



ADMINISTRATIVE LOAD OF PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



Governing Body Foundation **National Survey Report 2026**

Reporting Period: 2 March 2026 to 12 March 2026

Compiled by Alexandra Pinnock
for the Governing Body Foundation (March 2026)





National Survey Report 2026: Administrative Load of Public School Principals

Introduction

INTRODUCTORY PAGES

This report presents the findings of the Administrative Load of Public School Principals Survey 2026. It provides an overall national analysis of survey responses, together with a breakdown of findings across the four GBF regions, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data to identify key trends, pressure points, and areas requiring attention at provincial and national levels.

The report will also include individual regional analysis for KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Gauteng. The survey was conducted electronically over a 10-day period from 2 March to 12 March 2026.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governing Body Foundation (GBF) conducted this national survey to quantify the administrative burden experienced by public school principals in four provinces in South Africa where GBF membership is represented. This report presents the findings of the Administrative Load of Public School Principals Survey 2026, administered electronically over a 10-day period from 2 to 12 March 2026 and draws on responses from 305 public school principals. It includes a national analysis, together with a comparative breakdown across the four GBF regions with meaningful sample sizes: Western Cape (136), Gauteng (87), Eastern Cape (59), and KwaZulu-Natal (19). Across the GBF membership base of 750 schools, the Western Cape accounts for 38.9% of member schools, Gauteng 29.6%, KwaZulu-Natal 16.0%, and the Eastern Cape 15.5%.

The findings present a clear and concerning picture. Across the survey, principals describe an administrative environment that is excessive, increasing, and increasingly disruptive to their core work as school leaders. The burden is not experienced as occasional or limited to one part of the year. Instead, it is reported as both cyclical and unpredictable, with pressure peaking most strongly at the start of the year, the end of term, and during random or unplanned periods. Administrative work has also become deeply embedded in principals' personal time: 83.9% of respondents reported that after-hours administration is required often or very often, and 40.3% reported spending more than nine hours per week on administrative work outside the formal school day.

A particularly important finding is that principals overwhelmingly believe the burden has worsened over time. Nationally, 92.1% reported that the administrative load is now higher or much higher than it was five years ago. At the same time, the burden is no longer simply an issue of workload volume; it is directly affecting professional effectiveness. 71.1% of respondents indicated that administrative demands have a "high or severe impact

The qualitative responses reinforce the quantitative data with urgency. Principals consistently call for the elimination of duplicated reporting, the removal or simplification of compliance tools, and more realistic timelines for submissions. The message is clear: the current administrative load is actively undermining the quality of school leadership and, by extension, the quality of education South African learners receive.

The findings paint a consistent picture across all provinces and school types: South Africa's public school principals are operating under an administrative load that is unsustainable and worsening. The data reveals several critical findings that demand urgent attention.

After-hours work is the norm, not the exception.

84% Eighty-four percent of principals report working after-hours "often" or "very often" to keep up with administrative demands, with 40% spending more than nine hours per week on after-hours admin work and 23% exceeding 12 hours per week.

The administrative burden is rising sharply.

92% Ninety-two percent of principals report the administrative load is "higher" or "much higher" than five years ago, with 69% selecting "much higher." Only two respondents out of 305 reported a decrease.

Core leadership duties are being compromised.

71% Seventy-one percent of principals indicate that administrative demands have a "high" or "severe" impact on their ability to perform their core duties as school leaders, with a further 25% reporting "moderate" (regularly constraining) impact.

Principals are considering leaving.

59% Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicate that administrative demands contribute "to a large extent" or "to a very large extent" towards thoughts about leaving the principalship. This represents a significant retention crisis.

Management and Accountability Tools are the biggest drivers.

80% Management and Accountability Tools, including School Improvement Monitoring (SIM), School Improvement Plan (SIP) and School Self-Evaluation (SSE) emerged as the single most burdensome function, with the highest combined time demand and pressure scores nationally. Over 80% of principals rating them as high or very high.

Systemic issues compound the pressure.

91% The top pressure-creating factors are: short notice for submissions (91%), duplication of information (90%), overwhelming support documentation (82%), unrealistic deadlines (80%), and last-minute departmental changes (76%). These are systemic failures in administrative planning, not inevitable features of school management.



About this Report

This report has been compiled by Alexandra Pinnock for the Governing Body Foundation (GBF) and presents the findings of the Administrative Load of Public School Principals Survey 2026.

The survey was undertaken in response to growing concern from principals that the administrative load placed on them, and on schools more broadly, is increasingly affecting their ability to perform their roles effectively as school leaders and managers. The findings aim to contribute meaningfully to discussions on school leadership, support, compliance demands, and administrative reform at both provincial and national level.



Note on Interpretation

This report is based on the responses received through an anonymous sample survey of public school principals. It offers important insight into the experiences and perceptions of respondents and highlights clear patterns that warrant attention. At the same time, the findings should be interpreted with appropriate care.

Disclaimer:

While every effort has been made to present the data accurately and responsibly, the following should be noted:

1. This survey is based on a sample of responses received and does not necessarily constitute a statistically representative sample of all public school principals nationally, or within every province or GBF region.
2. The findings reflect the reported perceptions and experiences of respondents at the time of completing the survey.
3. Response numbers differ across provinces and regions. In some categories, relatively small response numbers mean that findings should be treated as directional and indicative, rather than definitive.
4. Qualitative comments have been grouped into broad themes in order to identify common issues and patterns. These themes are intended to assist interpretation and should not be read as exact or exhaustive categories.
5. The report is intended to support discussion, reflection, advocacy, and engagement, and should be understood as a practical evidence-based contribution to broader conversations about the administrative load carried by school principals.

Despite these limitations, the survey reveals a strong and consistent pattern of findings and provides valuable insight into the administrative pressures affecting school leadership in the four provinces sampled.



Aim of the Survey

The aim of the survey was to better understand the nature, extent, and impact of the administrative demands placed on public school principals.

In particular, the survey sought to explore:

- * the extent to which administrative responsibilities are affecting principals' core leadership and management roles
- * how much time is being taken up by administrative and compliance-related work
- * which categories of administration are creating the greatest pressure
- * which underlying factors are making the burden more difficult to manage
- * what patterns are emerging in relation to support, well-being, and the sustainability of the role

The survey is intended to provide a practical evidence base that can inform constructive engagement and advocacy. It is also relevant in the context of growing recognition, at a national level, that the administrative burden carried by school principals requires closer attention.



Survey Structure

The respondents were anonymous. The questionnaire was designed to be short and practical, while still gathering meaningful information. It was structured around five sections:

? Section A: School Context

Background and classification information relating to the school and respondent context.

? Section B: Time Demand (Timing and After-hours)

Questions relating to the amount of time required for administration, including after-hours demands.

? Section C: Administrative Demands by Function

A more detailed examination of the extent to which different categories of school administration create pressure.

? Section D: Factors Creating Pressure

Questions exploring the features of administrative work that make it particularly difficult or burdensome.

? Section E: Overall Patterns, Support and Well-being

Questions examining trends over time, support, impact, and broader implications for principals



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Section A

SCHOOL CONTEXT

This section establishes the demographic profile of the survey respondents to support fair comparison across schools and provinces.



A1. Provincial Distribution

The survey drew responses from six of South Africa's nine provinces with 305 captured responses. Mpumalanga and Free State together account for only 1.3% (4) of all responses and have therefore been excluded from further analysis. Across the four provinces included in the main analysis, the GBF membership base consists of 750 schools of which 38.9% (292) are in the Western Cape, 29.6% (222) in Gauteng, 16.0% (120) in KwaZulu-Natal and 15.5% (116) in the Eastern Cape. The survey received 301 responses from these provinces, representing 40.1% of the GBF membership base overall.

Total Responses per Province

The Western Cape contributed the largest number of responses to the survey (136; 45.2%), followed by Gauteng (87; 28.9%), the Eastern Cape (59; 19.6%) and KwaZulu-Natal (19; 6.3%). Relative to member-school numbers, the Eastern Cape recorded the highest response rate (50.9%), followed by the Western Cape (46.6%), Gauteng (39.2%) and KwaZulu-Natal (15.8%).

This indicates significant national coverage, and means that the survey provides a strong overall basis for identifying key patterns and concerns, although provincial representation is uneven.

Province	GBF Member Schools	Survey Responses	Response Rate	% of Survey Responses
Eastern Cape	116	59	50.9%	19.6%
Gauteng	222	87	39.2%	28.9%
KwaZulu-Natal	120	19	15.8%	6.3%
Western Cape	292	136	46.6%	45.2%
TOTAL	750	301	40.1%	100.0%

Table A1: Total responses per province (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

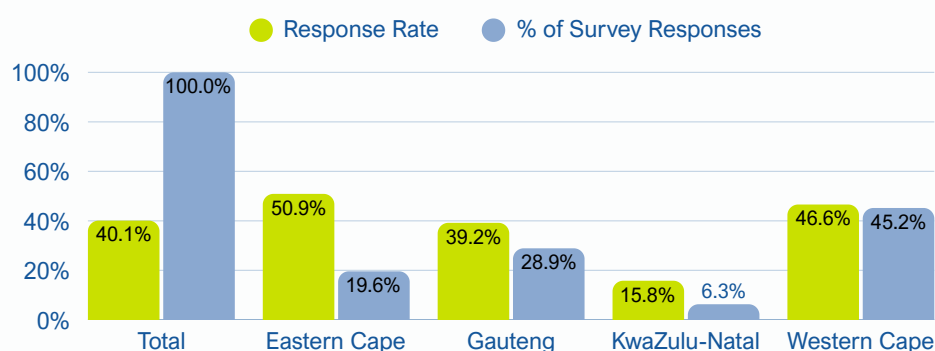


Figure A1: Responses per province (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)



A2. School Type

The distribution of respondents by school type provides useful context for the survey findings, as administrative demands may vary across different school settings. It helps frame later results on workload, pressure, and capacity.

Total National Respondents per School Type

Primary schools dominate the sample (189, 62%), followed by Secondary schools (93, 30.5%). A further 19 respondents (6.2%) from Pre-Primary, 19 (6.2%) from LSEN (Learners with Special Education Needs) schools, and smaller numbers from Combined schools (10, 3.3%).

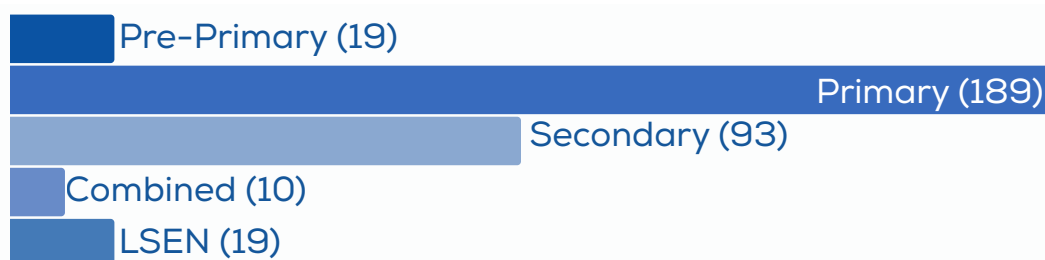


Figure A2: Total national respondents per School Type (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

This means that the overall survey findings are likely to reflect the experiences of principals in primary and secondary schools (282, 92.5%), most strongly while pre-primary, combined, and LSEN schools make up much smaller portions of the sample.

Provincial Responses per School Type

Among the schools that responded, primary schools were the most represented in all four provinces: Eastern Cape (33), Gauteng (59), KwaZulu-Natal (13), and Western Cape (81). Secondary schools were the next most represented: Eastern Cape (17), Gauteng (25), KwaZulu-Natal (5), and Western Cape (46). LSEN schools were the least represented: Eastern Cape (6), Gauteng (3), KwaZulu-Natal (2), and Western Cape (8).

School type	Total	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape
Pre-Primary	19	3	3	1	10
Primary	189	33	59	13	81
Secondary	93	17	25	5	46
Combined	10	5	1	0	3
LSEN	19	6	3	2	8

Table A2: School type responses per province (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

The Eastern Cape response profile shows relatively stronger representation from combined (5) and LSEN (6) schools, while the Western Cape includes a somewhat broader spread across pre-primary (10) and LSEN (8) schools. KwaZulu-Natal appears the most concentrated, with responses coming mainly from primary schools (13), followed by much smaller numbers of secondary (5), LSEN (2), and pre-primary (1) schools.

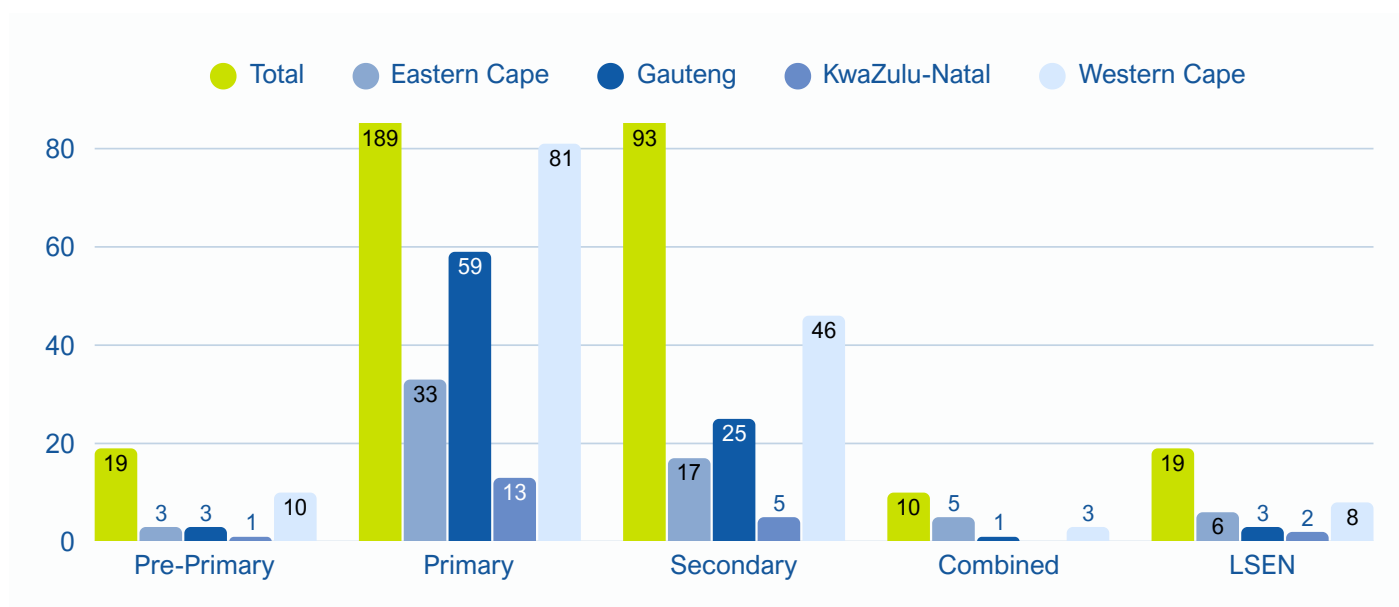


Figure A3: School type responses per province (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

Overall, the table suggests that the survey captures a broad spread of school contexts, but with a clear weighting towards primary and secondary schools, especially in the Western Cape and Gauteng. The smaller representation of pre-primary, combined, and LSEN schools means that findings for these categories should be interpreted more cautiously, particularly at provincial level where the numbers are very low.



A3. Quintile Distribution

Total National Responses per Quintile

Quintile	Respondents	Percentage
Quintile 1	9	3.0%
Quintile 2	5	1.6%
Quintile 3	27	8.9%
Quintile 4	46	15.1%
Quintile 5	218	71.5%
TOTAL	305	100%

Table A3: Total national responses per quintile (analysis includes all provinces that responded)

The sample is heavily weighted towards Quintile 5 schools (218 respondents, 71.5%), with Quintile 4 representing 15.1%, Quintile 3 at 8.9%, and Quintiles 1 and 2 together accounting for only 4.6%.

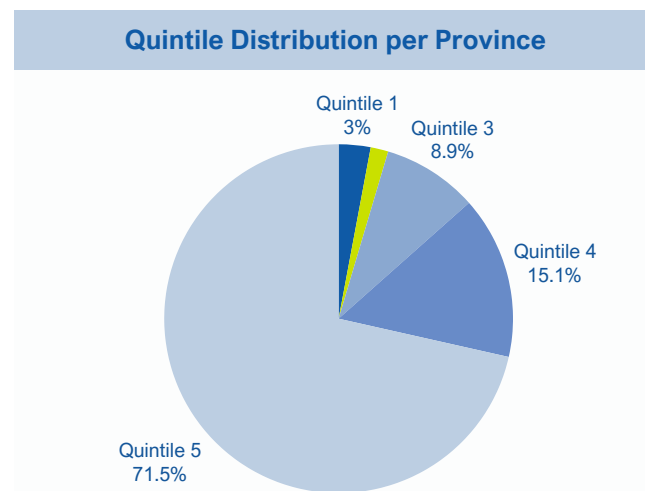


Figure A4: Quintile distribution of respondents (analysis includes all provinces that responded)

This quintile skew is significant contextually: it means the reported administrative burden is not primarily a resource-poverty issue. Even well-resourced Quintile 5 schools report overwhelming administrative demands, which suggests the problem is systemic rather than a function of under-resourcing at school level.

Provincial Responses per Quintile

Quintile	Total	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape
Quintile 1	9	0	1	1	6
Quintile 2	5	0	0	0	5
Quintile 3	27	3	9	0	13
Quintile 4	46	11	6	6	19
Quintile 5	218	45	71	12	93

Table A4: Quintile responses per province (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

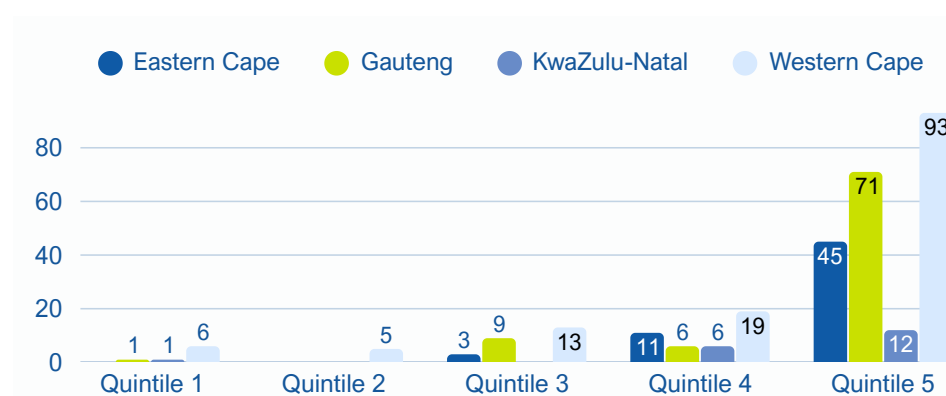


Figure A5: Quintile responses per province (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

Among the schools that responded, Quintile 5 schools were by far the most represented in every province: Eastern Cape (45), Gauteng (71), KwaZulu-Natal (12), and Western Cape (93). Quintile 4 schools formed the next strongest group in most provinces, particularly in the Western Cape (19) and Eastern Cape (11), while Gauteng had a slightly stronger showing from Quintile 3 (9) than Quintile 4 (6) schools. Lower quintiles were only lightly represented, with Quintile 1 responses coming mainly from the Western Cape (6) and just one each from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, while Quintile 2 responses came only from the Western Cape (5).



A4. School Size (Number of Learners)

Total National Responses per Size of School

The sample splits fairly evenly across size categories: 500 to 1000 learners (124, 40.7%), more than 1000 learners (115, 37.7%), and fewer than 500 learners (66, 21.6%).

Number of Learners	Number of Schools
Less than 500	66
500 to 1000	124
More than 1000	115
TOTAL	305

Table A5: National responses per Size of School (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

Larger schools report somewhat higher after-hours burden: 86% of schools with more than 1000 learners report after-hours work often or very often, compared to 82% for smaller schools. However, the differences are modest, confirming that administrative overload affects schools regardless of size.

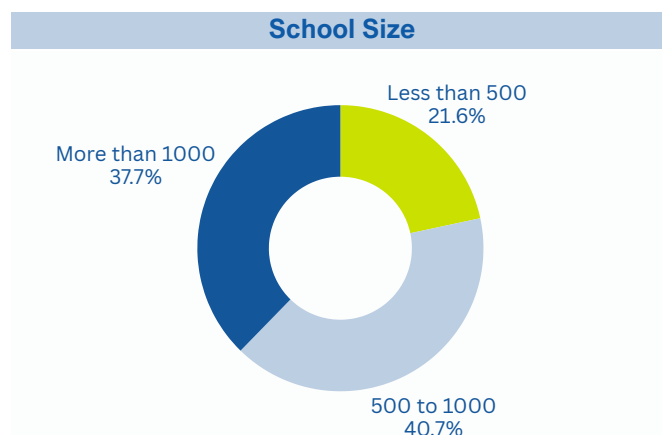


Figure A6: National responses per Size of School (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

Provincial Responses per Size of School

Learner numbers	Total	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape
Less than 500	66	16	9	5	36
500 to 1000	124	21	39	7	54
More than 1000	115	22	39	7	46

Table A6: Provincial responses per Size of School (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)

Among the schools that responded, the Western Cape shows the strongest representation across all three school-size categories, with particularly high numbers in the 500 to 1000 (54) and more than 1000 (46) learner groups. In Gauteng, responses are concentrated equally in the 500 to 1000 (39) and more than 1000 (39) categories, with far fewer from schools with less than 500 learners (9). The Eastern Cape shows a more even spread across the three groups, with responses from less than 500 (16), 500 to 1000 (21), and more than 1000 learners (22). In KwaZulu-Natal, the response profile is smaller and fairly evenly distributed, with 5 schools under 500 learners and 7 each in the middle and largest size categories.

