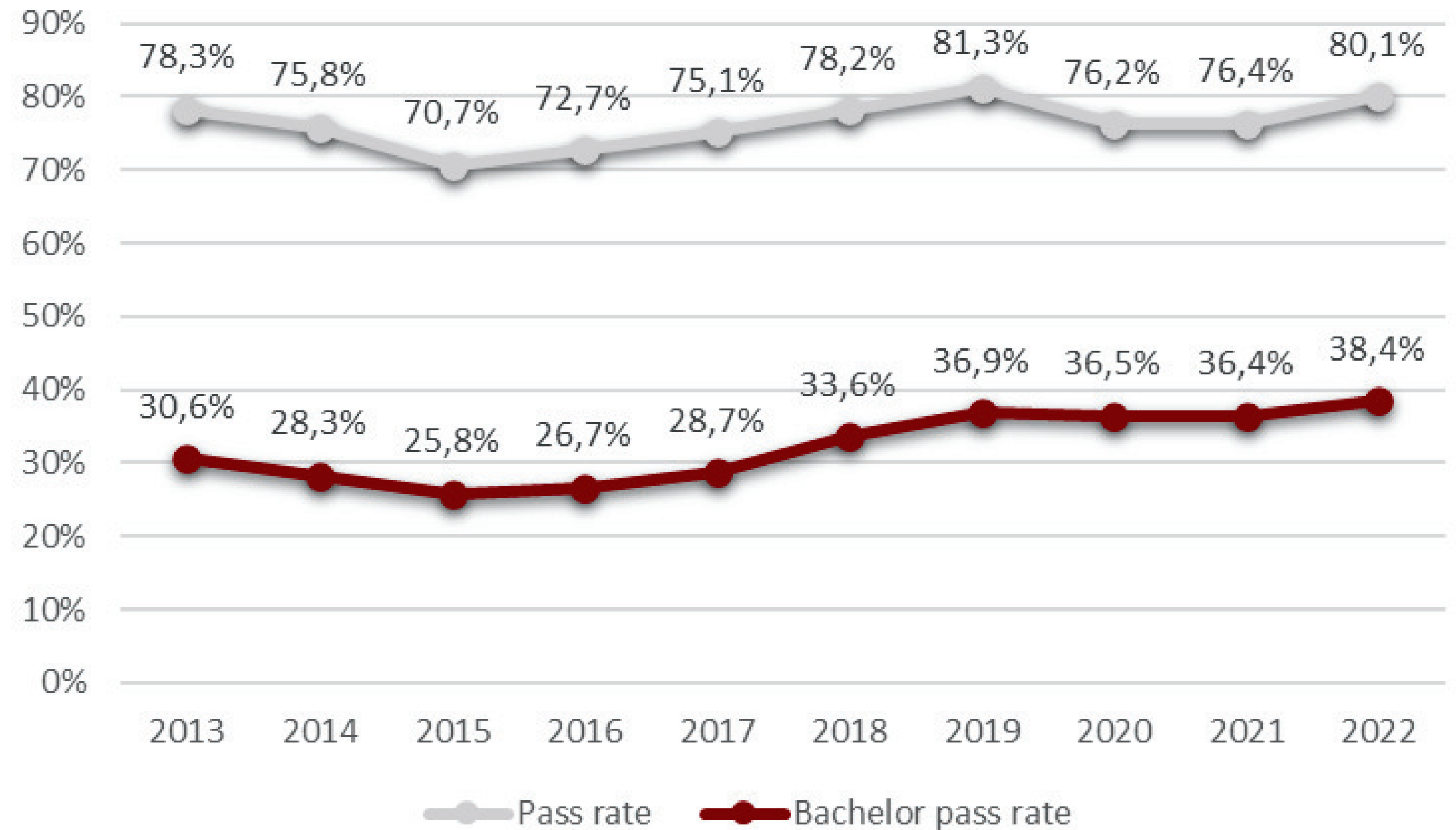
- Merging of 2020 Examination and 2021 ET phase
- Lower repetition and dropout in the ET phase at the end of 2020 and 2021



KEY POINT

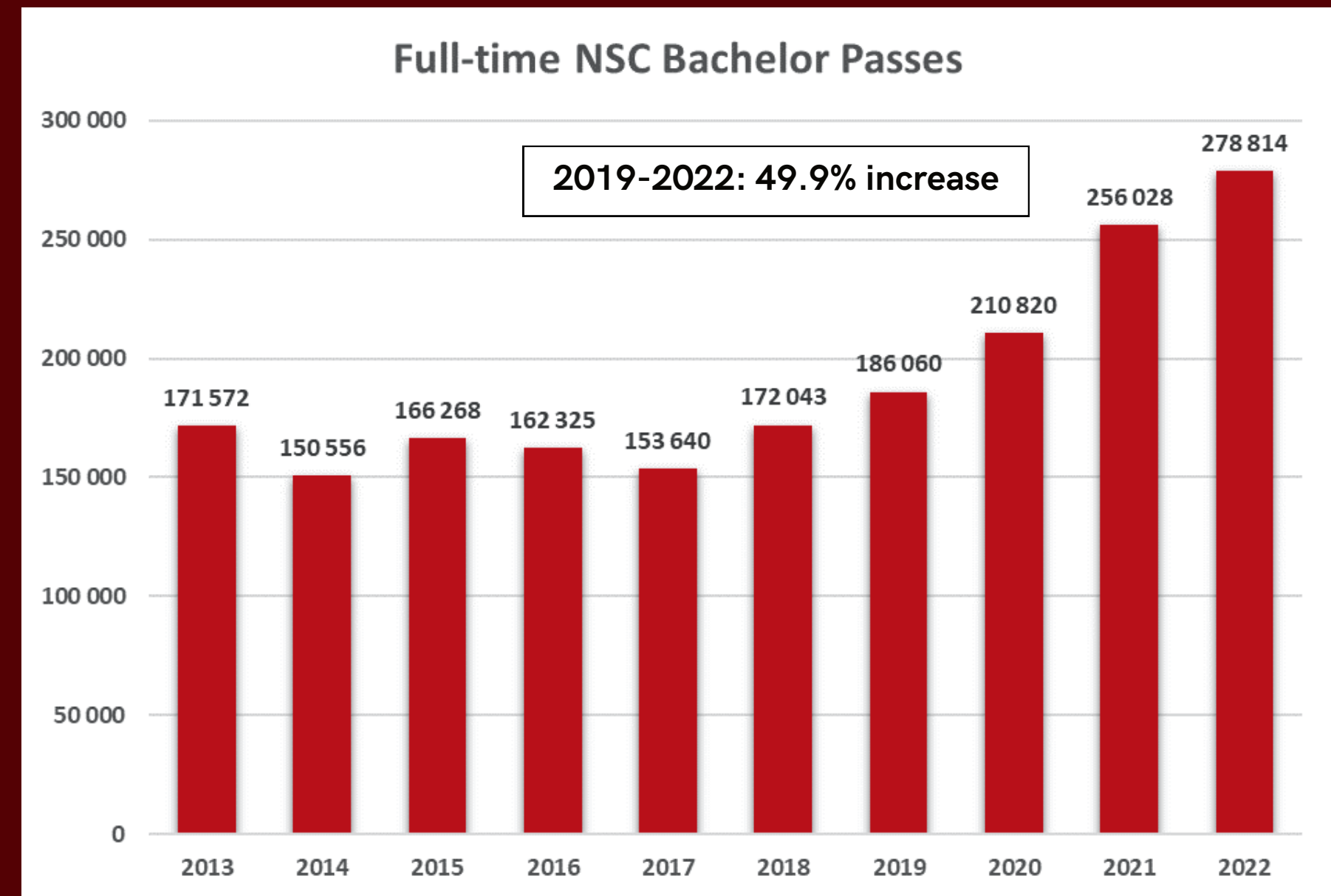
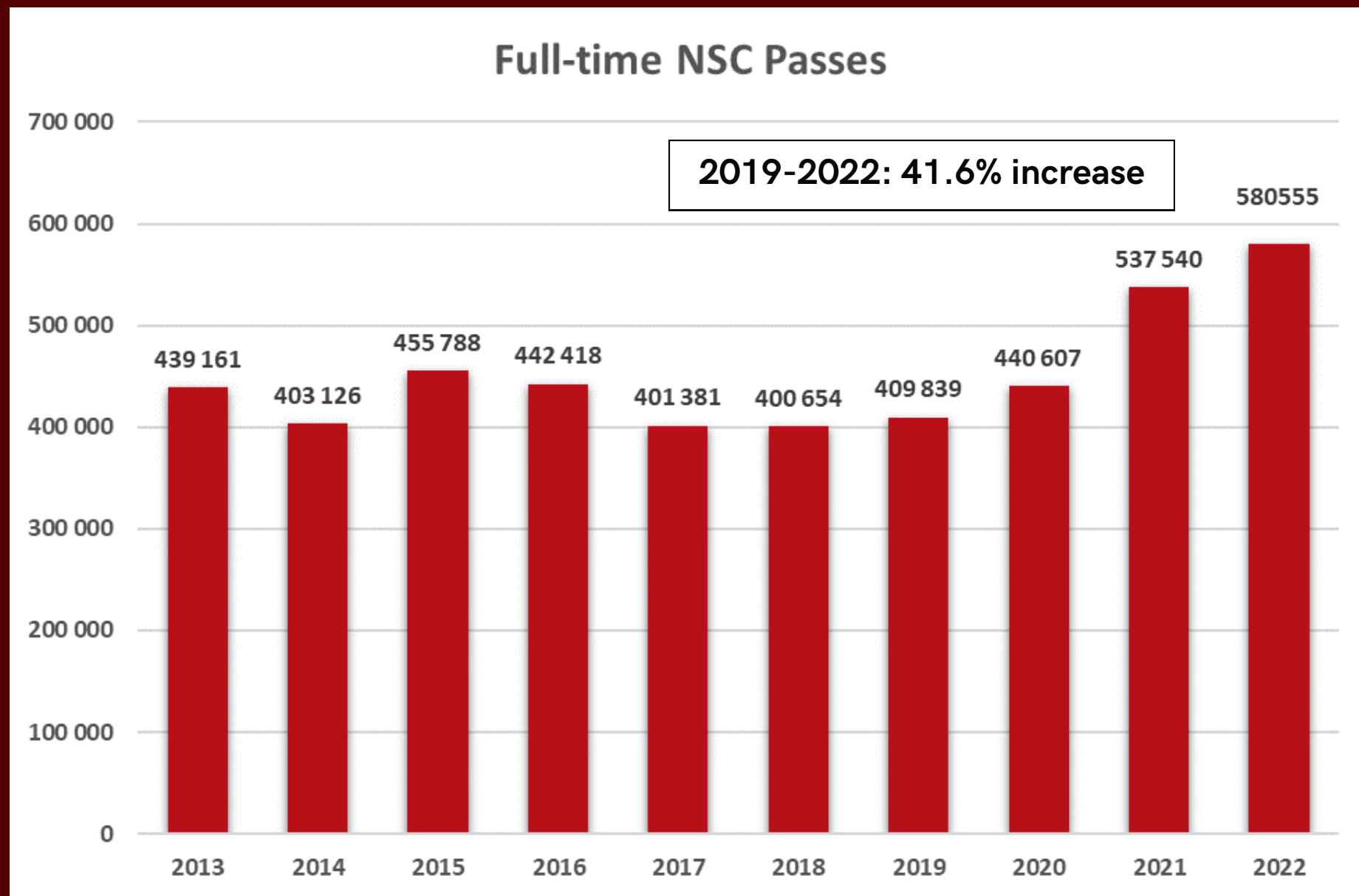
The number of learners writing the NSC examination has risen substantially, and it is likely the higher numbers will persist

Pass rates remained fairly stable during 2020-2022



National NSC full-time pass and bachelor pass rates

As a result, the number of passes and bachelor passes reached all-time highs



Not all provinces were equally affected

Pass numbers increased by the highest percentage in KZN, EC, and MP

between 2018 and 2021, and by the lowest percentage in WC

Bachelor pass numbers increased by the highest percentage in EC, KZN, MP, and LP

between 2018 and 2021, and by the lowest percentage in WC and GP

Changes attributable to:

- Lower starting number of passes
- Different enrolment changes
- Other factors?

KEY POINT

Far more learners are achieving a matric pass or bachelor pass than ever before

Matric cohort characteristics

The percentage of female candidates decreased slightly

from 55.7% in 2019 to 55.3% in 2021.

2020 and 2021 had more overage learners

despite lower Grade 11 repetition at the end of 2020.