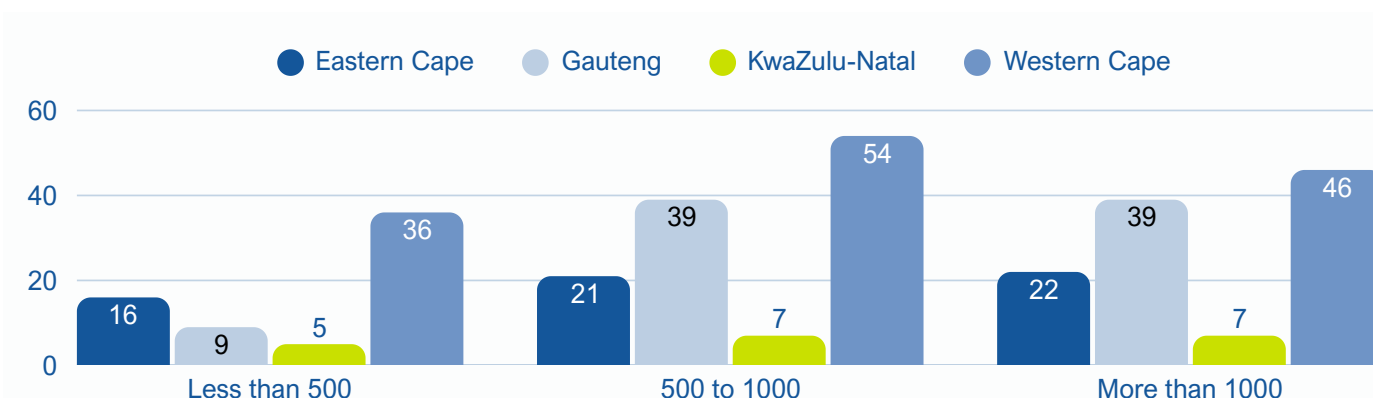


Figure A7: Provincial responses per Size of School (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)



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Section B

TIME DEMAND

(Timing and After-Hours)



B1. When Does Administration Peak?

Principals were asked to identify when administrative work typically peaks during the year. The responses reveal that administrative load is not neatly seasonal; instead, it is both concentrated at known pinch points and unpredictably distributed throughout the year. Respondents were able to select more than one option (multiple-response), therefore the percentages do not add to 100%.

Total National Responses

Peak Period	Respondents	Percentage		
Random/unpredictable	223	73.1%		73.1%
Start of year	212	69.5%		69.5%
End of Term	210	68.9%		68.9%
Financial year-end	121	39.7%		39.7%
Exam periods	106	34.8%		34.8%

Table B1 and Figure B1: National responses for administrative peak times

Across all four provinces, the data shows that administrative pressure is concentrated most strongly at the start of the year, the end of term, and during random or unpredictable periods. The prominence of the random/unpredictable category across provinces is particularly significant, as it suggests that principals are not only dealing with expected cyclical peaks, but are also facing irregular and often poorly timed demands that disrupt planning and management.

The most telling finding is that 73% of principals identify peak periods as random or unpredictable. This is more than any single scheduled period. While start of year (70%) and end of term (69%) are expected pressure points, the fact that nearly three-quarters of principals cannot predict when the next administrative surge will hit indicates a fundamental lack of coordinated planning from education departments.

Total Responses per Province

This section presents the overall provincial breakdown of responses to the question. While there are some provincial differences in the relative weight of each period, the provincial pattern suggests that administrative pressure is concentrated most strongly around random or unpredictable periods, the start of the year, and the end of term, with these three categories consistently attracting the highest percentages across all four provinces.

Province	n	Random / unpredictable	Start of year	End of Term	Exam periods	Financial year-end
Eastern Cape	59	74.6%	69.5%	74.6%	32.2%	37.3%
Gauteng	87	66.7%	62.1%	63.2%	33.3%	39.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	73.7%	68.4%	63.2%	31.6%	21.1%
Western Cape	136	75.7%	74.3%	70.6%	37.5%	42.7%

Table B2: Provincial heat map of administrative peak periods (Shading intensity moves from no shading, to light blue, to darker blue, with the highest response concentrations shown in olive, indicating the strongest areas of reported administrative pressure)

The Western Cape shows the strongest overall pattern, with particularly high responses for random or unpredictable periods (75.7%), start of year (74.3%), and end of term (70.6%), while the Eastern Cape shows an equally strong concentration around random or unpredictable periods (74.6%) and end of term (74.6%). KwaZulu-Natal follows a similar pattern, although with a notably lower response for financial year-end (21.1%). Gauteng shows a slightly more even spread across categories, but still reflects the same broad trend of administrative load being shaped more by ongoing and unpredictable demands than by exam periods or financial year-end alone.

Responses and Trends per Province

Eastern Cape

In the Eastern Cape, the strongest pressure points across subgroups are generally the end of term and random/unpredictable periods, although the exact pattern varies by school context. Among primary schools, the burden is especially concentrated at the end of term (84.8%) and during random/unpredictable periods (75.8%), while combined schools show particularly high pressure across several periods, including end of term (100.0%), exam periods (60.0%), and financial year-end (60.0%), though this is based on a small number of responses.

		n	Random / unpredictable	Start of year	End of Term	Exam periods	Financial year-end
All respondents		59	74.58%	69.49%	74.58%	32.20%	37.29%
Quintile	Q3	14	78.60%	64.30%	71.40%	42.90%	28.60%
	Q4	13	84.60%	84.60%	84.60%	38.50%	61.50%
	Q5	32	68.80%	65.60%	71.90%	25.00%	31.30%
School size	<500	18	83.30%	77.80%	77.80%	33.30%	38.90%
	>1000	11	45.50%	72.70%	72.70%	18.20%	45.50%
	500–1000	30	80.00%	63.30%	73.30%	36.70%	33.30%
School type	Combined	5	80.00%	60.00%	100.00%	60.00%	60.00%
	LSEN	6	83.30%	66.70%	66.70%	16.70%	16.70%
	Pre-Primary	3	66.70%	66.70%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Primary	33	75.80%	72.70%	84.80%	33.30%	39.40%
	Secondary	17	70.60%	64.70%	52.90%	29.40%	35.30%

Table B3: Eastern Cape heat map of administrative peak periods by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. This was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

By school size, the most notable pattern is the very high level of random/unpredictable peaks in schools with less than 500 learners (83.3%) and 500–1000 learners (80.0%), compared with a lower level among schools with more than 1000 learners (45.5%). By quintile, Quintile 4 schools stand out, with 84.6% selecting start of year, end of term, and random/unpredictable periods, suggesting a particularly concentrated pattern of pressure in that subgroup.

Gauteng

		n	Random / unpredictable	Start of year	End of Term	Exam periods	Financial year-end
All respondents		87	66.67%	62.07%	63.22%	33.33%	39.08%
Quintile	Q1	2	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%
	Q4	8	50.00%	75.00%	62.50%	62.50%	62.50%
	Q5	77	68.80%	61.00%	63.60%	29.90%	36.40%
School size	<500	7	28.60%	57.10%	71.40%	28.60%	28.60%
	>1000	48	66.70%	62.50%	60.40%	35.40%	35.40%
	500–1000	32	75.00%	62.50%	65.60%	31.30%	46.90%
School type	Combined	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	LSEN	3	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Pre-Primary	3	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	66.70%	100.00%
	Primary	59	55.90%	66.10%	71.20%	35.60%	45.80%
	Secondary	25	88.00%	60.00%	52.00%	32.00%	28.00%

Table B4: Gauteng heat map of administrative peak periods by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

In Gauteng, the most striking heat map pattern is the prominence of random/unpredictable periods, especially in certain school types and sizes. Among secondary schools, this reaches 88.0%, far higher than in primary schools (55.9%), suggesting that secondary principals may experience a more irregular and disruptive burden pattern.

By school size, 500–1000 learner schools show the strongest random/unpredictable peak (75.0%), while schools with less than 500 learners are much lower (28.6%), although the sample there is small.

By quintile, Quintile 5 schools dominate the pattern, with 68.8% selecting random/unpredictable periods, compared with 50.0% in both Quintile 1 and Quintile 4. The Gauteng pattern therefore suggests that unpredictability is especially important in secondary schools, mid-sized schools, and Quintile 5 settings.

KwaZulu-Natal

In KwaZulu-Natal, the strongest feature of the heat map is the prominence of random/unpredictable periods, but this varies sharply by subgroup. By school size, schools with less than 500 learners report 100.0% random/unpredictable peaks, while schools with more than 1000 learners are also very high at 85.7%, suggesting that unpredictability affects both smaller and larger schools strongly.

		n	Random / unpredictable	Start of year	End of Term	Exam periods	Financial year-end
All respondents		19	73.7%	68.4%	63.2%	31.6%	21.1%
Quintile	Q1	1	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Q4	6	83.3%	66.7%	66.7%	16.7%	0.0%
	Q5	12	66.7%	75.0%	66.7%	41.7%	33.3%
School size	<500	5	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%	60.0%	40.0%
	>1000	7	85.7%	57.1%	57.1%	14.3%	14.3%
	500–1000	7	42.9%	71.4%	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%
School type	LSEN	2	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	Pre-Primary	1	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Primary	13	76.9%	76.9%	76.9%	38.5%	23.1%
	Secondary	5	60.0%	60.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%

Table B5: KwaZulu-Natal heat map of administrative peak periods by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

By school type, primary schools show a very strong three-way pattern, with 76.9% selecting start of year, end of term, and random/unpredictable periods.

By quintile, Quintile 4 schools stand out on random/unpredictable periods (83.3%), while Quintile 5 schools show a stronger spread across start of year (75.0%), end of term (66.7%), and random/unpredictable periods (66.7%). The KwaZulu-Natal pattern therefore suggests that the burden is especially shaped by unpredictability, particularly in smaller and larger schools, and in primary and Quintile 4 settings.

Western Cape

In the Western Cape, the heat map shows a broad pattern of pressure across start of year, end of term, and random/unpredictable periods, but with important subgroup differences. By school type, secondary schools show especially strong random/unpredictable peaks (80.4%), while LSEN schools are notable for end of term (87.5%) and random/unpredictable periods (100.0%).

		n	Random / unpredictable	Start of year	End of Term	Exam periods	Financial year-end
All respondents		136	75.7%	74.3%	70.6%	37.5%	42.7%
Quintile	Q1	6	83.3%	83.3%	83.3%	16.7%	66.7%
	Q2	5	60.0%	80.0%	80.0%	60.0%	60.0%
	Q3	13	69.2%	69.2%	61.5%	53.8%	46.2%
	Q4	19	78.9%	57.9%	57.9%	21.1%	31.6%
	Q5	93	76.3%	77.4%	73.1%	38.7%	41.9%
School size	<500	36	75.0%	80.6%	75.0%	36.1%	44.4%
	>1000	46	80.4%	67.4%	63.0%	34.8%	34.8%
	500–1000	54	72.2%	75.9%	74.1%	40.7%	48.1%
School type	Combined	3	100.0%	66.7%	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%
	LSEN	8	100.0%	62.5%	87.5%	0.0%	37.5%
	Pre-Primary	10	60.0%	80.0%	70.0%	40.0%	70.0%
	Primary	84	71.4%	75.0%	71.4%	39.3%	46.4%
	Secondary	46	80.40%	73.90%	67.40%	41.30%	37.00%

Table B6: Western Cape heat map of administrative peak periods by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

By school size, schools with more than 1000 learners show the highest random/unpredictable rate (80.4%), while schools with less than 500 learners show the highest start of year rate (80.6%).

By quintile, Quintile 5 schools show a consistently high pattern across start of year (77.4%), end of term (73.1%), and random/unpredictable periods (76.3%), while Quintile 4 schools stand out specifically on random/unpredictable periods (78.9%). The Western Cape pattern suggests that both cyclical and irregular pressure are strongly present, especially in secondary, LSEN, larger, and Quintile 5 school contexts.

B2. Frequency of After-Hours Administrative Work

This section provides the national and provincial breakdown of responses to the question, "How often are you required to do administrative work after-hours to keep up with the demand?" This was a single-response question, and the percentages therefore indicate the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each frequency category.

Total National Responses

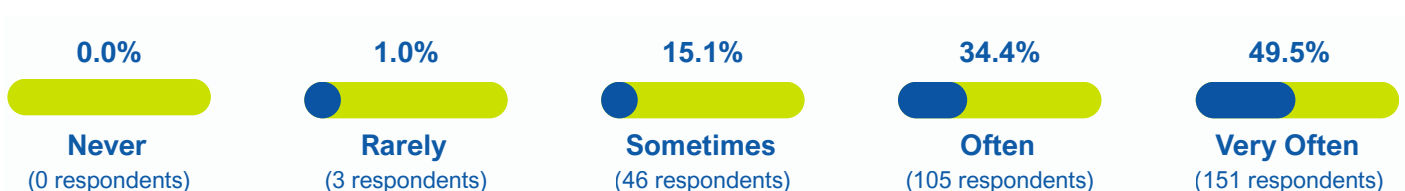


Figure B2: National responses for frequency of after-hours administrative work (analysis includes all provinces that responded)

The extent of after-hours work is overwhelming. Nearly half of all principals (49.5%) report doing after-hours admin "very often," with a further 34.4% saying "often." Combined, 83.9% of principals are regularly working beyond school hours on administrative tasks. Only 15.1% say "sometimes," and a mere 1.0% say "rarely." No respondent selected "never."

Total Responses per Province

This table presents the provincial distribution across the four main provinces and shows the extent to which after-hours administrative work has become a routine part of the principalship rather than an occasional or exceptional demand.

Province	n	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Eastern Cape	59	1.7%	16.9%	37.3%	44.1%
Gauteng	87	1.1%	13.8%	31.0%	54.0%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	0.0%	10.5%	31.6%	57.9%
Western Cape	136	0.7%	15.4%	35.3%	48.5%

Table B7: National responses for frequency of after-hours administrative work (Shading intensity moves from no shading, to light blue, to darker blue, with the highest response concentrations shown in olive, indicating the strongest areas of reported administrative pressure.)

These findings show a very consistent pattern that in every province, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that administrative work after-hours is required often or very often. The combined proportion of principals selecting these two categories is 81.4% in the Eastern Cape (37.3% often; 44.1% very often), 85.0% in Gauteng (31.0% often; 54.0% very often), 89.5% in KwaZulu-Natal (31.6% often; 57.9% very often), and 83.8% in the Western Cape (35.3% often; 48.5% very often). This indicates that in all four provinces, more than four out of every five respondents experience after-hours administration as a regular part of the role.

The strongest concentration in the very often category is evident in KwaZulu-Natal (57.9%) and Gauteng (54.0%), suggesting a particularly intense pattern of after-hours burden in these provinces. The Western Cape (48.5%) and Eastern Cape (44.1%) also show high levels in this category, reinforcing the broader national trend. By contrast, the proportion selecting sometimes remains relatively low across all provinces, ranging from 10.5% in KwaZulu-Natal to 16.9% in the Eastern Cape, while rarely is almost absent, with just 1.7% in the Eastern Cape, 1.1% in Gauteng, 0.7% in the Western Cape, and 0% in KwaZulu-Natal.

Responses and Trends per Province

Eastern Cape

In the table below, the Eastern Cape data indicates that after-hours administrative work is a regular feature of the principalship.

		n	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
All respondents		59	1.7%	16.9%	37.3%	44.1%
Quintile	Q3	14	0.0%	21.4%	21.4%	57.1%
	Q4	13	0.0%	15.4%	38.5%	46.2%
	Q5	32	3.1%	15.6%	43.8%	37.5%
School size	<500	18	0.0%	22.2%	27.8%	50.0%
	>1000	11	0.0%	36.4%	18.2%	45.5%
	500–1000	30	3.3%	6.7%	50.0%	40.0%
School type	Combined	5	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
	LSEN	6	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%
	Pre-Primary	3	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%
	Primary	33	3.0%	18.2%	36.4%	42.4%
	Secondary	17	0.0%	17.6%	41.2%	41.2%

Table B8: Eastern Cape heat map of frequency of after-hours administrative work by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

The Eastern Cape heat map suggests that after-hours administrative work is widespread across all school contexts, but is particularly intense in some subgroups. By quintile, Quintile 4 schools show the highest concentration in the very often category (61.5%), compared with 35.7% in Quintile 3 and 40.6% in Quintile 5. By school size, schools with less than 500 learners show the highest very often rate (50.0%), while those with 500–1000 learners show a strong split between often (50.0%) and very often (40.0%). By school type, the pattern is relatively similar across primary and secondary schools, but pre-primary schools show a particularly high often rate (66.7%), while LSEN schools show a stronger concentration in very often (50.0%). Overall, the Eastern Cape pattern suggests that after-hours work is common across all contexts, but is especially pronounced in Quintile 4, smaller schools, and some more specialised school types.

In summary, more than four in five respondents (81.4%) in the Eastern Cape reported that they are required to do administrative work after-hours often (37.3%) or very often (44.1%). Only 16.9% indicated that this occurs sometimes, and just 1.7% selected rarely. This pattern points to a significant encroachment of administrative work into time beyond the formal school day, suggesting that many principals are unable to contain administrative requirements within normal working hours.

Gauteng

Gauteng shows one of the strongest patterns of frequent after-hours administrative work in the sample. A combined 85.0% of respondents indicated that after-hours work is required often (31.0%) or very often (54.0%), with the latter category alone accounting for more than half of respondents. Only 13.8% reported that this occurs sometimes, and 1.1% selected rarely. These figures suggest that after-hours administrative work has become normalised for many principals in Gauteng and forms a routine part of managing school-related obligations.

		n	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
All respondents		87	1.1%	13.8%	31.0%	54.0%
Quintile	Q1	2	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	Q4	8	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%
	Q5	77	1.3%	14.3%	31.2%	53.2%
School size	<500	7	0.0%	0.0%	42.9%	57.1%
	>1000	48	0.0%	14.6%	29.2%	56.3%
	500–1000	32	3.1%	15.6%	31.3%	50.0%
School type	Combined	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	LSEN	3	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
	Pre-Primary	3	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%
	Primary	59	1.7%	16.9%	35.6%	45.8%
	Secondary	25	0.0%	8.0%	20.0%	72.0%

Table B9: Gauteng heat map of frequency of after-hours administrative work by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

Gauteng shows one of the strongest concentrations in the very often category across the provinces, but this varies noticeably by subgroup. By school type, secondary schools stand out most sharply, with 64.0% reporting very often, compared with 47.5% in primary schools. Combined schools also show 100.0% very often, but this is based on a single response.

By school size, schools with more than 1000 learners show the highest very often rate (56.2%), closely followed by schools with less than 500 learners (57.1%), although again the smaller-school base is limited. By quintile, both Quintile 4 and Quintile 5 show a strong split, but Quintile 5 dominates numerically and has 54.5% in the very often category.

Overall, Gauteng shows particularly intense after-hours frequency in secondary schools, larger schools, and upper-quintile schools.

KwaZulu-Natal

KwaZulu-Natal shows the highest concentration of respondents reporting that after-hours administrative work is required very often. A combined 89.5% indicated that such work is required often (31.6%) or very often (57.9%), while 10.5% selected sometimes, and none selected rarely.

This indicates an extremely strong pattern of after-hours work in the province, suggesting that principals in KwaZulu-Natal are particularly likely to experience administration as a demand that extends regularly beyond the formal school day.

		n	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
All respondents		19	0.0%	10.5%	31.6%	57.9%
Quintile	Q1	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Q4	6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	Q5	12	0.0%	16.7%	25.0%	58.3%
School size	<500	5	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%
	>1000	7	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	71.4%
	500–1000	7	0.0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%
School type	LSEN	2	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	Pre-Primary	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Primary	13	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	53.8%
	Secondary	5	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%

Table B10: KwaZulu-Natal heat map of frequency of after-hours administrative work by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

KwaZulu-Natal shows the strongest overall concentration in the very often category, and this pattern is visible across most subgroups. By school type, both primary (61.5%) and secondary (60.0%) schools are heavily concentrated in very often, while LSEN shows a split between sometimes and very often.

By school size, schools with less than 500 learners have the highest very often rate (60.0%), while both 500–1000 and more than 1000 learners show 57.1% in the same category.

By quintile, Quintile 5 schools show 58.3% very often, while Quintile 1 is 100.0% very often, although based on one response.

Overall, the KwaZulu-Natal pattern suggests a very consistent and entrenched after-hours burden across school sizes, school types, and quintiles, with relatively little variation away from the higher-frequency categories.

Western Cape

The Western Cape data indicates that after-hours administrative work is also widespread. A combined 83.8% of respondents reported that this is required often (35.3%) or very often (48.5%), while 15.4% selected sometimes and only 0.7% selected rarely.

These findings point to a strongly embedded pattern of after-hours work among principals in the province and suggest that administrative demands are regularly exceeding what can reasonably be absorbed within the formal working day.

		n	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
All respondents		136	0.7%	15.4%	35.3%	48.5%
Quintile	Q1	6	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%
	Q2	5	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%
	Q3	13	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	53.8%
	Q4	19	5.3%	15.8%	31.6%	47.4%
	Q5	93	0.0%	12.9%	39.8%	47.3%
School size	<500	36	0.0%	19.4%	36.1%	44.4%
	>1000	46	0.0%	8.7%	37.0%	54.3%
	500–1000	54	1.9%	18.5%	33.3%	46.3%
School type	Combined	3	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	LSEN	8	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	62.5%
	Pre-Primary	10	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%
	Primary	84	1.2%	17.9%	35.7%	45.2%
	Secondary	46	0.0%	8.7%	39.1%	52.2%

Table B11: Western Cape heat map of frequency of after-hours administrative work by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive. As B1 was a multiple-response question, row percentages do not add to 100%.)

The Western Cape heat map shows a strong but slightly more distributed after-hours frequency pattern than Gauteng or KwaZulu-Natal. By school type, secondary schools stand out most clearly, with 60.9% reporting very often, compared with 44.0% in primary schools and 30.0% in pre-primary schools. By school size, schools with more than 1000 learners show the highest very often rate (56.5%), while schools with 500–1000 learners are split evenly between often (42.6%) and very often (42.6%). By quintile, Quintile 1 shows the highest very often rate (66.7%), although based on few responses, while Quintile 4 (57.9%) and Quintile 3 (53.8%) are also high.

The Western Cape pattern therefore suggests especially intense after-hours frequency in secondary schools, larger schools, and some lower- to mid-quintile contexts, although Quintile 5 remains substantial in absolute terms.



B3. Hours of After-Hours Work Per Week

This section sets out the provincial breakdown of responses to the question, “How many after-hours per week do you typically use to complete administrative work?” The responses confirm serious encroachment on personal time across the different time categories within each provincial and school-context grouping.

Total National Responses

Hours per Week	Respondents	Percentage
0 to 1 hour	9	3.0%
2 to 4 hours	87	28.5%
5 to 8 hours	86	28.2%
9 to 12 hours	54	17.7%
More than 12 hours	69	22.6%

Table B12: National responses of after-hours administrative hours per week

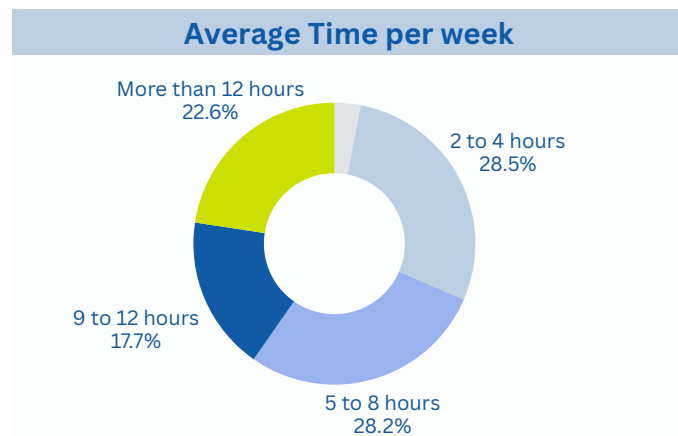


Figure B3: National responses of after-hours administrative hours per week

The modal categories are 2-4 hours (28.5%) and 5-8 hours (28.2%), but a striking 22.6% of principals report more than 12 hours per week of after-hours administrative work, with a further 17.7% reporting 9-12 hours. Only 3.0% manage to limit after-hours admin to 0-1 hours.

Combining the upper categories, 40.3% of principals spend more than 9 hours per week on after-hours admin. Assuming a five-day school week, that amounts to nearly two additional hours each evening, or a full extra working day consumed by administrative catch-up.

Total Responses per Province

Province	n	0 to 1 hour	2 to 4 hours	5 to 8 hours	9 to 12 hours	More than 12 hours
Eastern Cape	59	1.7%	25.4%	39.0%	8.5%	25.4%
Gauteng	87	2.3%	29.9%	20.7%	19.5%	27.6%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	0.0%	21.1%	26.3%	15.8%	36.8%
Western Cape	136	4.4%	30.1%	29.4%	19.9%	16.2%

Table B13: Provincial heat map of after-hours administrative hours per week (Shading intensity moves from no shading, to light blue, to darker blue, with the highest response concentrations shown in olive, indicating the strongest areas of reported administrative pressure.)

The above data shows that very few principals in any province spend only 0 to 1 hour per week on after-hours administration, while much larger proportions fall into the 5 to 8 hours, 9 to 12 hours, and more than 12 hours categories. The Eastern Cape is concentrated most strongly in 5 to 8 hours (39.0%), Gauteng and the Western Cape show a more even spread across the middle and higher bands, and KwaZulu-Natal stands out with the highest share in more than 12 hours (36.8%).

The results for this question confirm that the after-hours administrative burden is not only frequent, but often substantial in duration. Across the provinces, the findings suggest that administrative work is regularly absorbing a considerable portion of principals' personal time, with likely consequences for workload sustainability, effectiveness, and well-being.

Responses and Trends per Province

The overall trend suggests that after-hours administrative work is not only frequent, but often substantial in duration, with a significant proportion of principals in every province spending the equivalent of an additional working day or more per week on administration outside normal school hours.

Eastern Cape

The distribution of weekly after-hours time in the Eastern Cape further reinforces the extent of this burden. The largest proportion of respondents (39.0%) reported spending 5 to 8 hours per week on administrative work after-hours, while 25.4% reported more than 12 hours, and a further 8.5% reported 9 to 12 hours. Taken together, 33.9% of respondents are spending more than nine hours per week on after-hours administration. This indicates not only that after-hours work is frequent, but that for a significant proportion of Eastern Cape principals, it is also substantial in volume and likely to have implications for workload sustainability and well-being.

		n	0 to 1 hour	2 to 4 hours	5 to 8 hours	9 to 12 hours	More than 12 hours
All respondents		59	1.7%	25.4%	39.0%	8.5%	25.4%
Quintile	Q3	14	0.0%	21.4%	57.1%	7.1%	14.3%
	Q4	13	0.0%	23.1%	23.1%	23.1%	30.8%
	Q5	32	3.1%	28.1%	37.5%	3.1%	28.1%
School size	<500	18	0.0%	16.7%	50.0%	11.1%	22.2%
	>1000	11	0.0%	54.5%	27.3%	0.0%	18.2%
	500–1000	30	3.3%	20.0%	36.7%	10.0%	30.0%
School type	Combined	5	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%
	LSEN	6	0.0%	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	0.0%
	Pre-Primary	3	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Primary	33	3.0%	27.3%	33.3%	12.1%	24.2%
	Secondary	17	0.0%	29.4%	41.2%	0.0%	29.4%

Table B14: Eastern Cape heat map of after-hours administrative hours per week by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive.)

The Eastern Cape heat map suggests a mixed but still substantial after-hours time burden across subgroups. Quintile 4 stands out again, with 46.2% reporting more than 12 hours per week, compared with 25.0% in Quintile 5 and 7.1% in Quintile 3. Schools with 500–1000 learners show the strongest concentration in the more than 12 hours category (30.0%), while schools with more than 1000 learners are more concentrated in the 5 to 8 hours range (45.5%).

Combined schools show particularly heavy time demand, with 40.0% reporting more than 12 hours, while secondary schools are concentrated in the 5 to 8 hours (47.1%) and more than 12 hours (29.4%) categories. The Eastern Cape therefore appears to show especially strong long-hours pressure in Quintile 4, medium-sized schools, and combined or secondary school contexts.

Gauteng

The Gauteng results also reveal a comparatively heavy after-hours time burden. While 29.9% of respondents reported spending 2 to 4 hours per week, and 20.7% reported 5 to 8 hours, a substantial proportion reported more extensive demands: 19.5% indicated 9 to 12 hours, and 27.6% reported more than 12 hours per week.

		n	0 to 1 hour	2 to 4 hours	5 to 8 hours	9 to 12 hours	More than 12 hours
All respondents		87	2.3%	29.9%	20.7%	19.5%	27.6%
Quintile	Q1	2	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
	Q4	8	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	37.5%	37.5%
	Q5	77	2.6%	29.9%	23.4%	18.2%	26.0%
School size	<500	7	0.0%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%
	>1000	48	2.1%	31.3%	22.9%	14.6%	29.2%
	500–1000	32	3.1%	28.1%	15.6%	25.0%	28.1%
School type	Combined	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	LSEN	3	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Pre-Primary	3	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%
	Primary	59	1.7%	35.6%	18.6%	18.6%	25.4%
	Secondary	25	4.0%	20.0%	24.0%	20.0%	32.0%

Table B15: Gauteng heat map of after-hours administrative hours per week by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive.)

The data shows that 47.1% of respondents in Gauteng are spending more than nine hours per week on after-hours administrative work. The data therefore suggests that Gauteng principals are not only frequently required to work beyond formal hours, but that the duration of this work is often significant.

Gauteng shows one of the heaviest long-hours profiles in the heat map, especially in certain school contexts. By school type, secondary schools stand out very clearly, with 48.0% reporting more than 12 hours per week, compared with 18.6% in primary schools.

By school size, schools with more than 1000 learners show the heaviest long-hour burden, with 29.2% reporting more than 12 hours and a further 14.6% reporting 9 to 12 hours. Schools with 500–1000 learners also show a strong long-hours profile, with 25.0% in both the 9 to 12 and more than 12 hours categories.

By quintile, Quintile 4 schools appear especially pressured, with 50.0% reporting more than 12 hours, although Quintile 5 remains the most substantial group overall and shows 45.5% spending 9 hours or more per week after-hours.

Gauteng's most intense long-hours pattern is therefore concentrated in secondary schools, larger schools, and higher-quintile schools.

KwaZulu-Natal

The KwaZulu-Natal findings also show the heaviest long-hours profile among the four main provinces. While 21.1% reported spending 2 to 4 hours and 26.3% reported 5 to 8 hours after-hours per week, 15.8% reported 9 to 12 hours, and a notably high 36.8% reported more than 12 hours.

		n	0 to 1 hour	2 to 4 hours	5 to 8 hours	9 to 12 hours	More than 12 hours
All respondents		19	0.0%	21.1%	26.3%	15.8%	36.8%
Quintile	Q1	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Q4	6	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%
	Q5	12	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	8.3%	25.0%
School size	<500	5	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
	>1000	7	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%
	500–1000	7	0.0%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	42.9%
School type	LSEN	2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Pre-Primary	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Primary	13	0.0%	23.1%	23.1%	7.7%	46.2%
	Secondary	5	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%

Table B16: KwaZulu-Natal heat map of after-hours administrative hours per week by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive.)

In total, 52.6% of respondents in KwaZulu-Natal are spending more than nine hours per week on administrative work after-hours. This is a particularly striking finding and suggests that the administrative burden in the province is not only frequent, but also extremely time-intensive for many principals.

The KwaZulu-Natal heat map also shows the most severe long-hours pattern across the four provinces, although subgroup sizes are small.

By school type, primary schools are particularly striking, with 46.2% reporting more than 12 hours per week, while secondary schools are split between 5 to 8 hours (40.0%) and more than 12 hours (40.0%).

By school size, schools with more than 1000 learners show the heaviest burden, with 42.9% reporting more than 12 hours, while schools with less than 500 learners also show a high 40.0% in that category. By quintile, Quintile 5 schools are especially pressured, with 41.7% reporting more than 12 hours and another 41.7% reporting 5 to 8 hours.

The KwaZulu-Natal pattern therefore points to a particularly heavy after-hours time burden across most contexts, with especially strong pressure in primary schools, larger schools, and Quintile 5 schools.

Western Cape

The Western Cape presents a somewhat more distributed after-hours time profile than some of the other provinces, but the burden remains substantial. The largest proportions reported 2 to 4 hours (30.1%) and 5 to 8 hours (29.4%) per week, while 19.9% reported 9 to 12 hours and 16.2% reported more than 12 hours. Combined, 36.1% of respondents are spending more than nine hours per week on after-hours administration.

		n	0 to 1 hour	2 to 4 hours	5 to 8 hours	9 to 12 hours	More than 12 hours
All respondents		136	4.4%	30.1%	29.4%	19.9%	16.2%
Quintile	Q1	6	16.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	50.0%
	Q2	5	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Q3	13	7.7%	15.4%	46.2%	7.7%	23.1%
	Q4	19	5.3%	36.8%	26.3%	26.3%	5.3%
	Q5	93	2.2%	32.3%	26.9%	22.6%	16.1%
School size	<500	36	5.6%	25.0%	38.9%	19.4%	11.1%
	>1000	46	4.3%	26.1%	21.7%	23.9%	23.9%
	500–1000	54	3.7%	37.0%	29.6%	16.7%	13.0%
School type	Combined	3	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
	LSEN	8	0.0%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%
	Pre-Primary	10	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%
	Primary	84	6.0%	28.6%	32.1%	20.2%	13.1%
	Secondary	46	2.2%	32.6%	21.7%	21.7%	21.7%

Table B17: Western Cape heat map of after-hours administrative hours per week by school type, quintile, and school size (Note: Shading intensity reflects the proportion of respondents in each subgroup selecting each period, ranging from no shading to light blue to darker blue, with the highest concentrations shown in olive.)

This Western Cape heat map suggests that while many respondents fall into the 2 to 4 hours and 5 to 8 hours categories, long-hours pressure is still very significant in certain subgroups and confirms that extended after-hours administrative work remains a significant feature.

By school type, secondary schools show the most severe profile, with 41.3% reporting more than 12 hours per week, compared with 13.1% in primary schools. By school size, schools with more than 1000 learners show the heaviest long-hours burden, with 21.7% reporting more than 12 hours and another 26.1% reporting 9 to 12 hours. By quintile, Quintile 4 stands out for the 9 to 12 hours category (36.8%), while Quintile 1 is split evenly between 9 to 12 and more than 12 hours (33.3% each), though again on small numbers.

Overall, the Western Cape pattern suggests that the most intensive after-hours time demands are concentrated in secondary schools, larger schools, and some mid-quintile subgroups, even though the province as a whole shows a somewhat broader spread across hour categories.



B4. Provincial Summary (Time Demand)

The collected data on when administration typically peaks during the year, how often principals are required to do administrative work after-hours, and how many after-hours per week are typically used to complete administrative work points to a pattern of burden that is both cyclical and sustained. Across all four provinces, the responses show that administrative pressure is concentrated most strongly at the start of the year, the end of term, and during random or unpredictable periods, indicating that principals are dealing not only with expected seasonal peaks, but also with frequent unplanned demands that disrupt normal management and reduce the ability to plan effectively. The responses further show that after-hours administration is no longer occasional, but a routine part of the principal's role, with most respondents indicating that this happens often or very often, and many reporting substantial weekly hours spent on administration outside the formal school day.

Important differences emerge when the data is viewed by school type, school size, and quintile. Secondary schools often show the most intense after-hours burden, particularly in Gauteng and the Western Cape, while larger schools also tend to show heavier after-hours frequency and longer weekly hours, especially in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape. Quintile patterns are more complex. Although Quintile 5 schools dominate numerically and often show high burden levels, the heat maps also highlight particularly strong pressure points in Quintile 4 and, in some cases, smaller quintile groups. The Eastern Cape shows a more mixed and subgroup-specific pattern, with notable concentrations in Quintile 4, medium-sized schools, and some combined and LSEN settings. Gauteng stands out for the strength of its after-hours burden, especially in secondary and larger schools. KwaZulu-Natal shows the most consistently heavy pattern across the three areas, while the Western Cape combines broad pressure across many contexts with especially strong concentration in secondary, larger, and selected quintile groups.

Overall, the data suggests that the administrative load carried by principals is not shaped by province alone, but by the interaction between province, school type, school size, and quintile. The strongest trend across all three areas is that principals are facing a burden that is not only frequent, but also irregular, prolonged, and deeply embedded in the normal functioning of the role. This points to an administrative environment that is difficult to predict, difficult to contain within normal working hours, and particularly intense in more complex school contexts.

The time demand data paints a picture of a principalship under siege. Admin work peaks unpredictably, nearly all principals work beyond school hours regularly, and a large proportion sacrifice evenings and weekends to administrative compliance. This finding alone should compel education departments to review the administrative calendar and reduce the volume and unpredictability of demands placed on schools.



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Administrative Load of Public School Principals

Section C

ADMINISTRATIVE DEMANDS BY FUNCTION

C1. Comparative Analysis of Administrative Functions

Section C is the core of the survey. It assesses 13 administrative functions on three dimensions: Time Demand (how much time the task typically requires), Pressure (how pressured the principal feels due to deadlines, complexity, and consequences), and Capacity Fit (how well the principal's current people, time, and resources match what is needed). Responses are on a 5-point scale from Insignificant/Far more than needed (1) to Very high/Far less than needed (5).

Total National Responses for Time Demand, Pressure and Capacity Fit

The following table summarises the national results across all 13 functions. The Mean Score column uses a 1-5 scale where higher scores indicate greater burden (for Time Demand and Pressure) or greater resource shortfall (for Capacity Fit). The % High/Very High' column combines the top two response categories.

Table sorted by combined Pressure mean score (descending). First three bold-text rows indicate the top 3 most burdensome functions. Mean scores on 1-5 scale.

Administrative Function	Mean			Percentage (%)		
	Time	Pressure	Capacity	High TD	High PR	Cap<Need
Management & Accountability Tools	4.27	4.32	3.44	83.6%	83.6%	46.9%
Financial Administration	4.20	4.27	3.41	77.4%	80.0%	42.3%
Management Compliance Reporting	4.16	4.21	3.46	76.4%	77.0%	44.9%
Learner Admissions	4.08	4.23	3.30	72.8%	78.0%	35.7%
Curriculum Administration	4.17	4.10	3.44	79.3%	76.4%	45.2%
Human Resource Administration	4.14	4.15	3.48	75.1%	74.8%	44.9%
Governance Compliance Reporting	4.08	4.10	3.45	73.4%	73.8%	45.2%
Admin/Compliance Requests	4.08	4.12	3.44	76.4%	76.1%	45.2%
Infrastructure & Maintenance	3.80	3.80	3.44	63.9%	61.0%	43.0%
Safety & Security Compliance	3.73	3.84	3.37	55.7%	60.0%	38.7%
Staff Evaluations & Appraisals	3.78	3.82	3.26	61.6%	62.6%	33.4%
CEMIS (SNAP, Annual Surveys)	3.61	3.73	3.17	53.8%	58.7%	28.9%
LTSM	3.51	3.65	3.21	46.2%	52.5%	32.1%

Table C1 : National responses of Mean time demand, pressure, and capacity ratings across administrative functions

The following graphics provide an overall summary of the findings. Rather than examining each function individually, they offer a comparative view of how principals experience the major areas of school administration in terms of time demand, pressure, and available capacity. Together, they help identify which functions are most strongly associated with administrative burden and where that burden appears to be intensified by insufficient support or capacity.

Patterns of Time Demand and Pressure Across Functions

The graphic which follows plots each administrative function according to the percentage of principals who rated it as high or very high in time demand and high or very high in pressure, allowing the relationship between these two dimensions of burden to be examined across the full range of functions.

Scatter plot of High Time Demand vs High Pressure

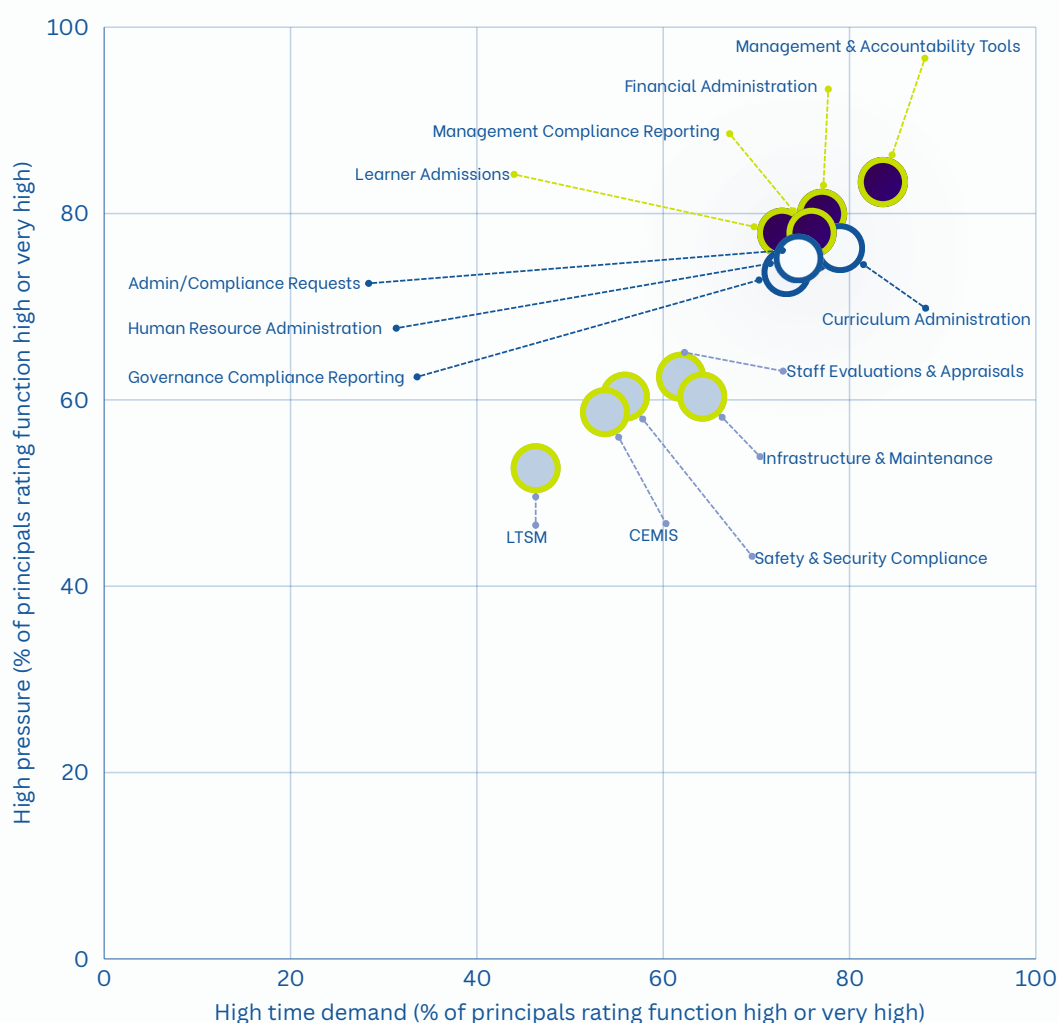


Figure C1: National responses of High Time Demand vs High Pressure across administrative functions

The scatter plot shows a strong positive relationship between time demand and pressure, indicating that functions which consume the most time are, in most cases, also those experienced as the most pressurised. The pattern is not widely dispersed; rather, many functions cluster in the upper range of both measures, suggesting that administrative burden is concentrated across a broad set of responsibilities rather than being limited to a small number of isolated tasks.

A clear group of high-burden functions is visible in the upper-right portion of the graphic. Management and Accountability Tools stands out most strongly, with 83.6% of principals rating it high or very high on both time demand and pressure. It is closely followed by Financial Administration (77.4% high time demand; 80.0% high pressure), Management Compliance Reporting (76.4%; 77.0%), Learner Admissions (72.8%; 78.0%), and Curriculum Administration (79.3%; 76.4%). These functions form the main cluster of administrative activities most strongly associated with burden.

The graphic also highlights some subtle differences in the relationship between time and pressure. For example, Learner Admissions shows a higher pressure rating than time-demand rating, suggesting that this function may be experienced as especially stressful or sensitive relative to the volume of time it requires. By contrast, Curriculum Administration shows a slightly higher time-demand rating than pressure rating, implying that it may be especially labour-intensive even where the perceived pressure is marginally lower. These variations are analytically important because they suggest that burden is not always produced in the same way: in some functions it is driven more by workload volume, while in others it may be shaped more strongly by risk, consequence, or complexity.

Although the lower-ranked functions fall further from the upper-right cluster, they remain well above minimal levels. Even LTSM, the lowest-ranked function, records 46.2% high time demand and 52.5% high pressure, while CEMIS records 53.8% and 58.7% respectively. This suggests that no administrative function is experienced as genuinely low burden in absolute terms. The overall trend therefore points to a principalship in which high administrative demand is distributed across much of the role, with only limited variation in intensity.

Three Tiers of Administrative Burden on Principals

The comparative analysis indicates that the administrative functions can be grouped into three broad tiers of burden. This grouping is based on the combined pattern of mean pressure and mean time demand and helps to distinguish the most burdensome functions from those that, although relatively lower, still make a meaningful contribution to the overall administrative load carried by principals.