Proportionally fewer learners took Mathematics and Physical Science in 2020 and 2021,

although overall numbers increased because of increased enrolment.

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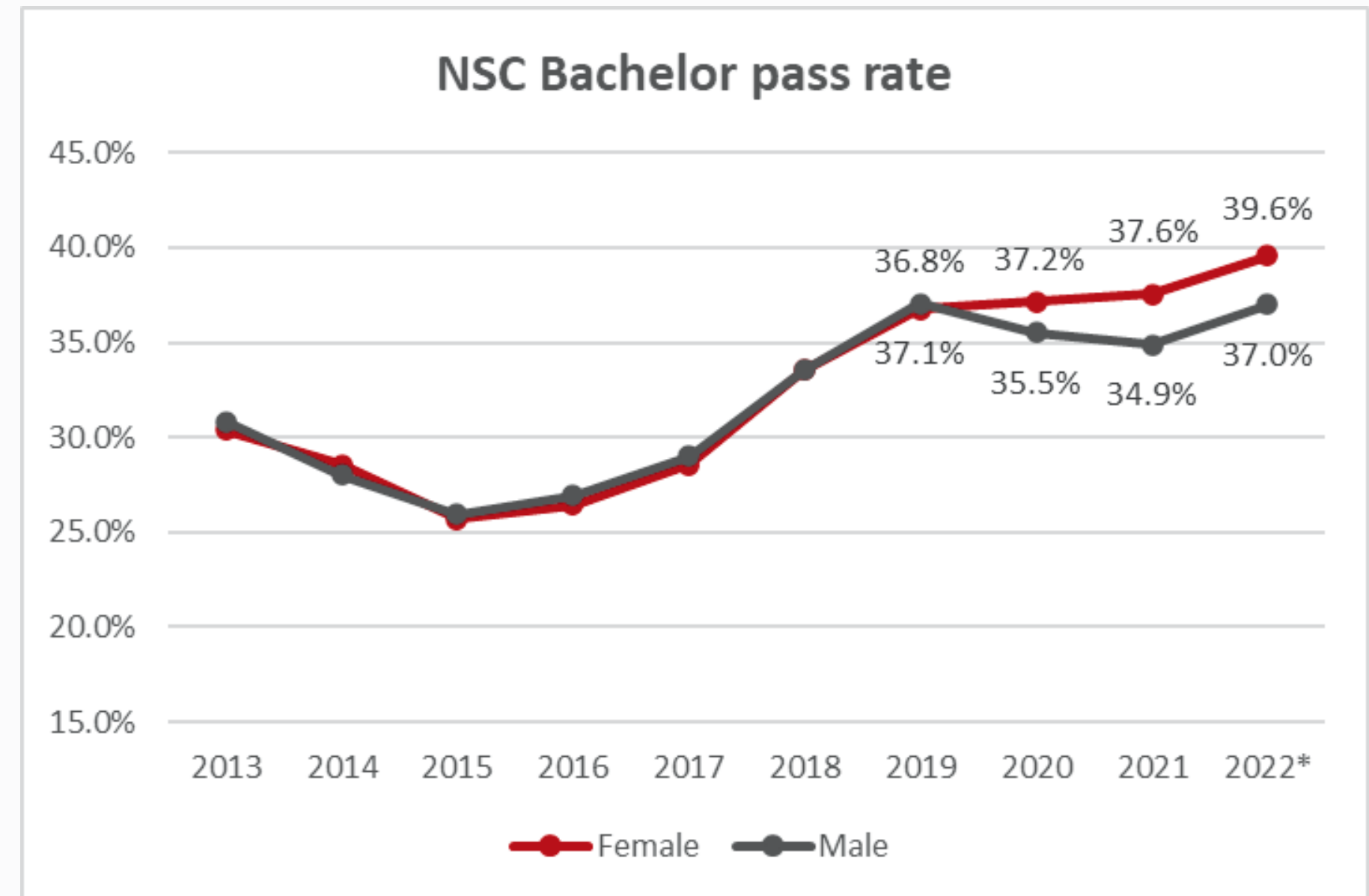
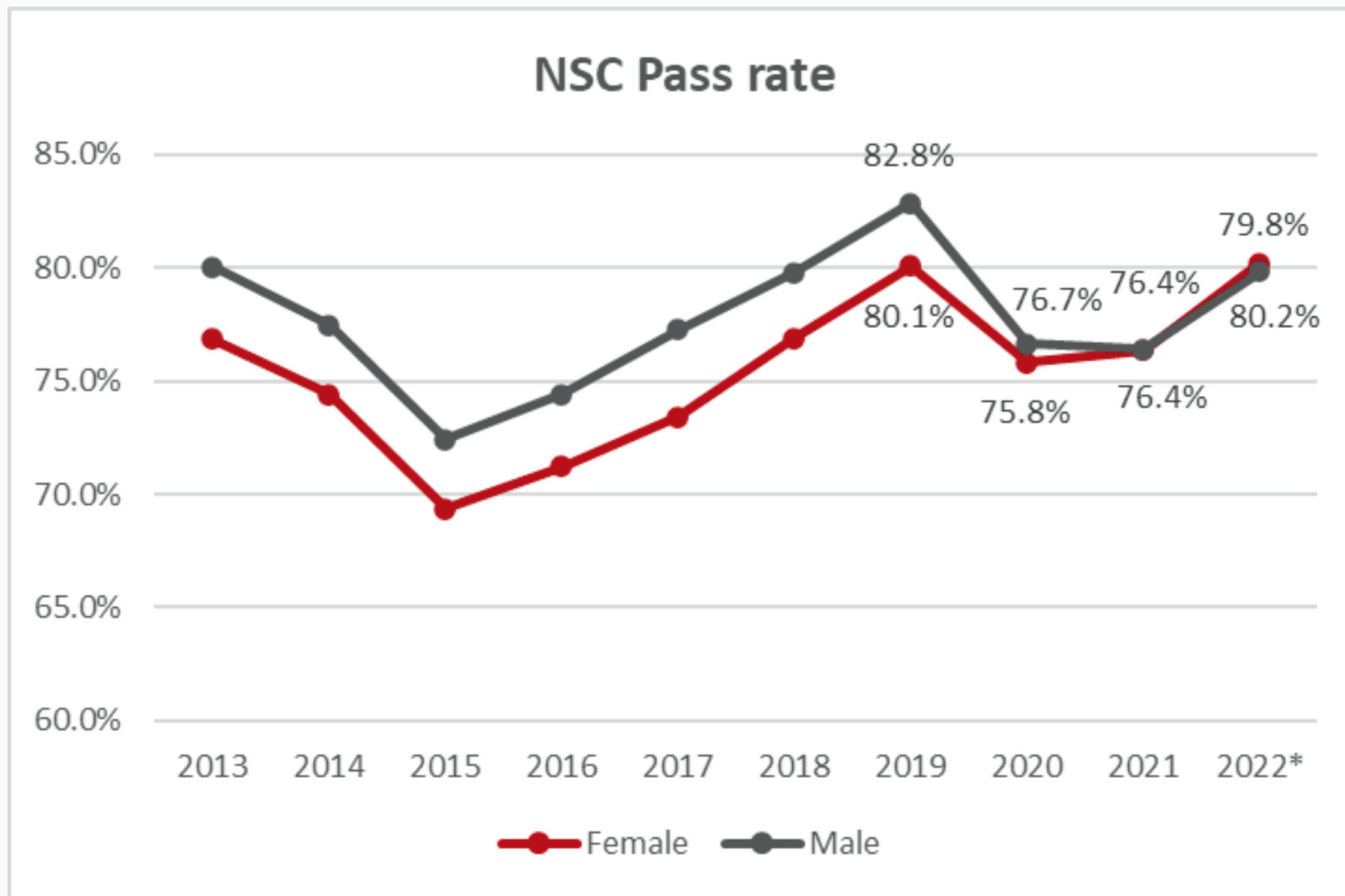
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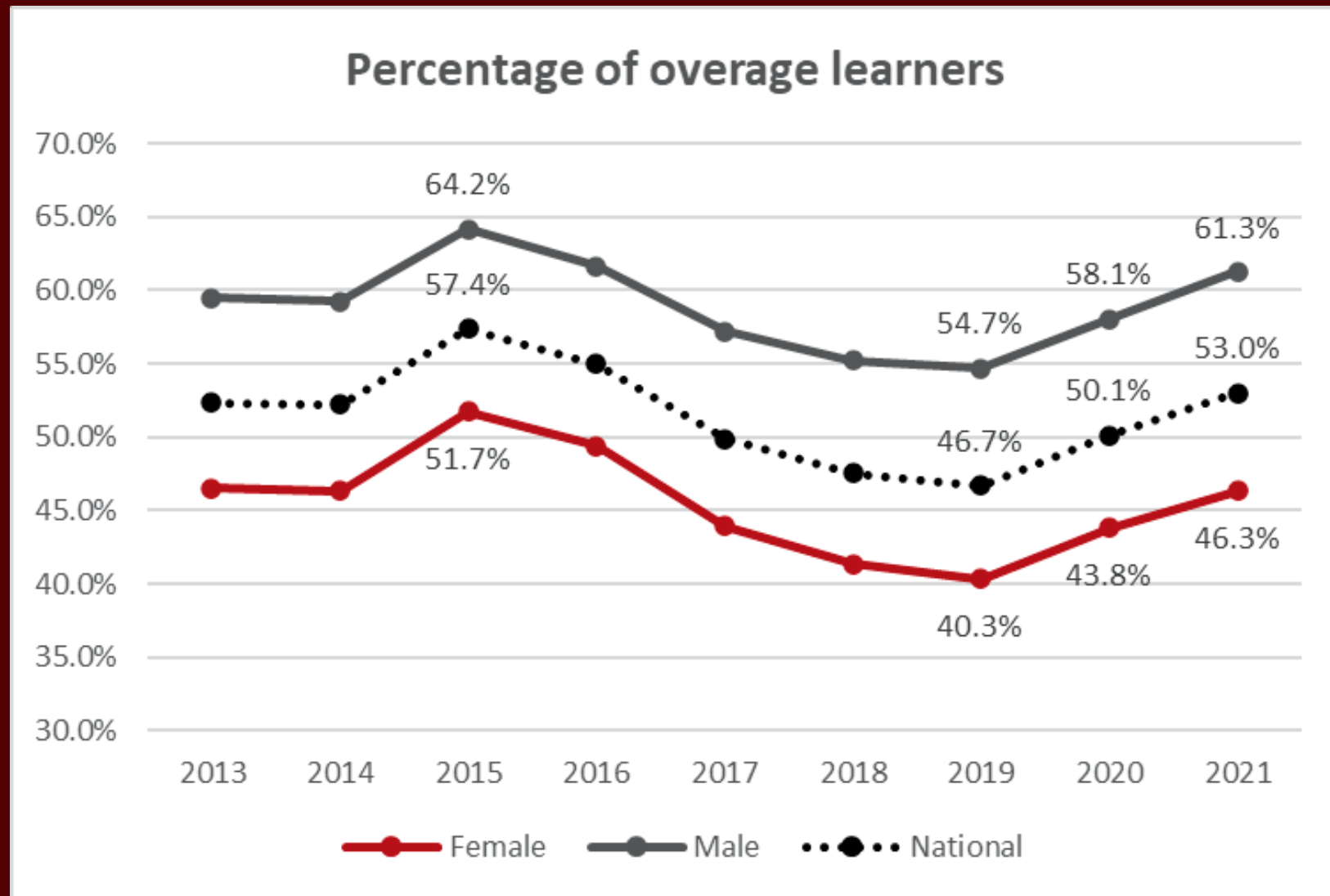
although overall numbers increased because of increased enrolment.