Tier Classification of Functions according to mean pressure and time score

	TIER 1	CRITICAL BURDEN	PRESSURE MEAN  > 4.2	TIME DEMAND MEAN  > 4.2
		Management & Accountability Tools	4.27	4.32
		Financial Administration	4.20	4.27
		Management Compliance Reporting	4.16	4.21
		Learner Admissions	4.08	4.23
	TIER 2	HIGH BURDEN	PRESSURE MEAN  4.0 – 4.2	TIME DEMAND MEAN  4.0 – 4.2
		Curriculum Administration	4.17	4.10
		Human Resource Administration	4.14	4.15
		Governance Compliance Reporting	4.08	4.10
		Admin/Compliance Requests	4.08	4.12
	TIER 3	MODERATE-HIGH BURDEN	PRESSURE MEAN  < 4.2	TIME DEMAND MEAN  < 4.2
		Infrastructure & Maintenance	3.80	3.80
		Safety & Security Compliance	3.73	3.84
		Staff Evaluations & Appraisals	3.78	3.82
		CEMIS (SNAP, Annual Surveys)	3.61	3.73
		LTSM	3.51	3.65

Figure C2: Tier Classification of Functions according to mean pressure and time score

The top tier includes Management and Accountability Tools, Financial Administration, Learner Admissions, and Management Compliance Reporting, followed by a second tier of Human Resource Administration, Admin/Compliance Requests, Curriculum Administration, and Governance Compliance Reporting, and a third tier comprising Safety and Security Compliance, Staff Evaluations and Appraisals, Infrastructure and Maintenance, CEMIS, and LTSM.

Patterns of Capacity less than needed Across Functions

This graphic shows the proportion of principals who reported that available capacity for each administrative function is less than needed or far less than needed, providing a comparative view of where administrative burden is accompanied by perceived shortfalls in staffing, systems, or operational support.

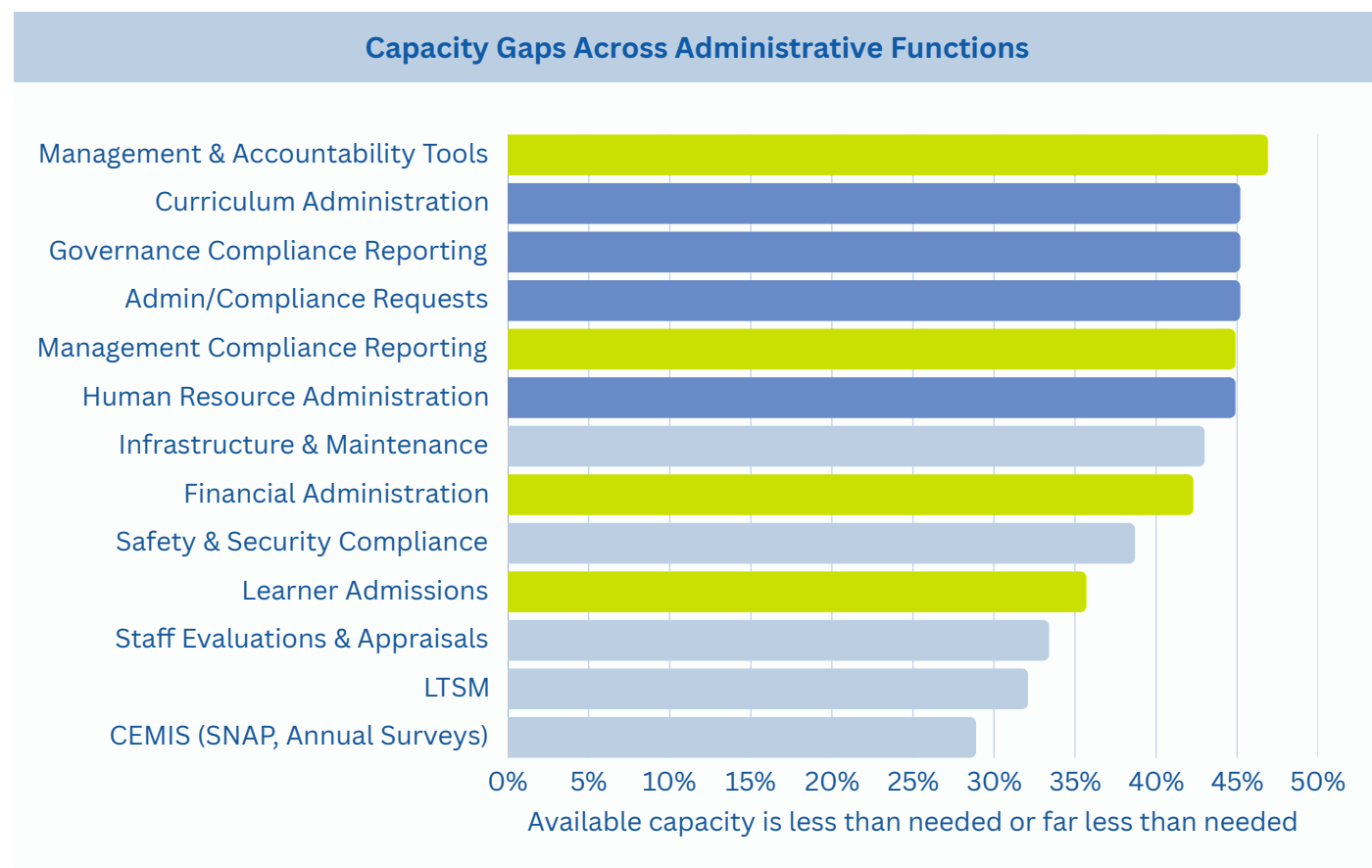


Figure C3: National responses of Capacity Shortfalls Across Administrative Functions

The graphic is also colour-coded to reflect the burden ranking established in the earlier analysis of time demand and pressure. Functions shown in olive represent the highest combined burden, with the strongest mean scores for time and pressure; darker blue indicates functions in the next burden tier; and light blue indicates the lower-ranked functions. This helps the reader to interpret the capacity findings alongside the broader burden profile, rather than viewing capacity in isolation.

The capacity profile shows that constraints in available support are not confined to a small number of functions, but are spread across much of the administrative landscape. Several of the functions that rank most highly on time demand and pressure also show the highest levels of reported capacity shortfall, indicating that the burden is not only a function of the task itself, but is often compounded by insufficient support structures at school level.

The most pronounced capacity shortfall is reported for Management and Accountability Tools, where 46.9% of principals indicate that capacity is less than needed. This is followed by Curriculum Administration, Governance Compliance Reporting, and Admin/Compliance Requests, each at 45.2%, and by Management Compliance Reporting and Human Resource Administration, both at 44.9%. Infrastructure and Maintenance also shows a relatively high shortfall at 43.0%, while Financial Administration stands at 42.3%. The pattern suggests that principals are least well supported in precisely those areas that are already associated with high time demand and pressure.

The distribution of the lower-ranked functions is also important. Even where capacity shortfall percentages are lower, they remain notable, including Safety and Security Compliance (38.7%), Learner Admissions (35.7%), Staff Evaluations and Appraisals (33.4%), LTSM (32.1%), and CEMIS (28.9%). These are not negligible figures. They indicate that across the full range of administrative functions, a significant minority, and in many cases more than a third, of principals feel that current capacity is inadequate.

Viewed alongside the first graphic, the overall trend suggests that the heaviest administrative burdens are reinforced by perceived insufficiency of support. In research terms, this is an important finding because it indicates that the problem is not simply one of workload, but of workload operating under conditions of constrained capacity.

The implication is that administrative pressure is likely to be experienced most intensely where high task demand coincides with weak staffing, limited systems support, or insufficient administrative infrastructure. This strengthens the case for reform measures that focus not only on reducing administrative volume, but also on improving the capacity available to manage unavoidable tasks.

The administrative burden is shaped by the interaction of time demand, pressure, and capacity shortfall. The same functions that appear most demanding and most pressurised are also often those where principals report the greatest lack of sufficient support. This suggests that the administrative load carried by principals is not simply the result of too many tasks, but of too many demanding tasks being managed under conditions of inadequate capacity.



C2. Analysis of each Function According to Three Tiers

The administrative functions were grouped into three tiers according to the degree of burden they place on principals, using the mean pressure score as the primary basis for classification. In interpreting the tiers, time demand and capacity were also taken into account, particularly the proportion of principals who reported that their available capacity was less than needed or far less than needed.

This approach makes it possible to identify not only which functions are most pressured, but also which ones combine high pressure with substantial time demands and clear signs that school-level staffing or systems capacity is often insufficient.

The tiered framework therefore provides a more complete picture of the administrative load carried by principals and helps distinguish between critical burden functions, high burden functions, and those that, while relatively lower, still make a meaningful contribution to the overall load.

Tier 1: Critical Burden Functions (Pressure Mean > 4.2)

These functions represent the most severe combination of high pressure and high time demand and therefore require the most urgent attention.



Four administrative functions stand out as carrying the heaviest combined burden, with pressure mean scores above 4.2 out of 5. In identifying these as the most critical functions, capacity was considered alongside both time demand and pressure, using the proportion of principals who reported that their available capacity was less than needed or far less than needed. These are therefore not simply routine administrative duties, but functions that combine high pressure, high time demand, and clear indications that school-level staffing or systems capacity is often insufficient to manage them effectively.

Function	Province	n	Mean		Percentage (%)	
			Time	Pressure	High TD	High PR
Management and Accountability Tools	National	305	4.27	4.32	83.60%	83.60%
	Eastern Cape	59	4.12	4.05	78.00%	72.90%
	Gauteng	87	4.34	4.34	86.20%	85.10%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	4.21	4.26	78.90%	84.20%
	Western Cape	136	4.3	4.44	85.30%	88.20%
Financial Administration	National	305	4.2	4.27	77.40%	80.00%
	Eastern Cape	59	4.14	4.19	76.30%	78.00%
	Gauteng	87	4.16	4.24	72.40%	75.90%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	4.32	4.37	78.90%	84.20%
	Western Cape	136	4.23	4.31	80.10%	82.40%
Learner Admissions	National	305	4.08	4.23	72.80%	78.00%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.98	4.1	72.90%	72.90%
	Gauteng	87	3.98	4.22	67.80%	75.90%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	4.21	4.16	73.70%	73.70%
	Western Cape	136	4.17	4.3	75.00%	81.60%
Management Compliance Reporting	National	305	4.16	4.21	76.40%	77.00%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.69	3.78	57.60%	59.30%
	Gauteng	87	4.2	4.22	81.60%	80.50%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.53	3.58	47.40%	52.60%
	Western Cape	136	4.43	4.47	85.30%	86.00%

Table C2: Functions that cause Administrative 'Critical Burden' (Tier 1 pressure mean >4.2 and time demand mean >4.2)



Management and Accountability Tools (SIM, SIP, SSE)

This is the most burdensome function overall. It records the highest time demand mean (4.27) and the highest pressure mean (4.32) of all functions. In addition, 83.6% of principals rate both the time demand and the pressure as high or very high, while 46.9% indicate that their available capacity is less than needed or far less than needed. This combination of very high time intensity, very high pressure, and significant capacity shortfall strongly suggests that the SIM/SIP/SSE cluster is placing exceptional strain on principals. It stands out not only as administratively heavy, but also as a function where schools appear insufficiently resourced to meet the demand comfortably.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Management and Accountability Tools

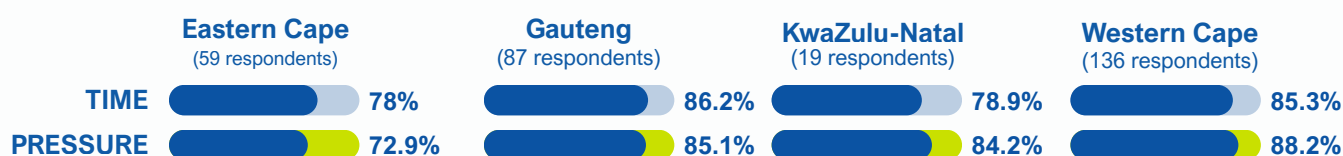


Figure C4: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Management and Accountability Tools (Tier 1)

The significance of this function lies not simply in its ranking, but in what that ranking represents. The tools in this category are intended to support school improvement, monitoring, self-evaluation, and accountability. However, the figures suggest that in practice they are being experienced as one of the strongest contributors to administrative overload. Instead of serving primarily as developmental tools, they appear to have become compliance-heavy instruments that consume very substantial time and create persistent stress. The fact that nearly half of all principals feel that they do not have sufficient capacity to manage these demands reinforces the argument that the burden is structural rather than incidental.



Financial Administration (budget, audits, procurement, reports, exemptions)

Financial Administration ranks second overall, with a pressure mean of 4.27 and a time demand mean of 4.20. A very large majority of principals (80.0%) rate the pressure attached to this function as high or very high, while 77.4% do so for time demand. At the same time, 42.3% report that their capacity is less than or far less than needed.

These figures confirm that financial administration is not only time-consuming, but also experienced as highly pressurised, likely because of its complexity, accountability requirements, and the consequences of error. It is therefore one of the clearest candidates for targeted administrative support and simplification.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Financial Administration

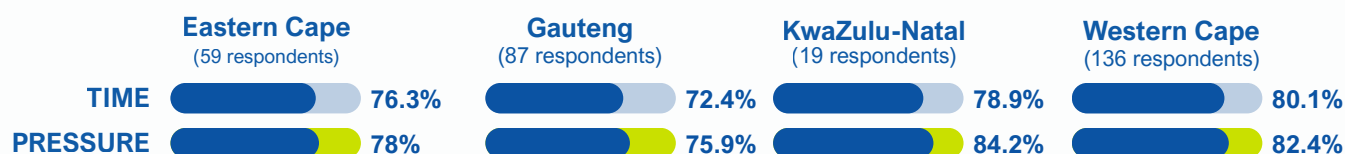


Figure C5: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Financial Administration (Tier 1)

What appears particularly important about financial administration is that the pressure is not merely bureaucratic. This is a function that involves real legal, fiduciary, and governance consequences. Budgeting, audits, procurement, reporting, exemptions, and subsidy-related administration require precision, compliance, and sustained follow-up. The figures therefore reflect a burden that is both practical and psychological: principals are not only spending a great deal of time on the function, but are doing so under conditions of high consequence. In this context, the capacity shortfall reported by over two-fifths of respondents is especially concerning.



Learner Admissions

Learner Admissions has a pressure mean of 4.23, placing it within the critical-burden tier, even though its time demand mean (4.08) is slightly lower than some other high-pressure functions. A total of 78.0% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, and 72.8% do so for time demand. In addition, 35.7% report insufficient capacity.

The fact that the pressure mean is higher than the time mean suggests that the burden here is not simply a matter of paperwork volume; it likely reflects the intensity, contestation, and sensitivity associated with admissions decisions. This helps explain why learner admissions emerges as one of the most pressured functions nationally, despite being marginally less time-heavy than some other functions.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Learner Admissions

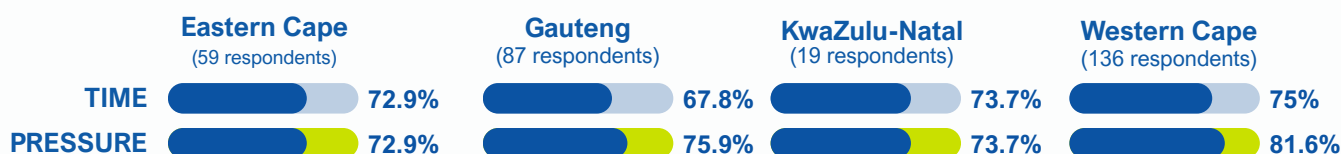


Figure C6: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Learner Admissions (Tier 1)

This is an important distinction. Admissions appears to be a function where the level of stakes attached to the work increases the pressure beyond what the time demand alone would suggest. Decisions around admissions often involve community expectation, legal challenge, reputational risk, and political sensitivity.

The figures therefore suggest that principals experience admissions as a highly pressured area not only because it is administratively demanding, but because it places them in positions of conflict, scrutiny, and high accountability.



Management Compliance Reporting (Building Blocks)

Management Compliance Reporting also falls into Tier 1, with a pressure mean of 4.21 and a time demand mean of 4.16. A total of 77.0% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, 76.4% rate the time demand as high or very high, and 44.9% indicate that their capacity is less than or far less than needed.

These figures show a function that is consistently experienced as both demanding and difficult to absorb within available school-level capacity. Its position in the critical-burden tier supports the view that compliance frameworks of this kind are adding materially to the overall administrative overload experienced by principals.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Management Compliance Reporting

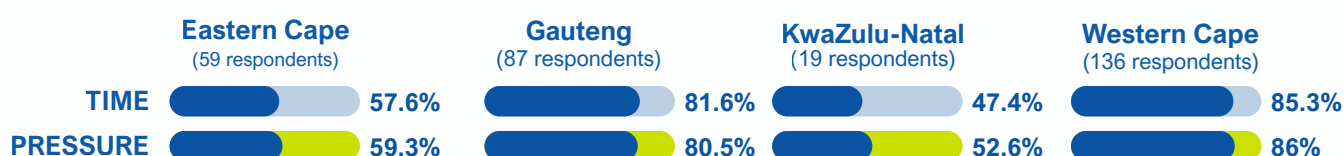


Figure C7: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Management Compliance Reporting (Tier 1)

The significance of this category is strengthened by the fact that it aligns closely with the qualitative findings, where Building Blocks and similar reporting requirements were frequently cited as items requiring review, simplification, or removal. This convergence between the quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the case that this is a substantive burden rather than a marginal frustration.

When a function ranks among the highest on both pressure and time demand, while also being repeatedly named by respondents as problematic, it becomes a particularly strong candidate for intervention.



Overall interpretation of Tier 1

Taken together, these four functions represent the core pressure points in the administrative lives of principals. They are characterised by a combination of high time demand, high perceived pressure, and significant capacity shortfalls. They are also functions that sit close to the centre of accountability and compliance expectations placed on schools.

The evidence suggests that these are the areas where reform, streamlining, digitisation, redistribution of responsibility, or stronger administrative support could have the greatest immediate impact

Tier 2: High Burden Functions (Pressure Mean 4.0–4.2)

These functions place substantial and sustained demands on principals, with consistently high levels of time demand and pressure, although not at the most critical level.



Four functions fall into this high-burden category, with pressure mean scores between 4.0 and 4.2 out of 5. In identifying these functions, capacity was considered alongside both time demand and pressure, using the proportion of principals who reported that their available capacity was less than needed or far less than needed.

Although these functions fall just below the critical threshold, they still reflect a combination of substantial time demand, high perceived pressure, and clear evidence that existing school-level staffing or systems capacity is often not sufficient to manage them comfortably.

Function	Province	n	Mean		Percentage (%)	
			Time	Pressure	High TD	High PR
Human Resource Administration	National	305	4.14	4.15	75.1%	74.8%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.98	4.00	74.6%	69.5%
	Gauteng	87	4.09	4.06	71.3%	67.8%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	4.16	4.21	68.4%	78.9%
	Western Cape	136	4.23	4.26	77.9%	80.1%
Admin/Compliance Requests	National	305	4.08	4.12	76.4%	76.1%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.90	4.00	71.2%	69.5%
	Gauteng	87	4.14	4.10	74.7%	72.4%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	4.21	4.16	84.2%	78.9%
	Western Cape	136	4.10	4.19	78.7%	80.9%
Curriculum Administration	National	305	4.17	4.10	79.3%	76.4%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.98	3.83	74.6%	64.4%
	Gauteng	87	4.03	4.07	72.4%	73.6%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	4.16	3.95	73.7%	78.9%
	Western Cape	136	4.33	4.28	86.0%	83.1%
Governance Compliance Reporting	National	305	4.08	4.10	73.4%	73.8%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.71	3.75	50.8%	52.5%
	Gauteng	87	4.07	4.09	74.7%	75.9%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.58	3.68	52.6%	52.6%
	Western Cape	136	4.32	4.33	85.3%	84.6%

Table C3: Functions that cause Administrative 'High Burden' (Tier 2 pressure and time demand mean 4.0 - 4.2)



Human Resource Administration

Human Resource Administration records a pressure mean of 4.15 and a time demand mean of 4.14. The proportions rating this function high or very high are also substantial: 74.8% for pressure and 75.1% for time demand. In addition, 44.9% of principals report that capacity is less than or far less than needed. These figures place HR administration firmly within the high-burden tier and suggest that staff-related administration is both consistently time-intensive and difficult to manage within current capacity arrangements.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Human Resource Administration

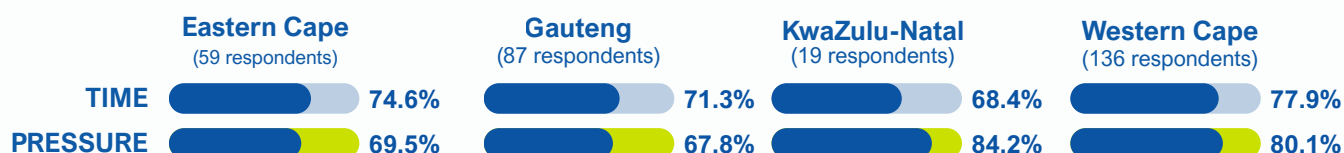


Figure C8: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Human Resource Administration (Tier 2)

The data suggests that HR administration is burdensome not only because of the number of tasks involved, but because it includes work that is often procedurally complex and relationally demanding. Appointments, leave management, grievances, performance concerns, and personnel processes all require attention, documentation, and follow-through.

In this sense, HR administration is not a narrow technical task; it is a function that combines compliance, people management, and institutional accountability, which helps explain why its burden profile is so high.



Admin/Compliance Requests by District

Admin/Compliance Requests records a pressure mean of 4.12 and a time demand mean of 4.08. A total of 76.1% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, 76.4% do so for time demand, and 45.2% indicate insufficient capacity.

These figures suggest that ad hoc or externally generated requests form an important part of the burden profile. Although individual requests may appear manageable in isolation, their cumulative effect is clearly substantial.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Admin/Compliance Requests by District

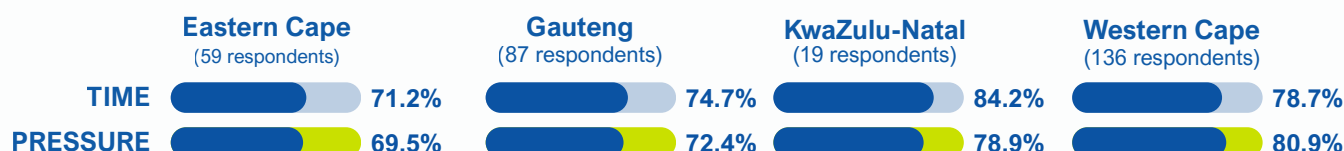


Figure C9: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Admin/Compliance Requests by District (Tier 2)

This category is particularly important because it captures the way burden can accumulate through frequency, timing, and duplication. The problem may not always lie in a single request, but in the volume of requests, the short notice often attached to them, and the fact that they arrive on top of many other obligations.