In 2020-2022, male learners performed relatively worse than in previous years (compared to female learners)



**2022 statistics are reported, not own calculations*

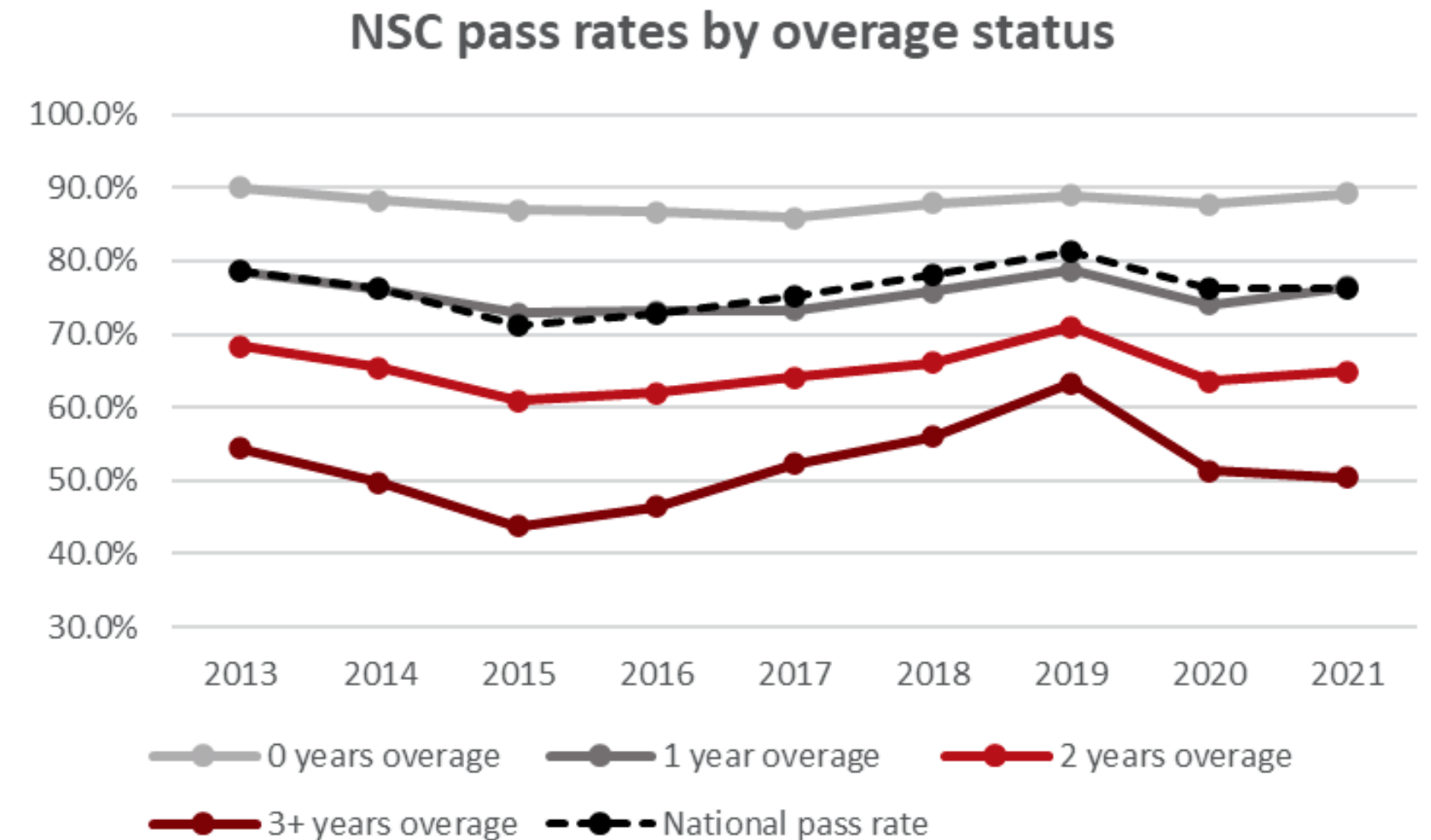
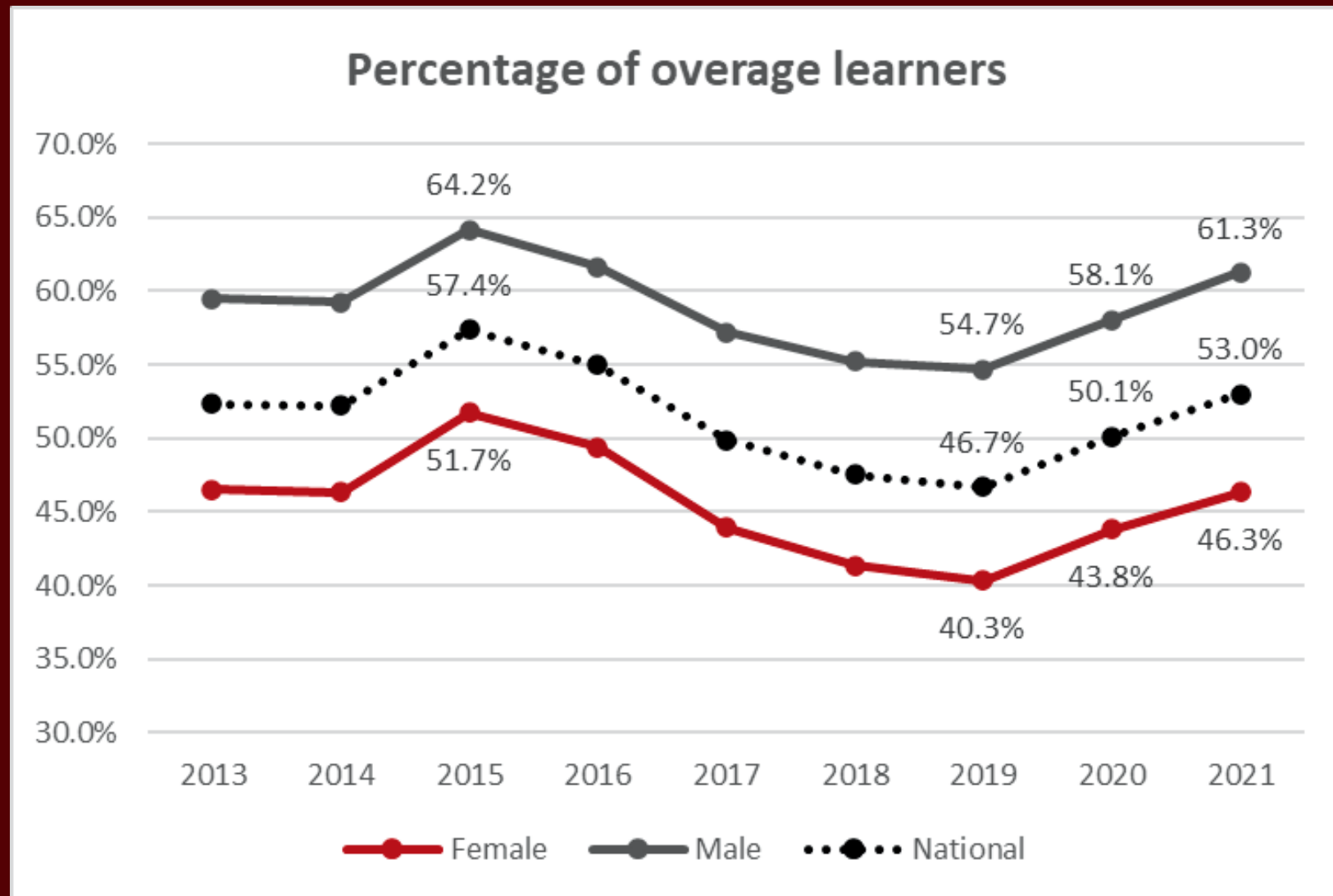
Significant age differences exist between genders...



Overage = 19 years or older in the December of the year in which the NSC examination was written

Significant age differences exist between genders...

...and overage status clearly corresponds to pass rates



Overage = 19 years or older in the December of the year in which the NSC examination was written

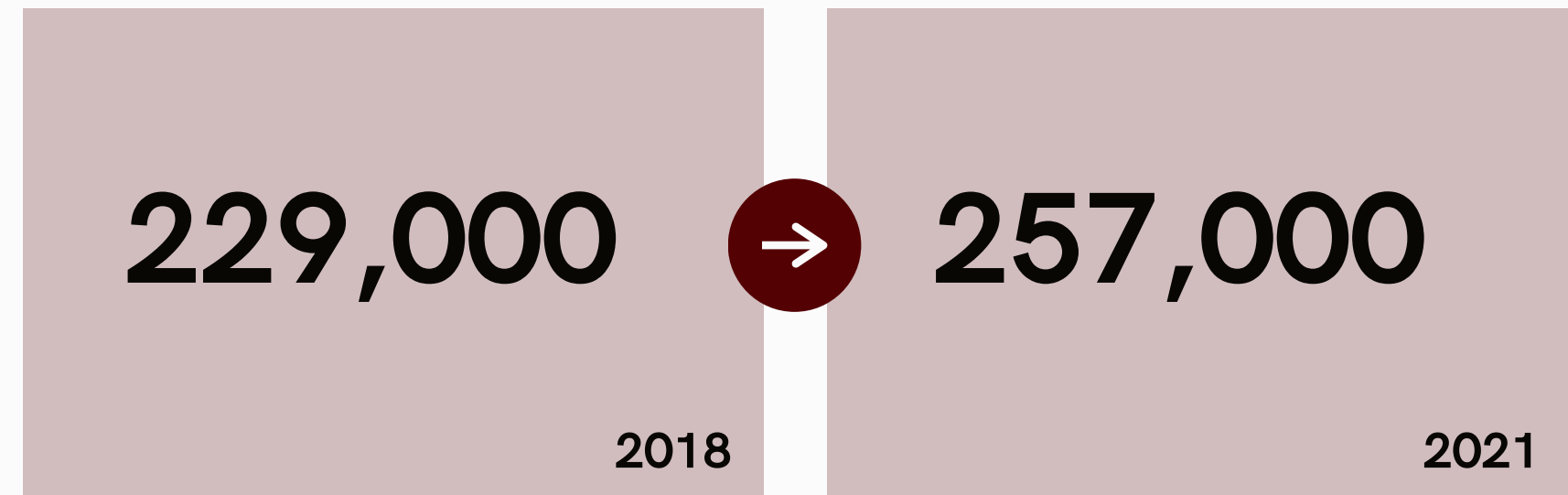
Similar differences are observed for bachelor pass rates

The percentage of learners choosing Mathematics/Physical Science is declining, although absolute numbers are still rising

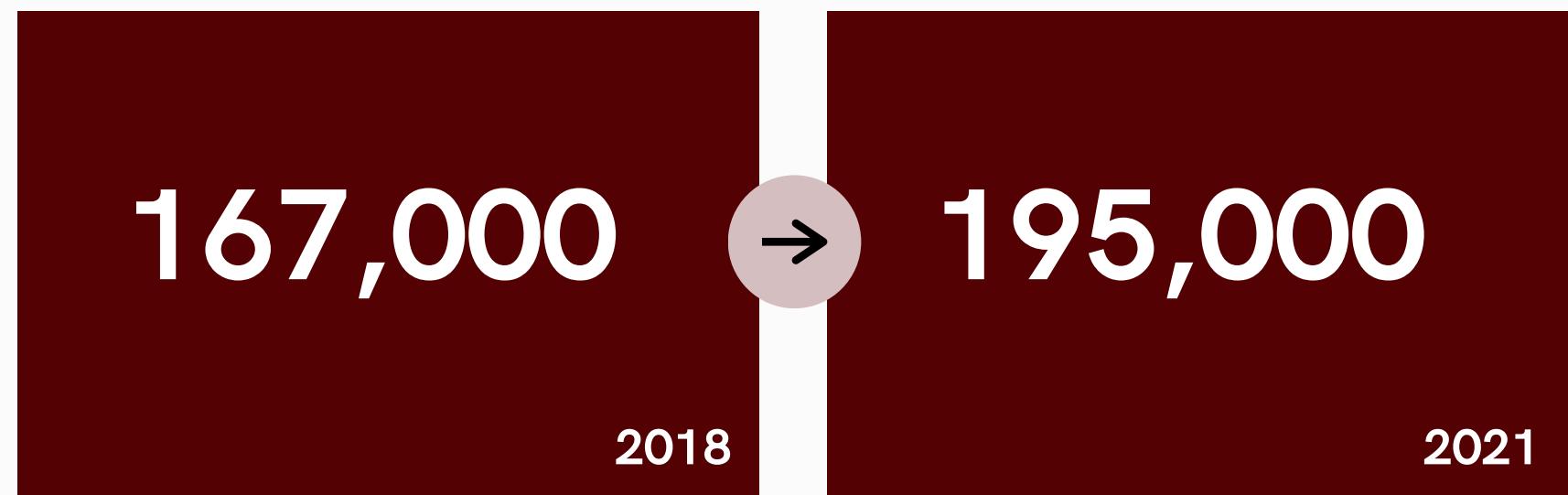
	MATHEMATICS	PHYSICAL SCIENCE
2018	45.6%	32.6%
2019	44.1%	31.6%
2020	40.8%	29.8%
2021	37.2%	27.8%

Percentage of learners writing Mathematics or Physical Science

NUMBER OF MATHEMATICS LEARNERS:

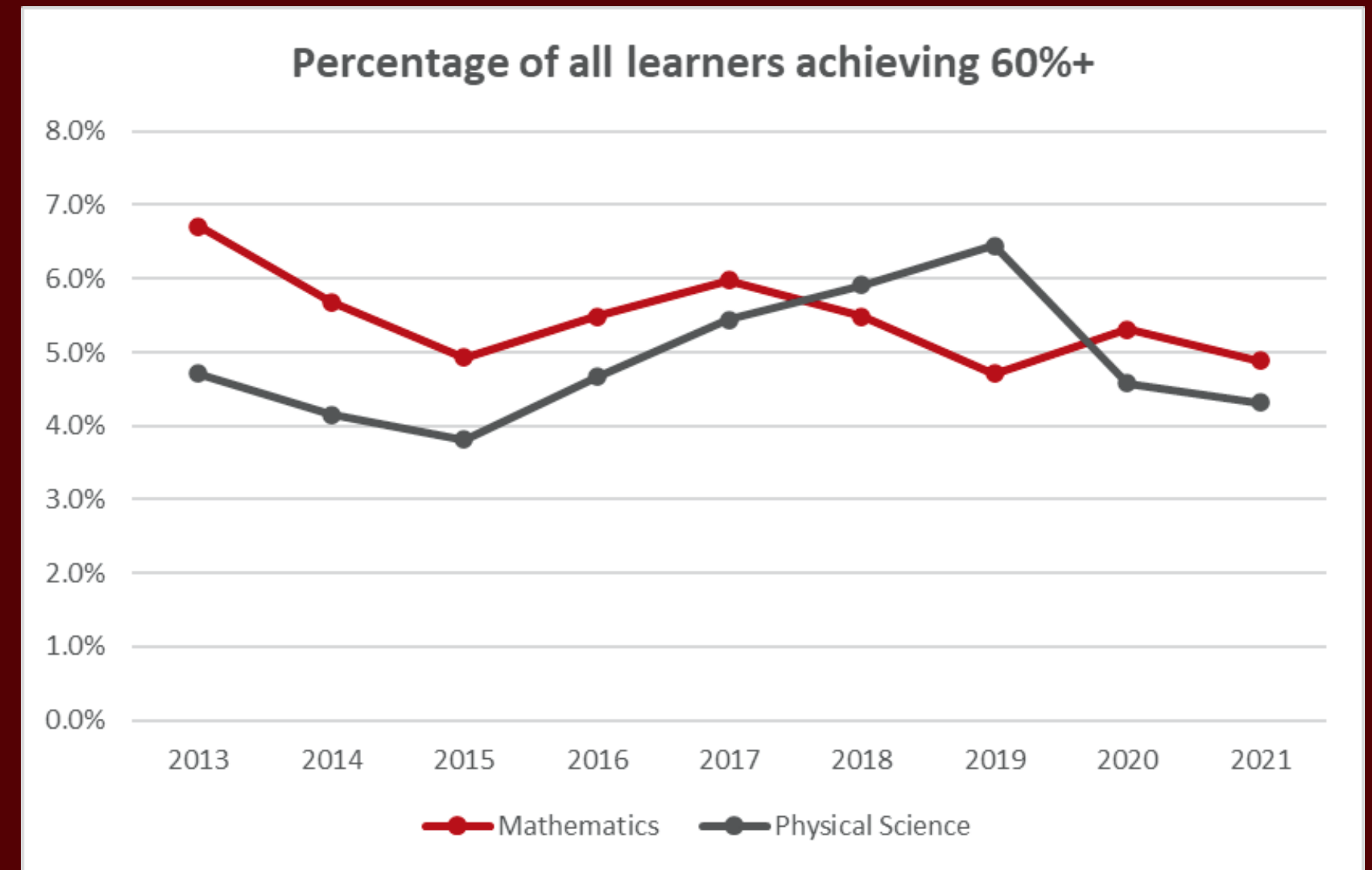
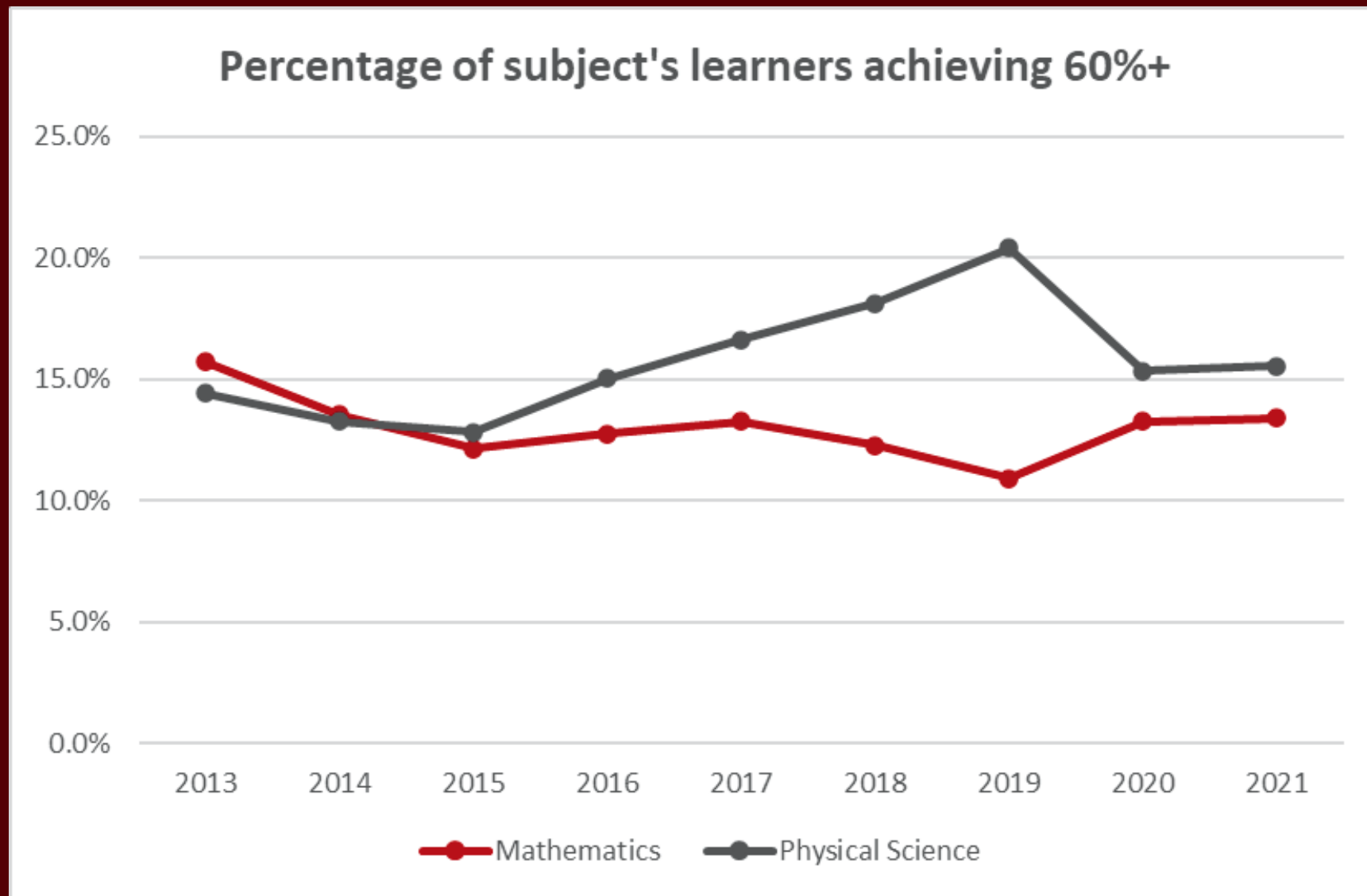