The strong capacity-shortfall figure supports the view that these requests are not being absorbed within a comfortable margin of administrative space; instead, they are contributing to a crowded and reactive working environment.



Curriculum Administration

Curriculum Administration records a pressure mean of 4.10 and a time demand mean of 4.17, one of the higher time scores in the full set of functions. A total of 76.4% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, 79.3% rate the time demand as high or very high, and 45.2% report that capacity is less than or far less than needed.

These figures indicate that curriculum administration is especially demanding in time terms and that the burden is widely experienced. It appears to be one of the functions where core educational leadership is heavily entangled with administrative process.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Curriculum Administration

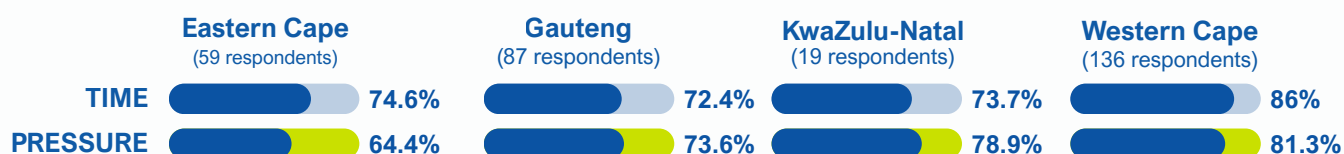


Figure C10: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Curriculum Administration (Tier 2)

This is particularly significant because curriculum work sits close to the central instructional purpose of the school. The figures suggest that instead of enabling leadership focused on teaching and learning, curriculum administration is itself becoming a major source of administrative pressure.

In effect, a domain that should be central to pedagogical leadership appears to be experienced as highly procedural and time-consuming, thereby reducing the space available for broader strategic and instructional work.



Governance Compliance Reporting

Governance Compliance Reporting also sits in this tier, with a pressure mean of 4.10 and a time demand mean of 4.08. In total, 73.8% of principals rate pressure as high or very high, 73.4% do so for time demand, and 45.2% indicate that available capacity is less than or far less than needed. This suggests that governance-related compliance work constitutes a significant additional layer of burden for school leaders and is experienced as demanding both in time and in pressure.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Governance Compliance Reporting

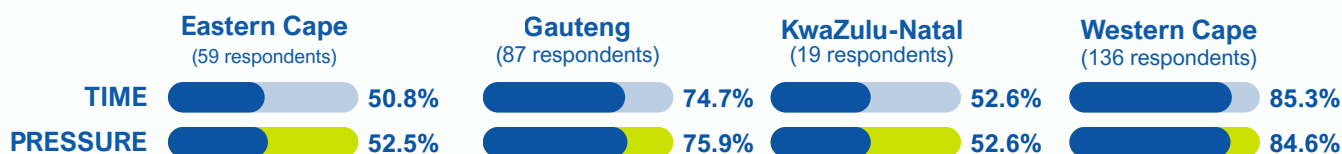


Figure C11: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Governance Compliance Reporting (Tier 2)

What emerges here is the extent to which governance obligations add another formal layer to the principal's administrative environment. Policy processes, governing body reporting, procedural compliance, and associated documentation all appear to carry a real administrative cost. While governance is a necessary and important part of school functioning, the figures suggest that the associated reporting requirements are substantial enough to place this function firmly within the high-burden tier.



Overall interpretation of Tier 2

Tier 2 functions show that the administrative burden on principals is not limited to a small number of extreme problem areas. Rather, a wide cluster of responsibilities sits just below the critical threshold and contributes heavily to the cumulative load. These functions are all sufficiently demanding to affect principals' time, energy, and sense of capacity, and together they reinforce the picture of a role that is under sustained administrative strain from multiple directions.

Tier 3: Moderate-High Burden Functions (Pressure Mean < 4.2)

These functions rank lower than those in Tiers 1 and 2, but still contribute meaningfully to the overall administrative load and cannot be regarded as low-burden areas.



Five functions fall into the moderate-high burden category, with pressure mean scores below 4.0 out of 5. In grouping these functions, capacity was again considered alongside both time demand and pressure, using the proportion of principals who reported that their available capacity was less than needed or far less than needed. While these functions rank lower than those in Tiers 1 and 2, they still show meaningful levels of burden and capacity shortfall, indicating that they continue to contribute materially to the overall administrative load carried by principals.

Function	Province	n	Mean		Percentage (%)	
			Time	Pressure	High TD	High PR
Safety and Security Compliance	National	305	3.73	3.84	55.7%	60.0%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.47	3.64	44.1%	50.8%
	Gauteng	87	3.76	3.87	56.3%	58.6%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.58	3.68	52.6%	63.2%
	Western Cape	136	3.83	3.93	59.6%	63.2%
Staff Evaluations and Appraisals	National	305	3.78	3.82	61.6%	62.6%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.64	3.75	50.8%	54.2%
	Gauteng	87	3.80	3.86	63.2%	64.4%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.68	3.74	57.9%	63.2%
	Western Cape	136	3.82	3.84	65.4%	64.7%
Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting	National	305	3.80	3.80	63.9%	61.0%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.80	3.71	62.7%	52.5%
	Gauteng	87	3.80	3.86	64.4%	64.4%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.74	3.47	68.4%	42.1%
	Western Cape	136	3.79	3.85	62.5%	64.7%
CEMIS	National	305	3.61	3.73	53.8%	58.7%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.02	3.12	23.7%	30.5%
	Gauteng	87	3.60	3.73	55.2%	60.9%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.32	3.63	36.8%	52.6%
	Western Cape	136	3.90	4.01	68.4%	70.6%
LTSM	National	305	3.51	3.65	46.2%	52.5%
	Eastern Cape	59	3.25	3.45	40.7%	45.8%
	Gauteng	87	3.51	3.62	42.5%	51.7%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19	3.32	3.68	31.6%	63.2%
	Western Cape	136	3.68	3.76	54.4%	55.1%

Table C4: Functions that cause Administrative 'Moderate-High Burden' (Tier 3 pressure and time demand mean <4.2)



Safety and Security Compliance

Safety and Security Compliance records a pressure mean of 3.84 and a time demand mean of 3.73. Even at this lower level, 60.0% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, 55.7% rate the time demand as high or very high, and 38.7% report insufficient capacity. This indicates that safety and security compliance remains a significant burden, even if it does not rank among the very highest functions.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Safety and Security Compliance

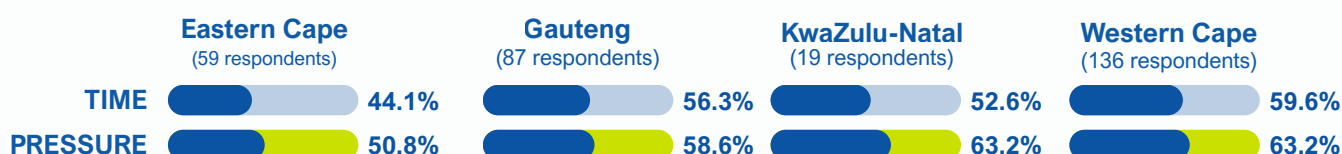


Figure C12: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Safety and Security Compliance (Tier 3)

The figures suggest that this function should not be dismissed simply because it falls into Tier 3. It remains a meaningful source of administrative work, and in many contexts it is likely to be both urgent and non-negotiable. The relatively high percentage of principals reporting pressure in this area suggests that safety compliance is one of the many functions that, although not dominant in ranking terms, still makes a substantial contribution to cumulative overload.



Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

Staff Evaluations and Appraisals records a pressure mean of 3.82 and a time demand mean of 3.78. A total of 62.6% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, 61.6% do so for time demand, and 33.4% report that capacity is less than or far less than needed.

These figures suggest that appraisal-related work remains a meaningful administrative load, particularly given the preparation, documentation, and follow-up it usually requires.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

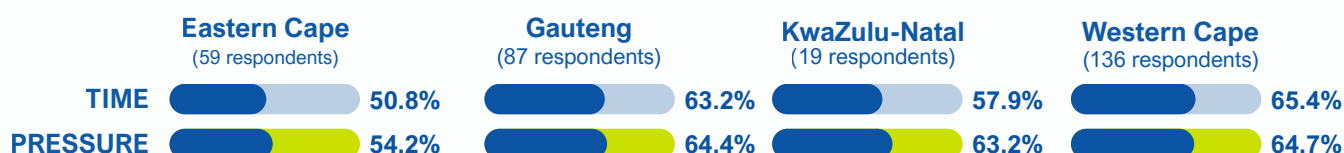


Figure C13: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Staff Evaluations and Appraisals (Tier 3)

What is notable here is that even a relatively lower-ranked function still attracts high-burden ratings from well over half of respondents. This underlines the density of the administrative environment overall.

Staff evaluations may not be as heavily pressurised as finance or accountability tools, but they still appear to require substantial effort and still compete for time within an already overloaded role.



Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting records a pressure mean of 3.80 and a time demand mean of 3.80, with 61.0% of principals rating pressure as high or very high and 63.9% doing so for time demand.

Notably, 43.0% report insufficient capacity, which is one of the higher capacity-shortfall figures in this tier. This suggests that although infrastructure reporting does not sit in the highest mean band, it still absorbs considerable effort and is often not well supported.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

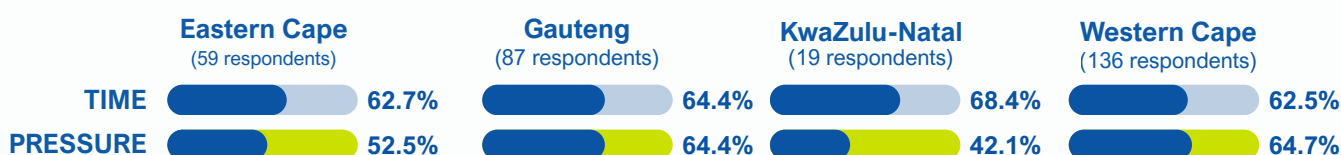


Figure C14 Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting (Tier 3)

This is an important finding because the capacity shortfall attached to infrastructure and maintenance is relatively high for a Tier 3 function. It suggests that this area may be lower in relative ranking, but still difficult for many schools to manage effectively with current administrative arrangements.

The burden may be shaped by the practical realities of follow-up, reporting, maintenance issues, and responsibility for the physical environment of the school.



CEMIS

When treated separately, CEMIS records a pressure mean of 3.73 and a time demand mean of 3.61. A total of 58.7% of principals rate the pressure as high or very high, 53.8% do so for time demand, and 28.9% report insufficient capacity. These figures place CEMIS lower than most of the other functions, but still firmly within a moderate-high burden range.

This suggests that CEMIS is less dominant than the top-tier functions, but still forms a notable part of the cumulative administrative load.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across CEMIS

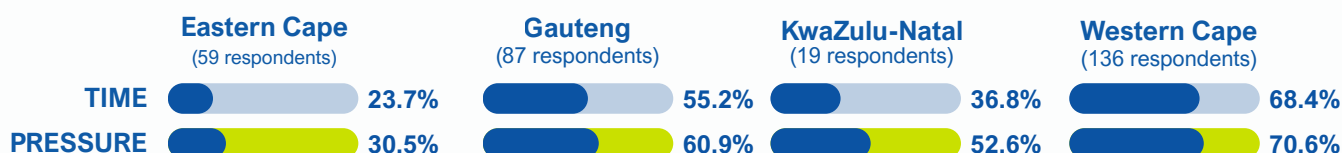


Figure C15: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across CEMIS (Tier 3)

The figures imply that CEMIS may be more periodic or contained than other functions, but it is clearly not experienced as trivial. More than half of respondents still rate its pressure as high or very high, indicating that even lower-ranked systems requirements remain materially burdensome in practice.



LTSM

LTSM records the lowest pressure mean in the full set (3.65) and the lowest time demand mean (3.51). However, even here, 52.5% of principals rate pressure as high or very high, 46.2% rate time demand as high or very high, and 32.1% report insufficient capacity.

These figures are important because they show that even the lowest-ranked function is still experienced as burdensome by a large proportion of principals. In other words, there is no function in the dataset that can reasonably be described as low burden in absolute terms.

High Time Demand and High Pressure across LTSM

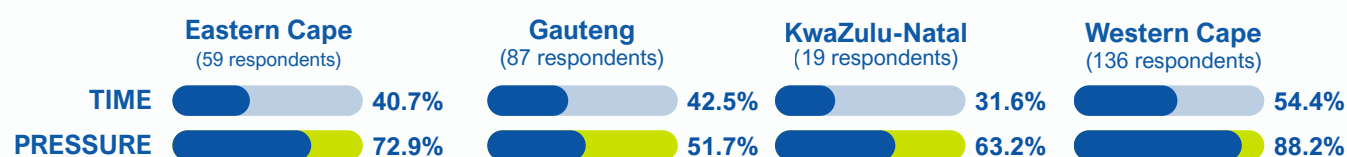


Figure C16: Responses of High Time Demand and High Pressure across LTSM (Tier 3)

This is a critical point for interpretation. LTSM may sit at the bottom of the ranking, but the burden associated with it remains significant. The fact that more than half of principals still rate the pressure as high or very high means that the lower tier should not be mistaken for a low-burden tier. It is lower only in relative terms.



Tier 3 interpretation

Tier 3 confirms that the issue is not only the existence of a few highly pressurised functions, but the fact that the entire administrative environment remains demanding. Even the lowest-ranked functions show relatively high proportions of principals reporting high or very high pressure. This means that principals are operating in a context of broad administrative density, where lower-ranked functions still contribute materially to overall overload.



C3. Capacity Fit Analysis

In addition to analysing time demand and pressure, this report also examines capacity fit in order to better understand whether principals feel that the staffing, systems, or administrative support available to them are sufficient to meet the demands of each function. Capacity fit is a critical dimension of the analysis because a function may be experienced as burdensome not only because it is time-consuming or stressful, but because schools do not have the organisational or human resource capacity required to manage it effectively.

For the purposes of this report, capacity fit is examined using the proportion of respondents who indicated that their available capacity was "less than needed" or "far less than needed" for a given function. These combined responses are treated as an indicator of capacity shortfall. Higher percentages therefore reflect a weaker fit between the demands of the function and the capacity available at school level to carry it out.

Why capacity is analysed separately

Capacity is analysed separately because it provides a different lens on administrative burden. Time demand tells us how much work a function requires; pressure tells us how intensely that work is experienced; but capacity fit helps explain whether principals believe their schools are actually equipped to cope with the function. This is especially important in interpreting burden, because two functions may produce similar pressure scores while differing markedly in the extent to which principals feel adequately supported to manage them.

Analysing capacity separately therefore strengthens the interpretation in three ways. First, it helps distinguish between functions that are difficult but manageable and those that are difficult because the required support is not in place. Second, it highlights where problems may be structural rather than merely procedural. Third, it provides a more policy-relevant basis for intervention, since high capacity shortfall points not only to burden, but also to areas where additional support, staffing, system redesign, or simplification may be needed.

Total Responses per Province

Province	n	Capacity Mean	Far More Than Needed	More Than Needed	About Right / Good Fit	Less Than Needed	Far Less Than Needed
National	305	2.62	2.3%	8.9%	48.2%	33.8%	6.9%
Eastern Cape	59	2.7	0.0%	11.9%	57.6%	22.0%	8.5%
Gauteng	87	2.83	5.7%	10.3%	51.7%	27.6%	4.6%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	2.55	0.0%	10.5%	52.6%	31.6%	5.3%
Western Cape	136	2.47	1.5%	6.6%	41.2%	42.6%	8.1%

Table C5: Provincial heat map of Capacity Fit (Shading intensity moves from no shading, to light blue, to darker blue, with the highest response concentrations shown in olive, indicating the strongest areas of reported administrative pressure.)

Capacity fit is shown as the distribution of responses across five categories, ranging from Far More Than Needed to Far Less Than Needed. The Capacity Mean provides a summary measure of fit, with lower scores indicating weaker fit and higher scores indicating a stronger match between the demands of the function and the capacity available at school level.

The provincial pattern suggests that the most favourable overall capacity fit is reported in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, where larger proportions of respondents fall into the about right / good fit category and fewer indicate severe shortfall. By contrast, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal show a weaker overall capacity profile, with higher combined proportions in the less than needed and far less than needed categories, pointing to a more pronounced capacity gap in those provinces. Overall, the table suggests that while perceptions of adequate capacity vary across provinces, the burden is most likely to exceed available support in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, reinforcing the broader finding that administrative strain is not only about workload, but also about whether schools feel sufficiently resourced to manage it.

National Capacity fit by Function (and Tier)

This table summarises the national distribution of adequate or better capacity (Adequate or (far more than needed, more than needed and about right / good fit) and capacity shortfall (less than needed and far less than needed) for each administrative function. Tier labels reflect the previously defined burden groupings based on pressure and time demand.

National Capacity Fit Distribution by Administrative Function		Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
Tier 1: Critical Burden	Management & Accountability Tools	53.0%	47.0%
	Financial Administration	57.4%	42.6%
	Management Compliance Reporting	54.6%	45.4%
	Learner Admissions	63.7%	36.3%
Tier 2: High Burden	Curriculum Administration	54.5%	45.5%
	Human Resource Administration	54.8%	45.2%
	Governance Compliance Reporting	54.6%	45.4%
	Admin/Compliance Requests	54.5%	45.5%
Tier 3: Moderate-High Burden	Infrastructure & Maintenance	56.6%	43.4%
	Safety & Security Compliance	61.1%	38.9%
	Staff Evaluations & Appraisals	66.3%	33.7%
	CEMIS	70.9%	29.1%
	LTSM	67.7%	32.3%

Table C6 : National Capacity Fit Distribution by Administrative Function and Tier

At national level, the functions with the highest capacity shortfall are concentrated in the upper burden tiers. Management and Accountability Tools shows the highest shortfall nationally (47.0%), followed by Curriculum Administration (45.5%), Admin/Compliance Requests (45.5%), Governance Compliance Reporting (45.4%), Management Compliance Reporting (45.4%), and Human Resource Administration (45.2%). This suggests that the functions most strongly associated with pressure and time demand are also those in which principals most often feel insufficiently supported. By contrast, the lowest shortfall is found in CEMIS (29.1%), LTSM (32.3%), and Staff Evaluations and Appraisals (33.7%), although even these figures remain notable. The overall pattern indicates that capacity challenges are widespread and are not confined only to one or two highly visible administrative areas.

The tiered comparison shows a clear relationship between burden level and capacity fit. Tier 2: High Burden Functions has the highest average capacity shortfall (45.4%), followed very closely by Tier 1: Critical Burden Functions (42.8%), while Tier 3: Moderate-High Burden Functions shows a lower, though still substantial, average shortfall (35.5%). The range within the tiers is also important. In Tier 1, shortfall runs from 36.3% to 47.0%, while in Tier 3 it ranges from 29.1% to 43.4%, showing that even the lower-ranked functions are not free of meaningful capacity constraints. Overall, the table reinforces the interpretation that higher-burden functions are generally those where principals are also least likely to feel adequately resourced.

National Capacity fit by Quintile, School Size and School Type

This section explores how perceived capacity fit varies across quintile, school size, and school type. By comparing these school-context categories, the analysis aims to identify patterns in where principals are more likely to report that available capacity is either adequate or insufficient. The heat map provides a visual summary of these patterns, with shading intensity moving from no shading, to light blue, to darker blue, and finally to olive for the highest concentrations, thereby highlighting the strongest areas of response concentration in the dataset.

National Comparison		n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
Quintile	Q1	9	77.8%	22.2%
	Q2	5	60.0%	40.0%
	Q3	27	66.7%	33.3%
	Q4	46	43.5%	56.5%
	Q5	218	61.2%	38.8%
School size	<500	66	57.6%	42.4%
	>1000	124	60.2%	39.8%
	500–1000	115	59.8%	40.2%
School type	Combined	10	44.4%	55.6%
	LSEN	19	73.7%	26.3%
	Pre-Primary	19	64.7%	35.3%
	Primary	189	62.4%	37.6%
	Secondary	93	51.6%	48.4%

Table C7: National responses of Capacity Fit Distribution by Quintile, School Size and School Type

The overall comparison suggests that capacity shortfall is most pronounced in Quintile 4 schools (56.5%), combined schools (55.6%), and secondary schools (48.4%), indicating that perceived capacity fit is weakest in these contexts. By contrast, LSEN schools (73.7% adequate or better capacity) and Quintile 1 schools (77.8%) show the strongest overall capacity fit, although these categories have much smaller respondent numbers and should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Across school size, the pattern is more even, with all three categories showing broadly similar levels of shortfall, suggesting that capacity strain is not confined to one size band but is present across the system.

National Capacity Fit Across Quintile Groups

This graph provides an overall comparison of capacity fit across quintile groups, drawing together responses across the full set of administrative functions. It shows the average proportion of responses indicating adequate or better capacity versus capacity shortfall, and therefore gives a broad picture of how perceptions of administrative capacity vary across different school quintiles.

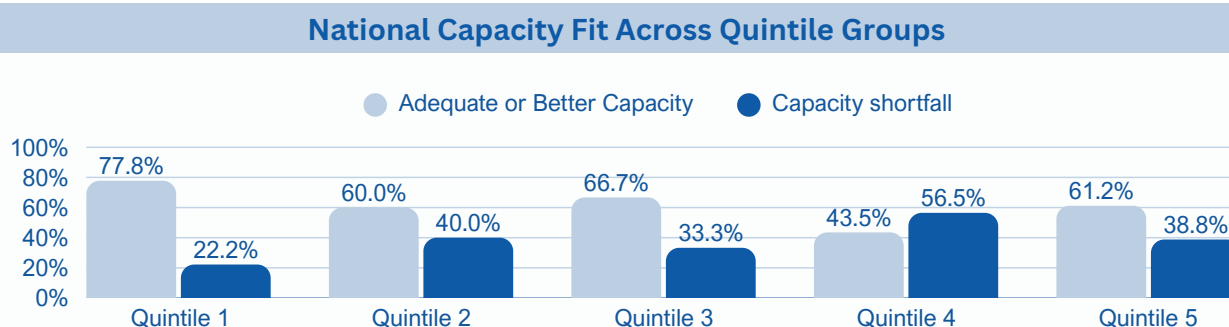


Figure C17: National responses of National Capacity Fit Distribution by Quintile

The overall pattern suggests that capacity fit does not improve or decline in a simple linear way across quintiles. The highest average capacity shortfall appears in Quintile 4 schools (56.5%), followed by Quintile 2 schools (40.0%), while Quintile 5 schools show a somewhat lower, but still substantial, shortfall of 38.8%. Quintile 3 schools are lower again at 33.3%, and Quintile 1 schools show the lowest shortfall at 22.2%, although this should be interpreted with caution given the very small number of responses in that group.

What is especially notable is that Quintile 5 schools, despite being the largest response group numerically, do not show the highest level of shortfall. Instead, the graph suggests that capacity strain is particularly pronounced in Quintile 4 schools, with some additional pressure also visible in Quintile 2. The broad trend therefore indicates that capacity constraints are unevenly distributed across the system and are not confined to one end of the quintile spectrum.

◆◆ National Capacity Fit Across School Size Categories

This graph compares overall capacity fit by school size, combining responses across all administrative functions. It shows the average balance between adequate or better capacity and capacity shortfall for schools with fewer than 500 learners, 500 to 1000 learners, and more than 1000 learners.

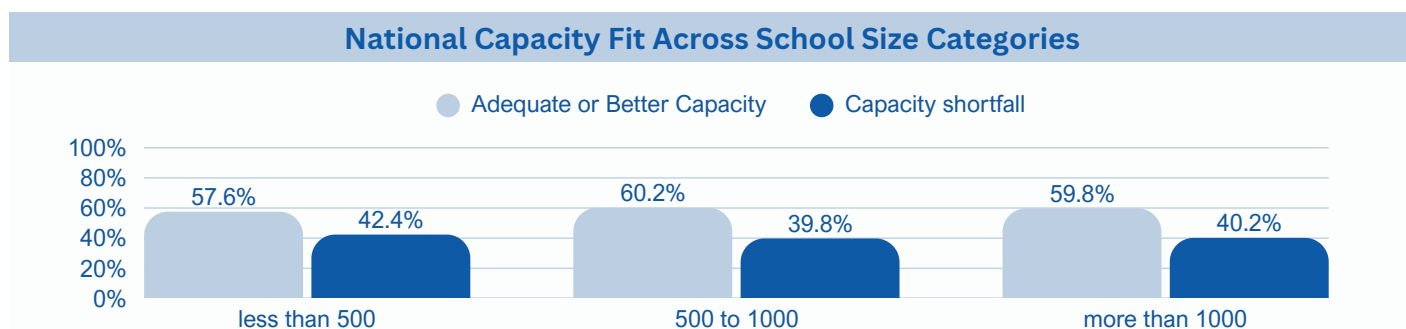


Figure C18 : National responses of Capacity Fit Across School Size Categories

The graph suggests that capacity shortfall is present across all school sizes, but the differences between the categories are relatively modest. Schools with fewer than 500 learners show the highest average capacity shortfall (42.4%), compared with 40.2% in schools with more than 1000 learners and 39.8% in schools with 500 to 1000 learners. This indicates that the greatest perceived mismatch between administrative demand and available capacity does not necessarily occur in the largest schools, and in fact appears slightly more pronounced in smaller-school contexts.

At the same time, the gap between the three size groups is not large, which suggests that capacity strain is a broadly shared issue rather than one confined to a particular size band. Overall, the trend points to a fairly even pattern of shortfall across school sizes, with slightly greater pressure in smaller schools.

◆◆ National Capacity Fit Across School Type

This graph presents the overall distribution of capacity fit by school type, bringing together responses across all administrative functions.

It compares the average proportion of responses indicating adequate or better capacity and capacity shortfall across pre-primary, primary, secondary, combined, and LSEN schools.

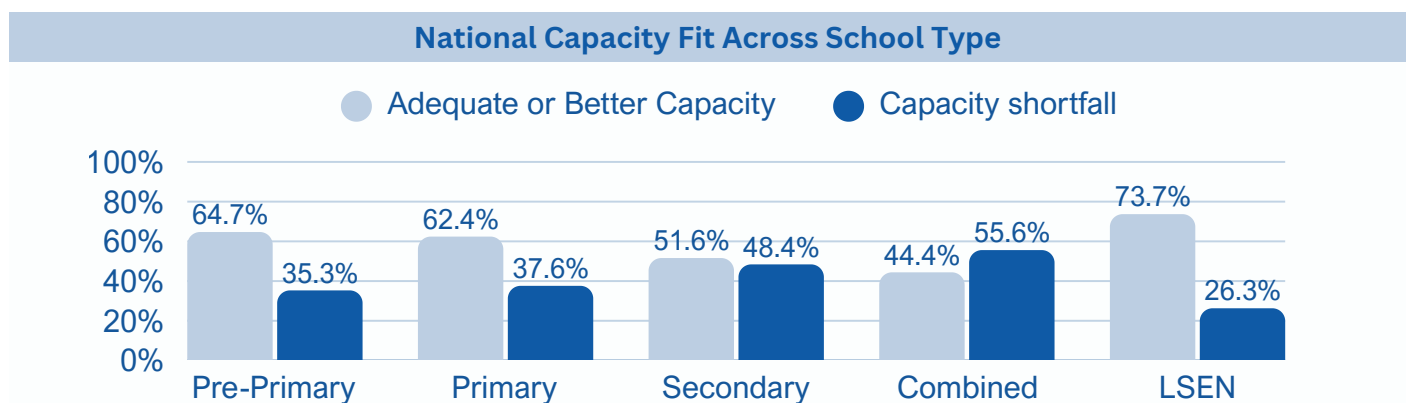


Figure C19: National responses of Capacity Fit Across School Type

The most striking pattern in the graph is the substantially higher average capacity shortfall reported by combined schools (55.6%) and secondary schools (48.4%), which is notably above primary schools (37.6%), pre-primary schools (35.3%), and LSEN schools (26.3%). This suggests that, on average, combined and especially secondary school contexts are the least well matched in terms of administrative demand and available capacity.

Primary schools, while showing a somewhat stronger capacity profile, still record a shortfall of more than a third, indicating that the burden remains significant there as well. The comparatively lower shortfall in LSEN and pre-primary schools should be interpreted with some caution because of smaller response numbers, but it nevertheless suggests a more favourable capacity fit in those settings. Overall, the trend indicates that school type matters, with combined and secondary schools standing out as the contexts in which principals are most likely to feel that administrative demands exceed the capacity available to manage them effectively.

Taken together, the three graphs suggest that capacity fit is shaped not by a single school characteristic, but by the interaction of school context, size, and institutional setting, with particularly strong strain evident in middle-quintile schools, mid-sized schools, and secondary school contexts.

Capacity Fit per Function

This section shows tables and figures that summarise and analyse the data for national and provincial distribution of capacity shortfall for each function. Adequate or better capacity includes those that responded far more than needed, more than needed and about right / good fit) and capacity shortfall includes those that responded less than needed and far less than needed for for Management and Accountability Tools. (analysis only includes four provinces with meaningful sample sizes)



Management and Accountability Tools (SIM, SIP, SSE)

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Management and Accountability Tools, focusing on how adequately principals feel resourced to manage this function across provinces and school contexts.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Management & Accountability Tools			
Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	304	53.0%	47.0%
Eastern Cape	59	59.3%	40.7%
Gauteng	87	59.8%	40.2%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	36.8%	63.2%
Western Cape	136	47.4%	52.6%

Table C8: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Management & Accountability Tools

Nationally, 53.0% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 47.0% reported a Capacity Shortfall, making this the most constrained function overall. The most favourable provincial profiles appear in Gauteng (59.8% adequate or better; 40.2% shortfall) and the Eastern Cape (59.3%; 40.7%). By contrast, KwaZulu-Natal shows the weakest fit, with only 36.8% reporting adequate or better capacity and 63.2% reporting shortfall. The Western Cape also shows more respondents in shortfall than in adequate fit (47.4% adequate or better; 52.6% shortfall).

Overall, the provincial pattern suggests that this function is particularly under-supported in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Management & Accountability Tools

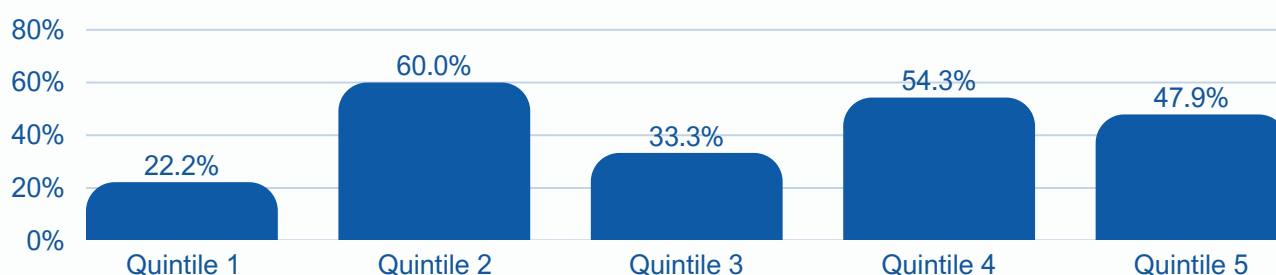
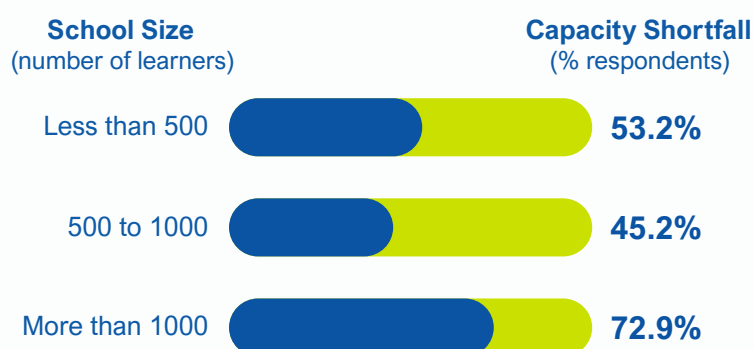


Figure C20: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Management & Accountability Tools

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 2 (60.0%), followed by Quintile 4 (54.3%), while Quintile 5 also remains high at 47.9%. Quintile 3 is notably lower at 33.3%, and Quintile 1 is lowest at 22.2%, although that figure should be treated cautiously because of the small number of responses. The pattern suggests that capacity strain in this function is especially acute in Quintile 2 and 4 schools, rather than following a simple gradient across quintiles.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Management & Accountability Tools



By school size, the highest shortfall is reported by schools with fewer than 500 learners (52.3%), followed by schools with more than 1000 learners (46.1%) and 500 to 1000 learners (45.2%). This suggests that smaller schools may be particularly vulnerable in relation to this function, although all three size bands show substantial capacity strain.

Figure C21: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Management & Accountability Tools

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Management & Accountability Tools

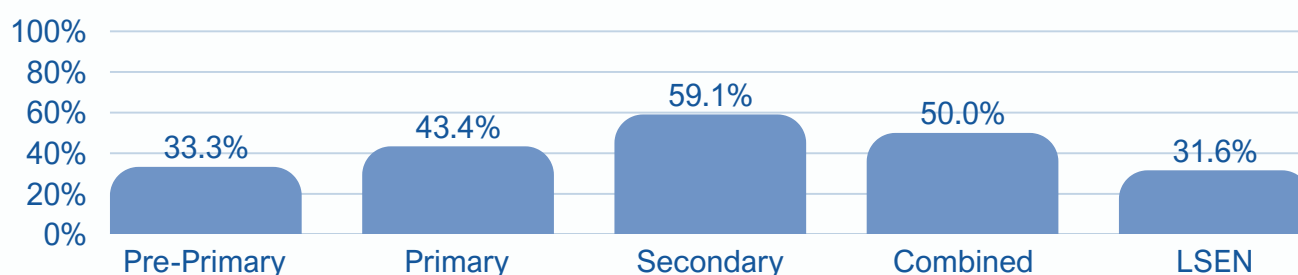


Figure C22: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Management & Accountability Tools

By school type, the strongest shortfall is found in secondary schools (59.1%), followed by combined schools (50.0%). Primary schools show a lower but still substantial shortfall of 43.4%, while pre-primary (33.3%) and LSEN (31.6%) are lower. This indicates that the function is especially difficult to support adequately in secondary and combined school contexts.

Overall, Management and Accountability Tools show one of the strongest patterns of capacity strain, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, Quintile 2 and 4 schools, smaller schools, and especially secondary and combined schools.



Financial Administration (budget, audits, procurement, reports, exemptions)

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Financial Administration, with attention to provincial and school-context differences in how well schools feel resourced to manage this function.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Financial Administration			
Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	303	57.4%	42.6%
Eastern Cape	59	62.7%	37.3%
Gauteng	87	58.6%	41.4%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	52.6%	47.4%
Western Cape	136	55.2%	44.8%

Table C9: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Financial Administration

Nationally, 57.4% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 42.6% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest provincial fit appears in the Eastern Cape (62.7% adequate or better; 37.3% shortfall), followed by Gauteng (58.6%; 41.4%). The weakest fit appears in KwaZulu-Natal (52.6% adequate or better; 47.4% shortfall), with the Western Cape also showing a relatively weak profile (55.2%; 44.8%). This suggests that financial administration is broadly demanding, but somewhat less well supported in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

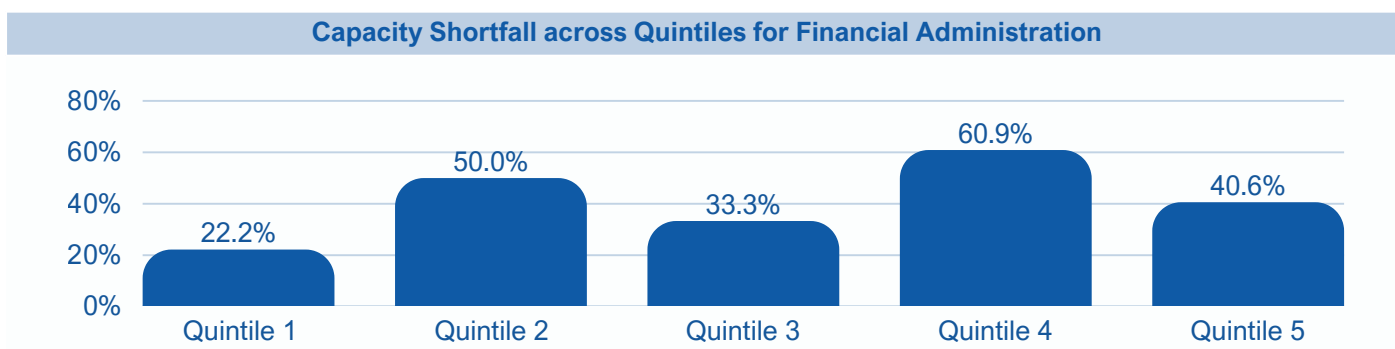


Figure C23: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Financial Administration

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 4 (60.9%), followed by Quintile 2 (50.0%). Quintile 5 is lower, though still substantial, at 40.6%, while Quintile 3 stands at 33.3% and Quintile 1 at 22.2%. The pattern suggests that financial administration capacity pressures are especially pronounced in Quintile 4 schools.

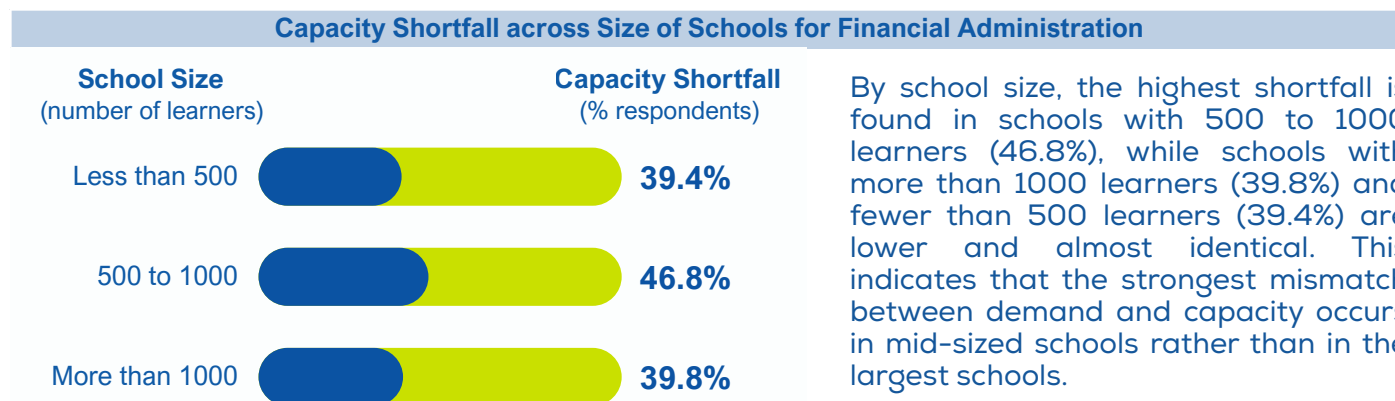


Figure C24: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Financial Administration

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Finance Administration

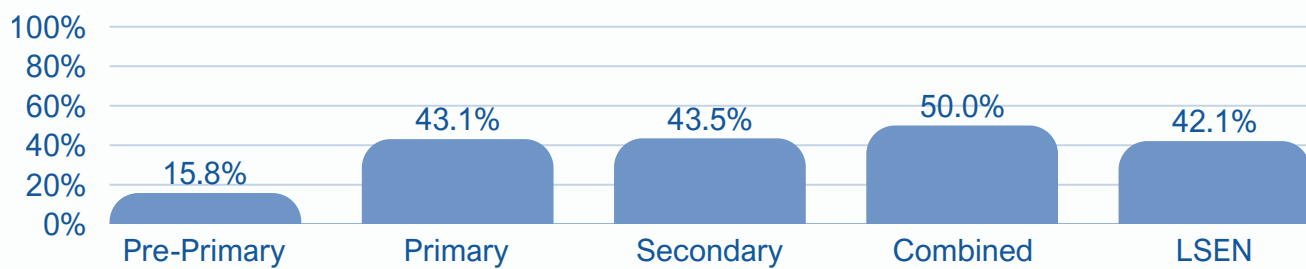


Figure C25: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Financial Administration

By school type, the highest shortfall appears in combined schools (50.0%), followed by secondary schools (43.5%), primary schools (43.1%), and LSEN schools (42.1%). Pre-primary schools are much lower at 15.8%, although on a smaller base. This suggests that financial administration strain is strongest in combined schools, while remaining substantial across the main school types.

Overall, Financial Administration shows a substantial capacity gap, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, Quintile 4 schools, mid-sized schools, and combined school contexts.



Management Compliance Reporting (Building Blocks)

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Management Compliance Reporting, one of the functions most strongly associated with administrative burden in the broader analysis.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Management Compliance Reporting

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	302	54.6%	45.4%
Eastern Cape	59	67.8%	32.2%
Gauteng	86	66.3%	33.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	52.6%	47.4%
Western Cape	134	41.8%	58.2%

Table C10: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Management Compliance Reporting

Nationally, 54.6% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 45.4% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The most favourable provincial profiles appear in the Eastern Cape (67.8% adequate or better; 32.2% shortfall) and Gauteng (66.3%; 33.7%).

By contrast, the Western Cape shows the weakest fit, with only 41.8% reporting adequate or better capacity and 58.2% reporting shortfall. KwaZulu-Natal sits between these, at 52.6% adequate or better and 47.4% shortfall. This suggests that management compliance reporting is especially difficult to support adequately in the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Management Compliance Reporting

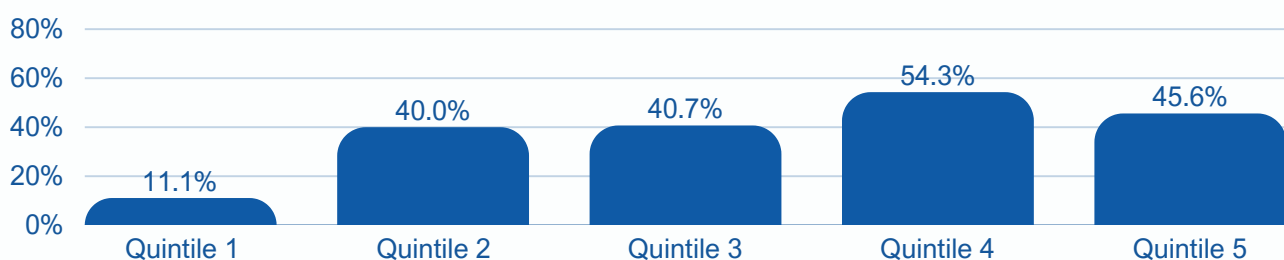


Figure C26: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Management Compliance Reporting

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 4 (54.3%), followed by Quintile 5 (45.6%). Quintile 3 and Quintile 2 are lower at 40.7% and 40.0% respectively, while Quintile 1 is lowest at 11.1%. The pattern indicates that this function is particularly capacity-constrained in Quintile 4, with additional pressure in Quintile 5.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Management Compliance Reporting

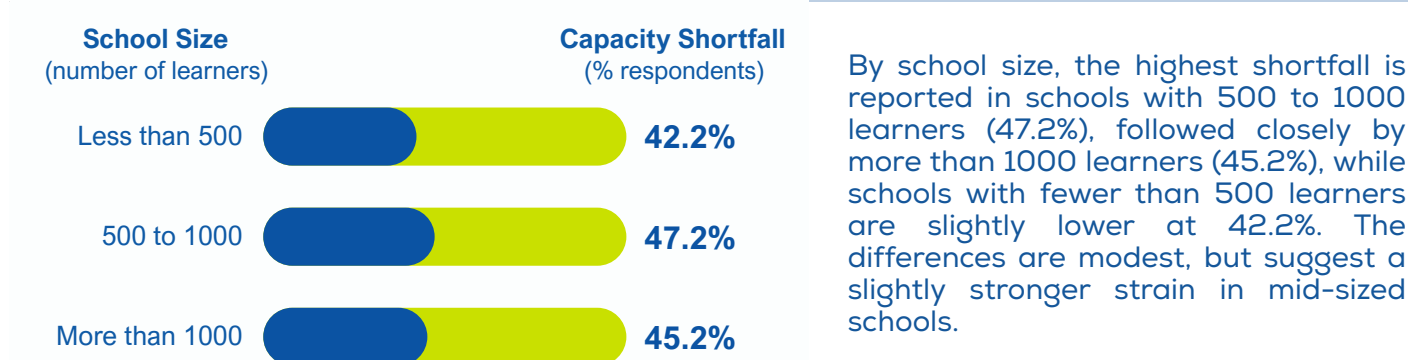


Figure C27: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Management Compliance Reporting

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Management Compliance Reporting

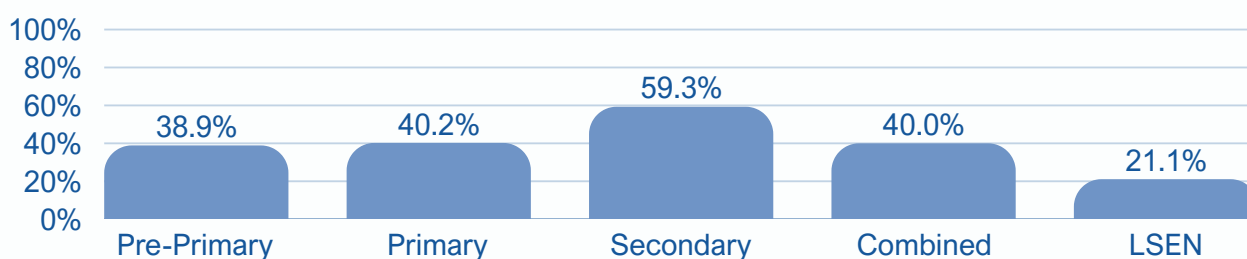


Figure C28: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Management Compliance Reporting

By school type, the strongest shortfall is found in secondary schools (59.3%), far above primary schools (40.2%), combined schools (40.0%), pre-primary schools (38.9%), and LSEN schools (21.1%). This indicates that management compliance reporting is particularly difficult to support in secondary school contexts.