NUMBER OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE LEARNERS:



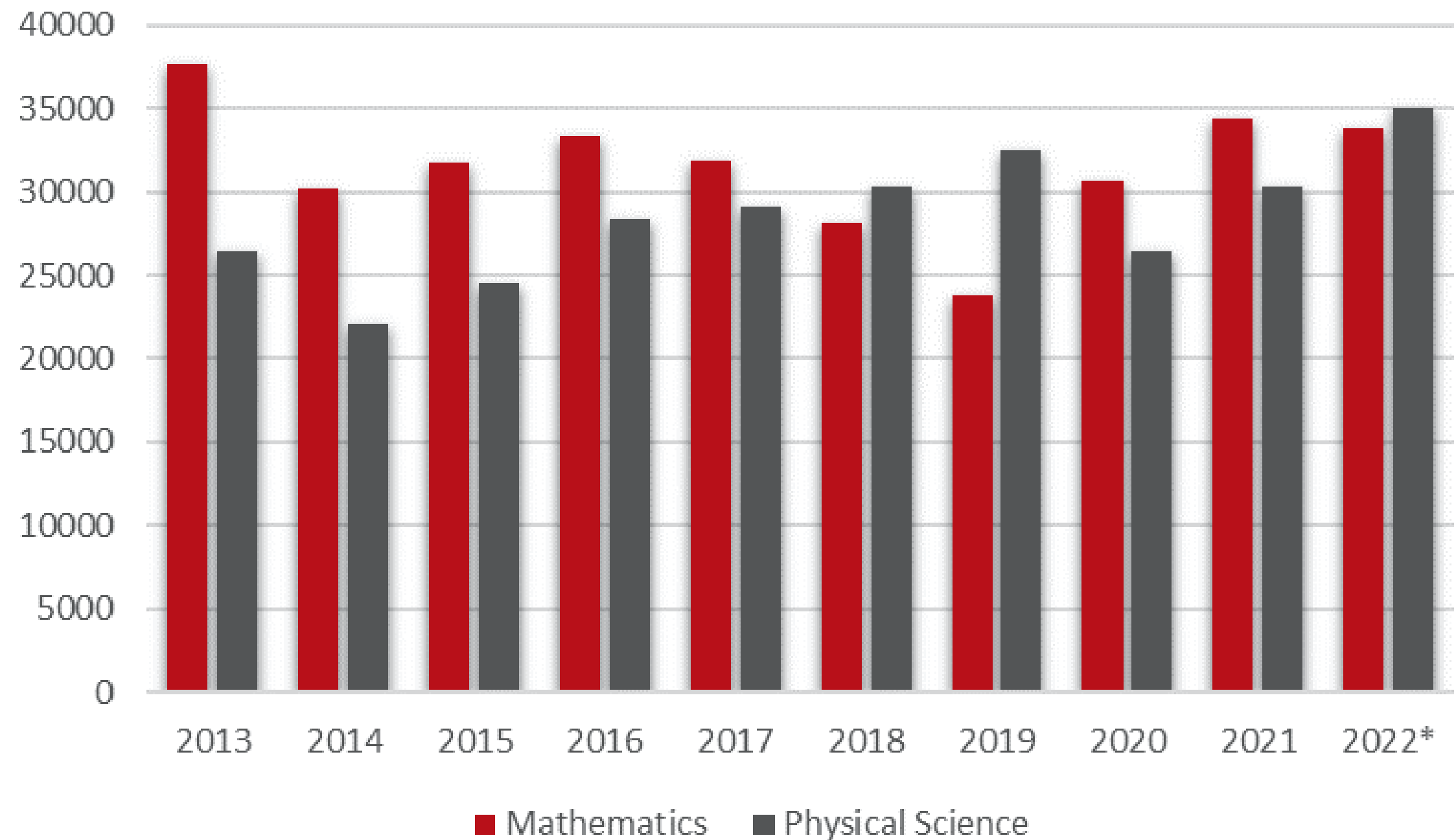
Full-time candidates; numbers rounded to nearest 1000

In 2020 and 2021, there were proportionally fewer learners achieving over 60% in Physical Science



'Percentage of all learners' =
$$\frac{\text{Number of 60%+ passes}}{\text{Total NSC enrolment}}$$

More learners reached 60% benchmarks in Mathematics and Physical Science in 2021 and 2022



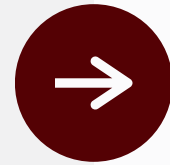
Number of full-time learners achieving 60%+

**2022 statistics are reported, not own calculations*

KEY POINT

Proportionally fewer learners are choosing Mathematics and Physical Science, and high-level Physical Science achievement experienced a marked decrease in 2020 and 2021

What/who do these changes impact?



Labour market

How will the value of NSC passes change in the face of increasing numbers?

STEM fields

How can learning losses be overcome to improve performance in STEM subjects?

NSC graduates

Will candidates' labour market expectations become misaligned with the real returns?

Higher education

How will post-secondary education institutions respond to increasing bachelor pass numbers?

Standardisation processes

How can standardisation bodies account for changes in the matric cohorts to ensure comparability of results across years?

2020-2022 are still 'early years' of the Covid generation

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?