Overall, Management Compliance Reporting shows a strong capacity gap, especially in the Western Cape, Quintile 4 schools, mid-sized schools, and most notably in secondary schools.



Learner Admissions

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Learner Admissions, focusing on how well principals feel their available support matches the demands of this function.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Learner Admissions

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	300	63.7%	36.3%
Eastern Cape	59	69.5%	30.5%
Gauteng	86	70.9%	29.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	18	66.7%	33.3%
Western Cape	133	57.1%	42.9%

Table C11: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Learner Admissions

Nationally, 63.7% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 36.3% reported a Capacity Shortfall, making this one of the more favourable capacity profiles among the high-burden functions. The strongest fit appears in Gauteng (70.9% adequate or better; 29.1% shortfall) and the Eastern Cape (69.5%; 30.5%). KwaZulu-Natal follows at 66.7%; 33.3%, while the Western Cape shows the weakest fit at 57.1% adequate or better and 42.9% shortfall. The data suggests that admissions capacity is comparatively stronger overall, but less so in the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Learner Admissions

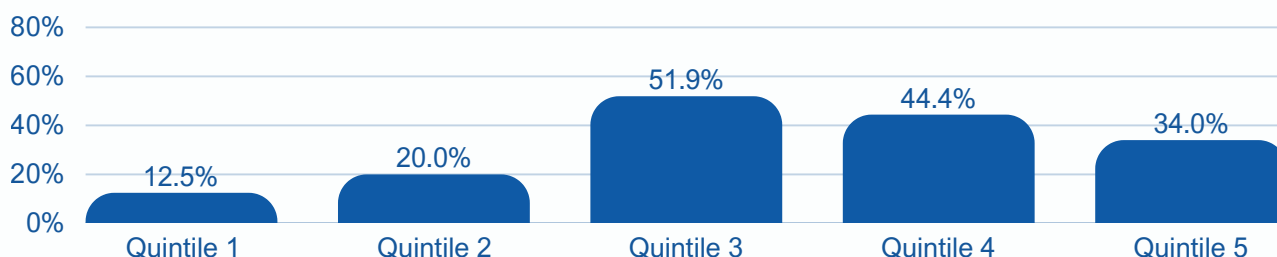
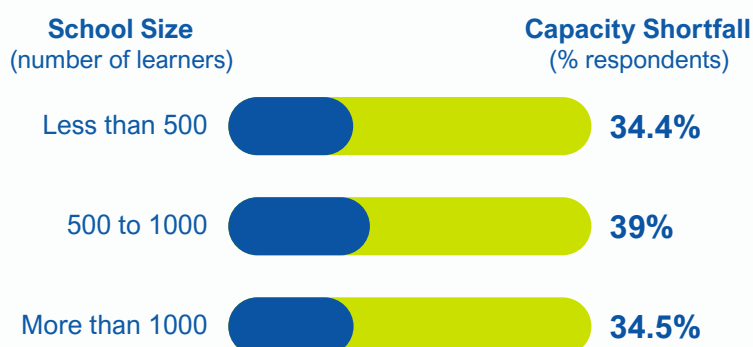


Figure C29: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Learner Admissions

By quintile, the highest shortfall is found in Quintile 3 (51.9%), followed by Quintile 4 (44.4%). Quintile 5 is lower at 34.0%, while Quintile 2 is 20.0% and Quintile 1 12.5%. This suggests that admissions strain is particularly visible in Quintile 3 and 4 schools, rather than in the largest Quintile 5 group.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Learner Admissions



By school size, the highest shortfall appears in schools with 500 to 1000 learners (39.0%), followed by more than 1000 learners (34.5%) and fewer than 500 learners (34.4%). The differences are relatively small, but point to a slightly greater capacity gap in mid-sized schools.

Figure C30: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Learner Admissions

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Learner Admissions

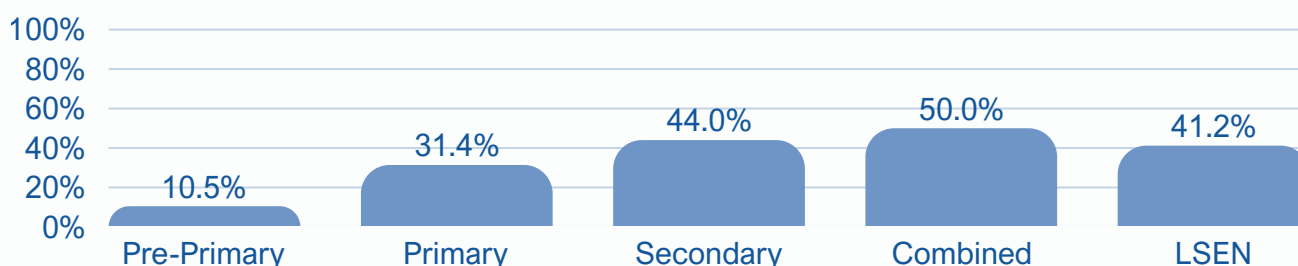


Figure C31: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Learner Admissions

By school type, the highest shortfall appears in combined schools (50.0%), followed by secondary schools (44.0%), LSEN schools (41.2%), primary schools (31.4%), and pre-primary schools (10.5%). The pattern suggests that admissions capacity is most strained in combined, secondary, and LSEN settings.

Overall, Learner Admissions shows a comparatively stronger capacity profile than many other functions, but still reveals important shortfalls in the Western Cape, Quintile 3 and 4 schools, mid-sized schools, and particularly in secondary and combined schools.



Curriculum Administration

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Curriculum Administration, an area that combines core educational work with substantial administrative demand.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Curriculum Administration

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	302	54.5%	45.5%
Eastern Cape	59	64.4%	35.6%
Gauteng	86	65.5%	34.5%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	52.6%	47.4%
Western Cape	134	44.0%	56.0%

Table C12: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Curriculum Administration

Nationally, 54.5% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 45.5% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest provincial fit appears in Gauteng (65.5% adequate or better; 34.5% shortfall) and the Eastern Cape (64.4%; 35.6%). The weakest fit is in the Western Cape, where only 44.0% reported adequate or better capacity and 56.0% reported shortfall. KwaZulu-Natal also shows a substantial shortfall at 47.4%. This suggests that curriculum administration is perceived as particularly under-resourced in the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Curriculum Administration

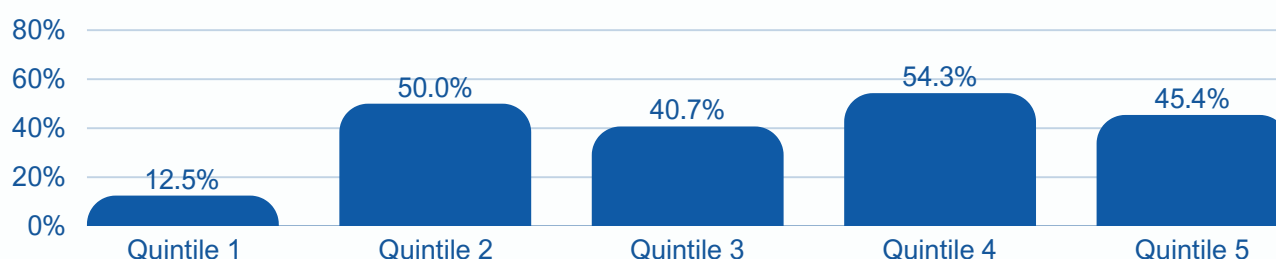
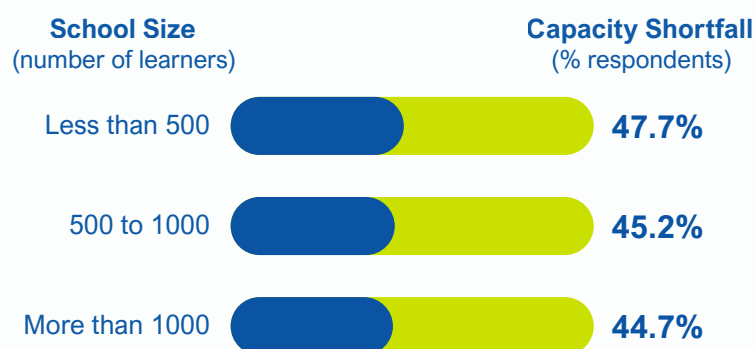


Figure C32 Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Curriculum Administration

By quintile, the highest shortfall is found in Quintile 4 (54.3%), followed by Quintile 2 (50.0%). Quintile 5 remains high at 45.4%, while Quintile 3 is lower at 40.7% and Quintile 1 much lower at 12.5%. The pattern indicates that curriculum administration strain is especially concentrated in Quintile 4, with additional pressure in Quintile 2 and 5 schools.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Curriculum Administration



By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with fewer than 500 learners (47.7%), followed by 500 to 1000 learners (45.2%) and more than 1000 learners (44.7%). The differences are not large, but suggest slightly greater strain in smaller schools.

Figure C33: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Curriculum Administration

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Curriculum Administration

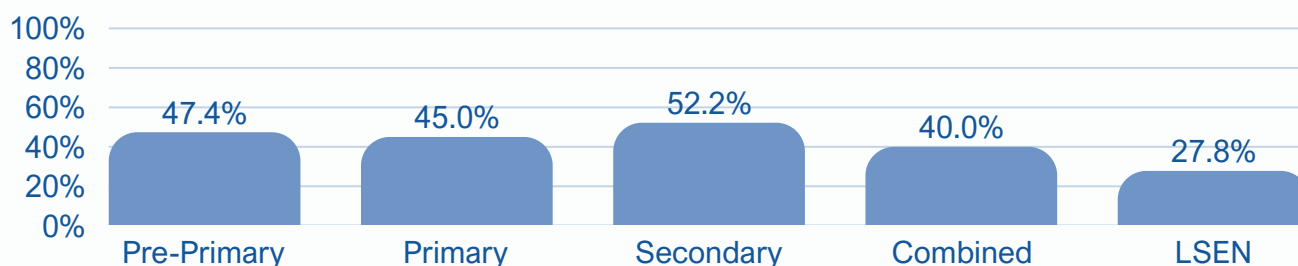


Figure C34: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Curriculum Administration

By school type, the strongest shortfall is found in secondary schools (52.2%), followed by pre-primary schools (47.4%), primary schools (45.0%), combined schools (40.0%), and LSEN schools (27.8%). This indicates that curriculum administration capacity is most constrained in secondary schools, although it remains substantial across most school types.

Overall, Curriculum Administration shows a substantial capacity gap, especially in the Western Cape, Quintile 4 schools, smaller schools, and particularly in secondary school contexts.



Human Resource Administration

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Human Resource Administration, with attention to how well available support aligns with the demands of staff-related administrative work.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Human Resource Administration

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	303	54.8%	45.2%
Eastern Cape	59	61.0%	39.0%
Gauteng	87	62.1%	37.9%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	42.1%	57.9%
Western Cape	134	49.3%	50.7%

Table C13: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Human Resource Administration

Nationally, 54.8% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 45.2% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest fit appears in Gauteng (62.1% adequate or better; 37.9% shortfall) and the Eastern Cape (61.0%; 39.0%). The weakest fit is in KwaZulu-Natal, where only 42.1% reported adequate or better capacity and 57.9% shortfall, followed by the Western Cape at 49.3% adequate or better and 50.7% shortfall. This suggests that HR administration is particularly under-supported in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Human Resource Administration

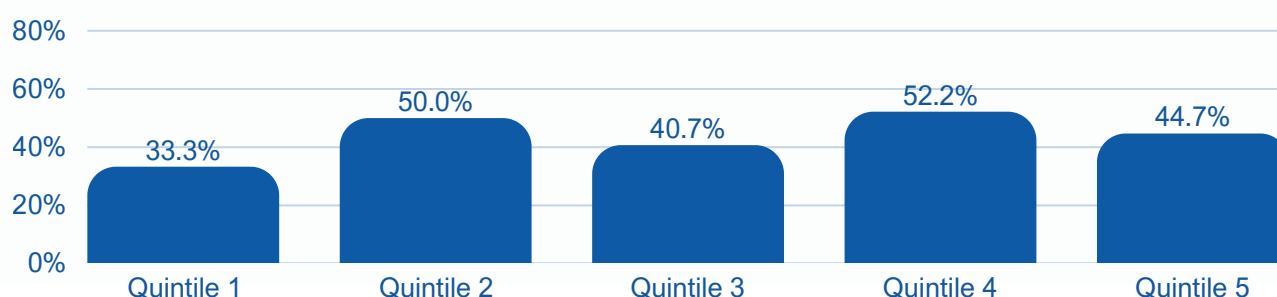
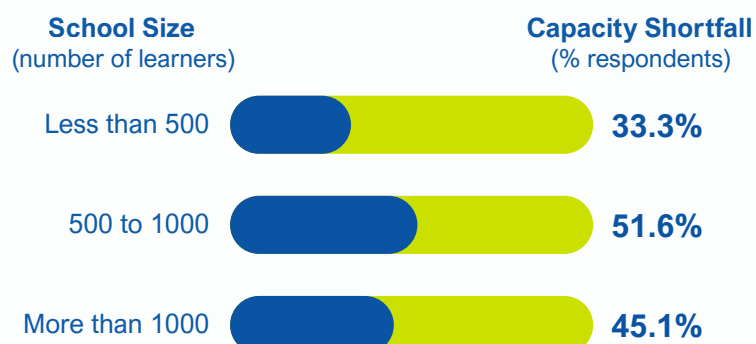


Figure C35: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Human Resource Administration

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 4 (52.2%), followed by Quintile 2 (50.0%). Quintile 5 remains substantial at 44.7%, while Quintile 3 is lower at 40.7% and Quintile 1 at 33.3%. The pattern indicates especially strong capacity strain in Quintile 4, with notable pressure also in Quintile 2 and 5 schools.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Human Resource Administration



By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with 500 to 1000 learners (51.6%), followed by more than 1000 learners (45.1%), while schools with fewer than 500 learners are substantially lower at 33.3%. This indicates that mid-sized schools are the most capacity-constrained in relation to HR administration.

Figure C36: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Human Resource Administration

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Human Resource Administration

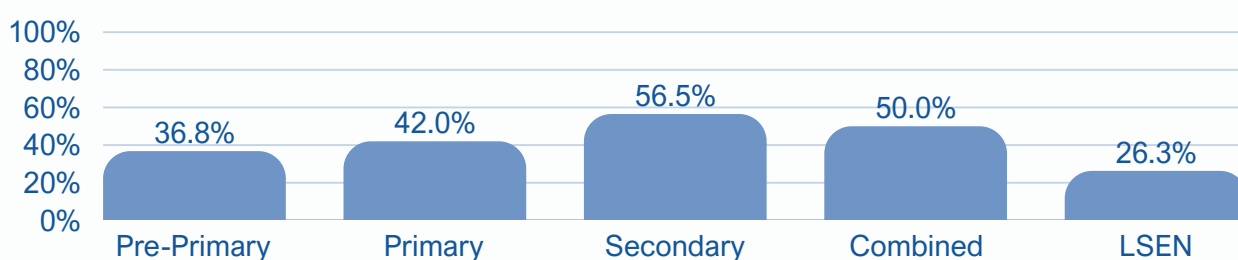


Figure C37: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Human Resource Administration

By school type, the highest shortfall appears in secondary schools (56.5%), followed by combined schools (50.0%), primary schools (42.0%), pre-primary schools (36.8%), and LSEN schools (26.3%). This suggests that HR administration is especially difficult to support adequately in secondary and combined school settings.

Overall, Human Resource Administration shows strong capacity strain, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, Quintile 4 schools, mid-sized schools, and particularly secondary and combined schools.



Governance Compliance Reporting

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Governance Compliance Reporting, focusing on the extent to which available support is seen as matching the demands of governance-related administration.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Governance Compliance Reporting

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	300	54.6%	45.4%
Eastern Cape	59	69.5%	30.5%
Gauteng	86	62.1%	37.9%
KwaZulu-Natal	18	63.2%	36.8%
Western Cape	133	41.5%	58.5%

Table C14: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Governance Compliance Reporting

Nationally, 54.6% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 45.4% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest provincial fit appears in the Eastern Cape (69.5% adequate or better; 30.5% shortfall), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (63.2%; 36.8%) and Gauteng (62.1%; 37.9%). The weakest profile appears in the Western Cape, where only 41.5% reported adequate or better capacity and 58.5% reported shortfall. This makes the Western Cape a clear outlier for governance-related capacity strain.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Governance Compliance Reporting

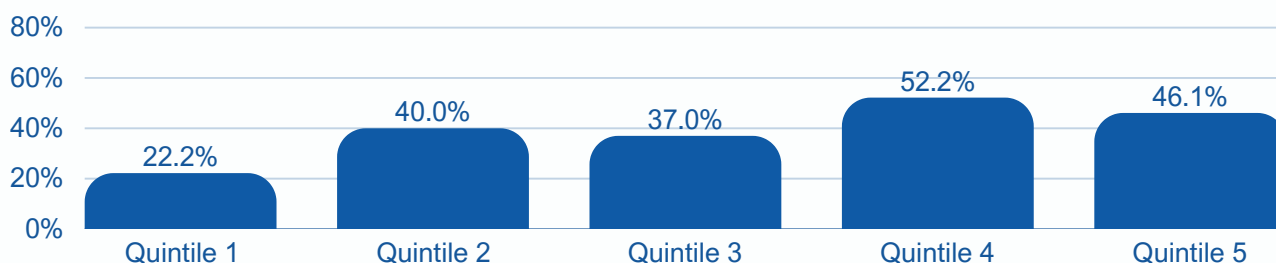
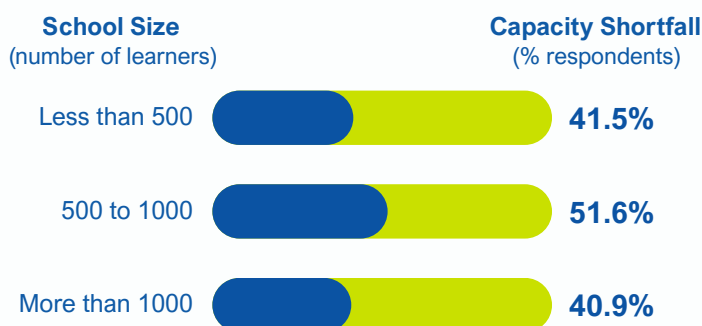


Figure C38: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Governance Compliance Reporting

By quintile, the highest shortfall is found in Quintile 4 (52.2%), followed by Quintile 5 (46.1%), while Quintile 2 is 40.0%, Quintile 3 37.0%, and Quintile 1 22.2%. The pattern indicates that governance compliance shortfall is concentrated mainly in Quintile 4 and 5 schools.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Governance Compliance Reporting



By school size, the strongest shortfall appears in schools with 500 to 1000 learners (51.6%), compared with 41.5% in schools with fewer than 500 learners and 40.9% in schools with more than 1000 learners. This suggests that mid-sized schools are particularly vulnerable in this area.

Figure C39: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Governance Compliance Reporting

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Governance Compliance Reporting

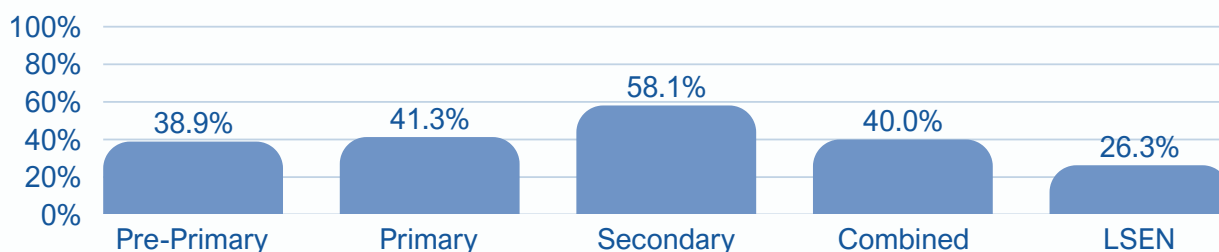


Figure C40: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Governance Compliance Reporting

By school type, the highest shortfall is found in secondary schools (58.1%), well above primary schools (41.3%), combined schools (40.0%), pre-primary schools (38.9%), and LSEN schools (26.3%). The pattern clearly indicates that governance compliance reporting is most difficult to resource adequately in secondary schools.

Overall, Governance Compliance Reporting shows a strong capacity gap, especially in the Western Cape, Quintile 4 and 5 schools, mid-sized schools, and above all in secondary school settings.



Admin / Compliance Requests

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Admin / Compliance Requests, focusing on the extent to which schools feel adequately supported to manage externally generated administrative demands.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Admin / Compliance Requests

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	303	54.5%	45.5%
Eastern Cape	59	62.7%	37.3%
Gauteng	87	58.6%	41.4%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	47.4%	52.6%
Western Cape	134	48.5%	51.5%

Table C15: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Admin / Compliance Requests

Nationally, 54.5% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 45.5% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest fit appears in the Eastern Cape (62.7% adequate or better; 37.3% shortfall), followed by Gauteng (58.6%; 41.4%).

The weakest fit appears in KwaZulu-Natal, where 47.4% reported adequate or better capacity and 52.6% shortfall, closely followed by the Western Cape at 48.5% adequate or better and 51.5% shortfall. The pattern suggests that ad hoc administrative requests are especially difficult to absorb in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Admin / Compliance Requests

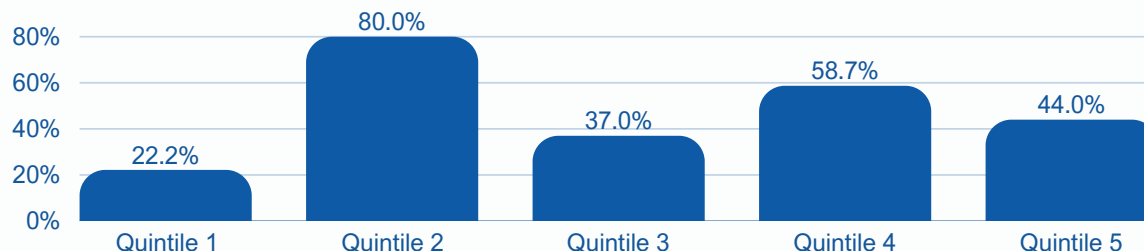
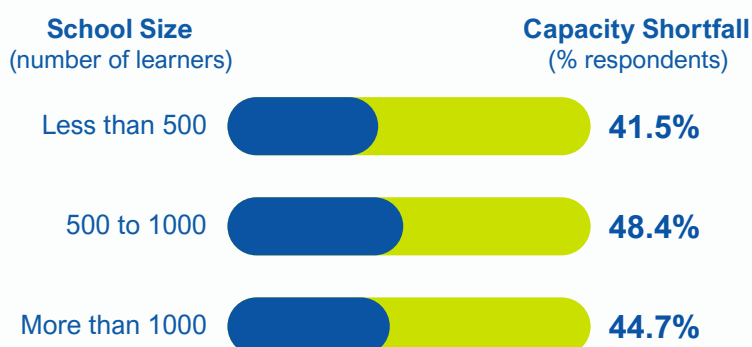


Figure C41: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Admin / Compliance Requests

By quintile, the highest shortfall is found in Quintile 2 (80.0%), although on a very small base, followed by Quintile 4 (58.7%) and Quintile 5 (44.0%). Quintile 3 is lower at 37.0%, while Quintile 1 is lowest at 22.2%. The pattern suggests that strain in relation to ad hoc requests is especially intense in some middle-quintile contexts, particularly Quintile 4.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Admin / Compliance Requests



By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with 500 to 1000 learners (48.4%), followed by more than 1000 learners (44.7%) and fewer than 500 learners (41.5%). This points to mid-sized schools as the most capacity-constrained in relation to general administrative requests.

Figure C42: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Admin / Compliance Requests

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Admin / Compliance Requests

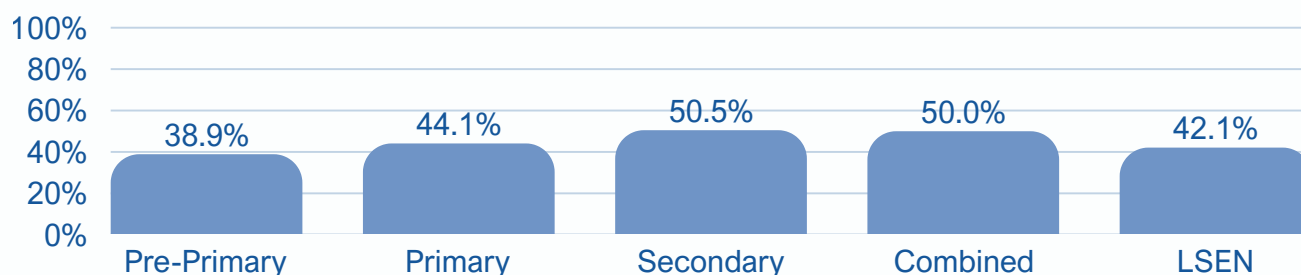


Figure C43: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Admin / Compliance Requests

By school type, the highest shortfall is found in secondary schools (50.5%), followed by combined schools (50.0%), primary schools (44.1%), LSEN schools (42.1%), and pre-primary schools (38.9%). The pattern suggests that ad hoc admin/compliance requests are especially difficult to manage in secondary and combined contexts.

Overall, Admin / Compliance Requests show a substantial capacity gap, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, Quintile 4 schools, mid-sized schools, and combined and secondary school settings.



Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting, focusing on how well schools feel resourced to manage this operational area.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	302	56.6%	43.4%
Eastern Cape	59	57.6%	42.4%
Gauteng	87	65.5%	34.5%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	57.9%	42.1%
Western Cape	133	50.4%	49.6%

Table C16: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

Nationally, 56.6% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 43.4% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest fit appears in Gauteng (65.5% adequate or better; 34.5% shortfall). The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are relatively similar at 57.6% / 42.4% and 57.9% / 42.1% respectively. The weakest fit is in the Western Cape, where 50.4% reported adequate or better capacity and 49.6% shortfall. This suggests that infrastructure and maintenance capacity is broadly strained, but especially so in the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

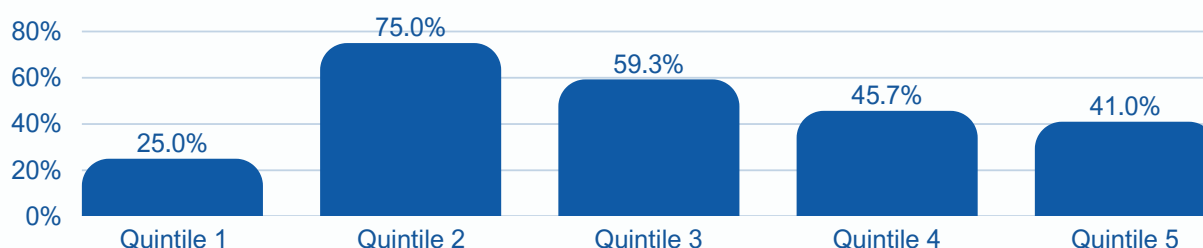
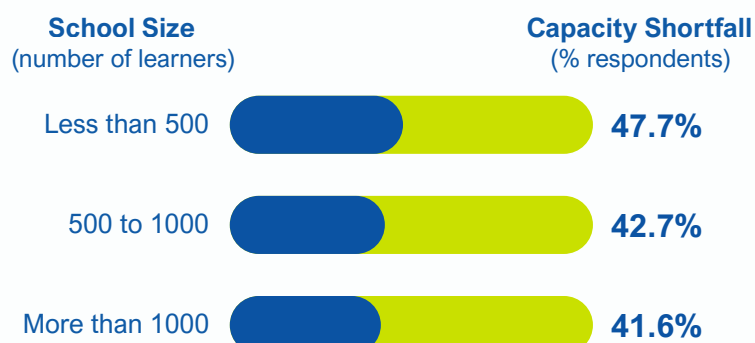


Figure C44: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 2 (75.0%), followed by Quintile 3 (59.3%), while Quintile 4 is lower at 45.7%, Quintile 5 at 41.0%, and Quintile 1 at 25.0%. The pattern suggests that infrastructure and maintenance pressures are particularly concentrated in Quintile 2 and 3 schools.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting



By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with fewer than 500 learners (47.7%), followed by 500 to 1000 learners (42.7%) and more than 1000 learners (41.6%). This suggests that smaller schools may be somewhat less well resourced to absorb infrastructure-related administrative demands.

Figure C45: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

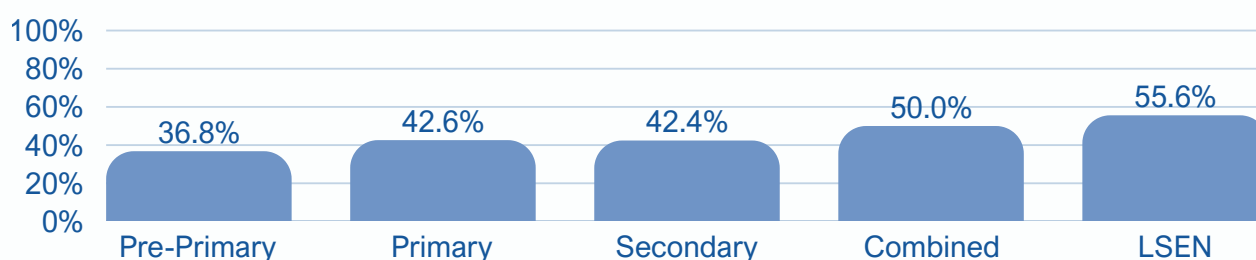


Figure C46: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting

By school type, the highest shortfall is found in LSEN schools (55.6%), followed by combined schools (50.0%), primary schools (42.6%), secondary schools (42.4%), and pre-primary schools (36.8%). The pattern suggests that infrastructure and maintenance capacity is particularly constrained in LSEN and combined school contexts.

Overall, Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting shows meaningful capacity strain, especially in the Western Cape, Quintile 2 and 3 schools, smaller schools, and combined and LSEN school contexts.



Safety and Security Compliance

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Safety and Security Compliance, focusing on how schools rate their available support relative to the demands of this function.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Safety and Security Compliance

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	303	61.1%	38.9%
Eastern Cape	59	67.8%	32.2%
Gauteng	87	63.2%	36.8%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	57.9%	42.1%
Western Cape	134	57.5%	42.5%

Table C17: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Safety and Security Compliance

Nationally, 61.1% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 38.9% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest fit appears in the Eastern Cape (67.8% adequate or better; 32.2% shortfall), followed by Gauteng (63.2%; 36.8%). The weakest fit appears in the Western Cape (57.5% adequate or better; 42.5% shortfall), closely followed by KwaZulu-Natal (57.9%; 42.1%). The provincial pattern suggests that safety and security compliance is less capacity-constrained than some of the higher-burden functions, but still shows notable shortfall in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Safety and Security Compliance

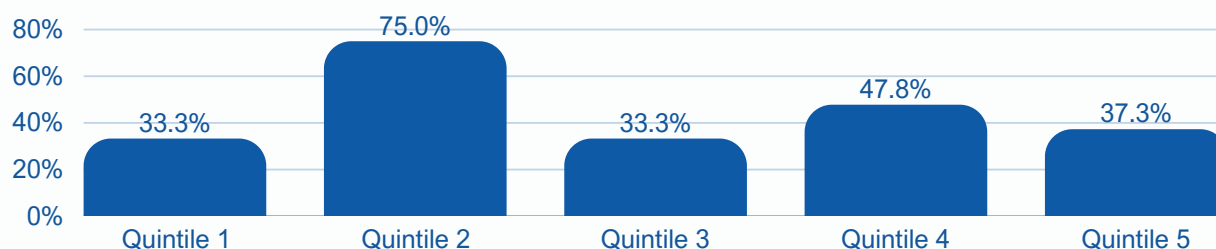
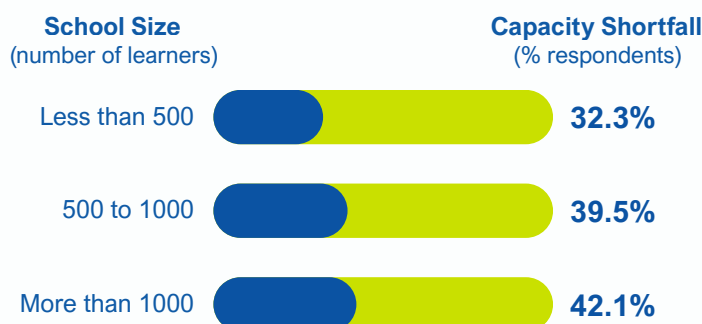


Figure C47: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Safety and Security Compliance

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 2 (75.0%), followed by Quintile 4 (47.8%), while Quintile 5 is lower at 37.3% and Quintile 1 and Quintile 3 both sit at 33.3%. The pattern suggests that safety and security pressures are especially pronounced in some middle-quintile contexts, particularly Quintile 2.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Safety and Security Compliance



By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with more than 1000 learners (42.1%), followed by 500 to 1000 learners (39.5%) and fewer than 500 learners (32.3%). This suggests that the capacity gap widens somewhat with school size, with larger schools showing the least favourable profile.

Figure C48: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Safety and Security Compliance

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Safety and Security Compliance

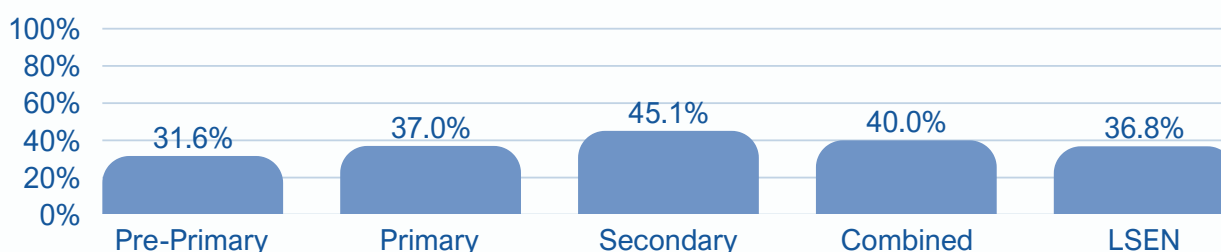


Figure C49: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Safety and Security Compliance

By school type, the highest shortfall is found in secondary schools (45.1%), followed by combined schools (40.0%), primary schools (37.0%), LSEN schools (36.8%), and pre-primary schools (31.6%). This suggests that safety and security capacity pressures are greatest in secondary school contexts.

Overall, Safety and Security Compliance shows a moderate but still important capacity gap, especially in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, some middle-quintile schools, larger schools, and particularly secondary and combined schools.



Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

This section examines perceived capacity fit for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals, focusing on how well schools feel equipped to manage this function.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	303	66.3%	33.7%
Eastern Cape	59	66.1%	33.9%
Gauteng	87	72.4%	27.6%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	63.2%	36.8%
Western Cape	134	62.7%	37.3%

Table C18: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

Nationally, 66.3% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 33.7% reported a Capacity Shortfall, making this one of the more favourable capacity profiles. The strongest fit appears in Gauteng (72.4% adequate or better; 27.6% shortfall).

The Eastern Cape records 66.1% / 33.9%, while KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape show weaker profiles at 63.2% / 36.8% and 62.7% / 37.3% respectively. The provincial pattern suggests that safety and security compliance is less capacity-constrained than some of the higher-burden functions, but still shows notable shortfall in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

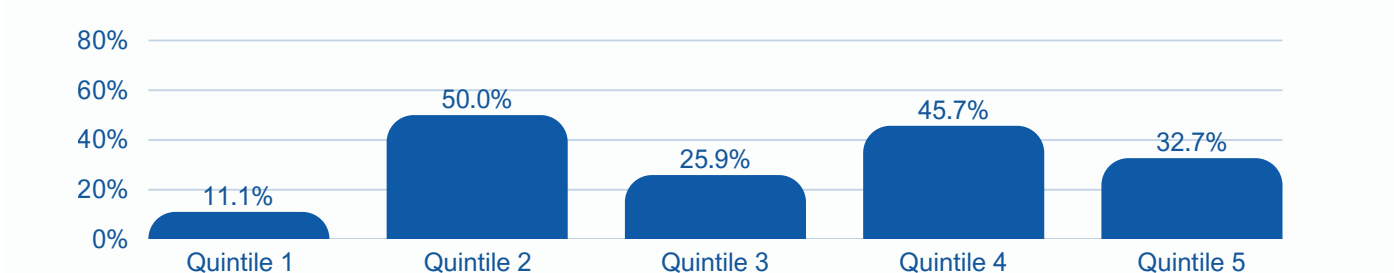


Figure C50: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 2 (50.0%), followed by Quintile 4 (45.7%), while Quintile 5 is lower at 32.7% and Quintile 3 lower still at 25.9%. Quintile 1 is lowest at 11.1%. The pattern suggests that, even in this relatively better-supported function, middle-quintile schools still show notable capacity strain.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

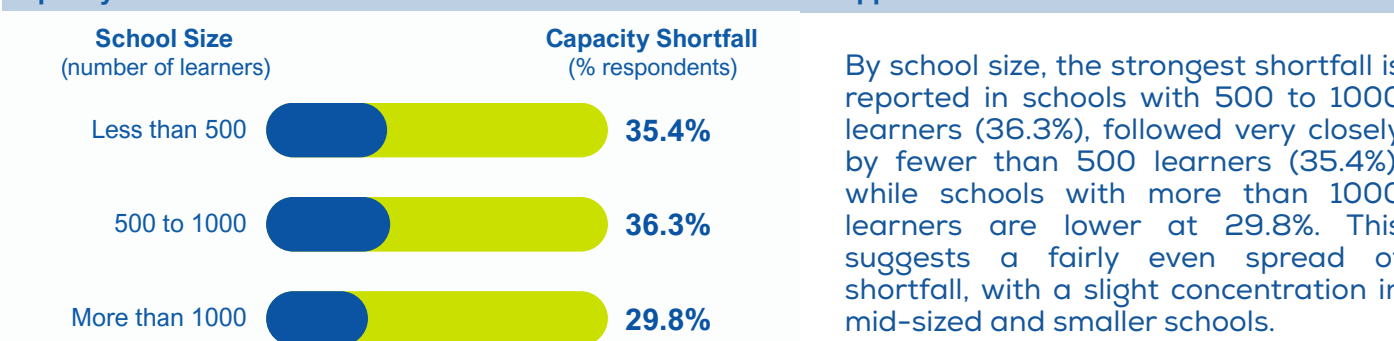


Figure C51: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with 500 to 1000 learners (36.3%), followed very closely by fewer than 500 learners (35.4%), while schools with more than 1000 learners are lower at 29.8%. This suggests a fairly even spread of shortfall, with a slight concentration in mid-sized and smaller schools.

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

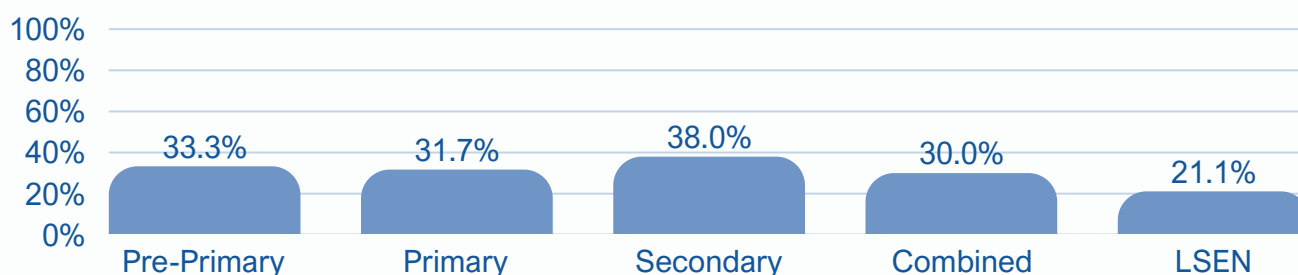


Figure C52: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals

By school type, the highest shortfall is found in secondary schools (38.0%), followed by pre-primary schools (33.3%), primary schools (31.7%), combined schools (30.0%), and LSEN schools (21.1%). The pattern suggests that capacity fit is comparatively better in this function, but that secondary schools still show somewhat greater strain than the other school types.

Overall, Staff Evaluations and Appraisals shows one of the stronger capacity profiles, although notable shortfall remains in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, in some middle-quintile groups, and particularly in secondary school contexts.

 CEMIS

This section examines perceived capacity fit for CEMIS, focusing on how well principals feel resourced to manage this system-related function.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for CEMIS

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	302	70.9%	29.1%
Eastern Cape	58	79.3%	20.7%
Gauteng	86	77.9%	22.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	18	72.2%	27.8%
Western Cape	136	62.5%	37.5%

Table C19: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for CEMIS

Nationally, 70.9% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 29.1% reported a Capacity Shortfall, making this the most favourable capacity profile among the functions. The strongest fit appears in the Eastern Cape (79.3% adequate or better; 20.7% shortfall), followed closely by Gauteng (77.9%; 22.1%). KwaZulu-Natal is somewhat lower at 72.2%; 27.8%, while the Western Cape shows the weakest fit at 62.5% adequate or better and 37.5% shortfall. The pattern suggests that CEMIS is comparatively better supported overall, though less so in the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for CEMIS

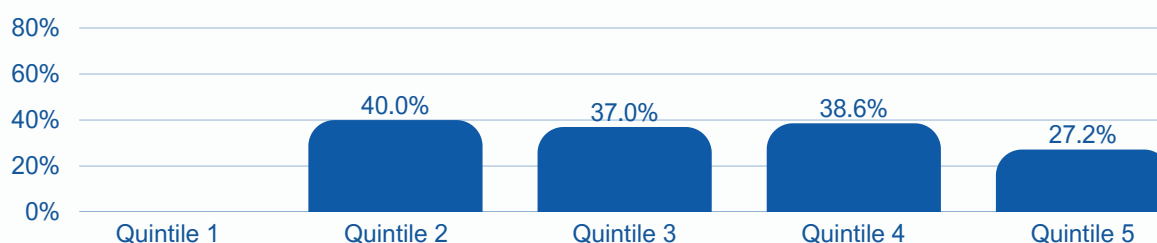


Figure C53: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for CEMIS

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 2 (40.0%), followed by Quintile 4 (38.6%) and Quintile 3 (37.0%), while Quintile 5 is notably lower at 27.2%. Quintile 1 records 0.0%, though that should be interpreted cautiously because of the very small base. The pattern suggests that even in a comparatively well-supported function, some middle-quintile schools still show meaningful strain.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for CEMIS

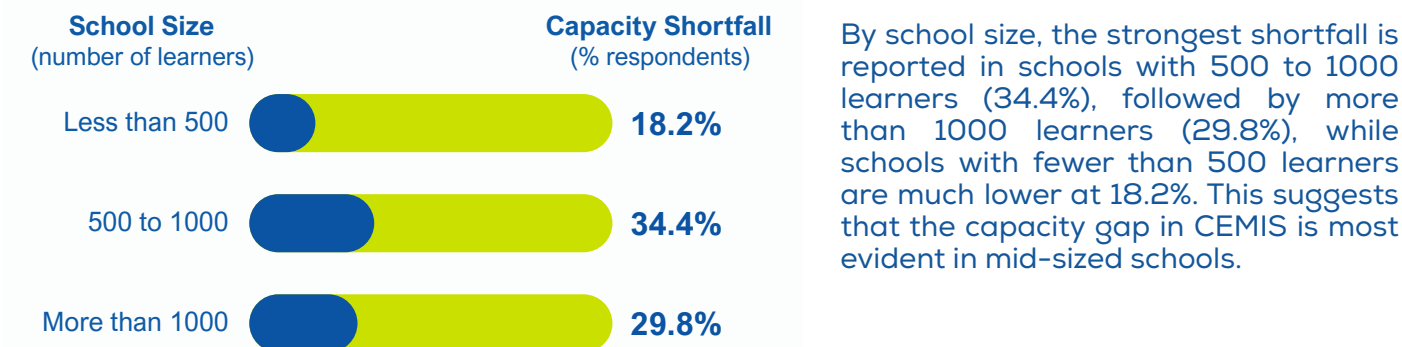


Figure C54: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for CEMIS

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for CEMIS

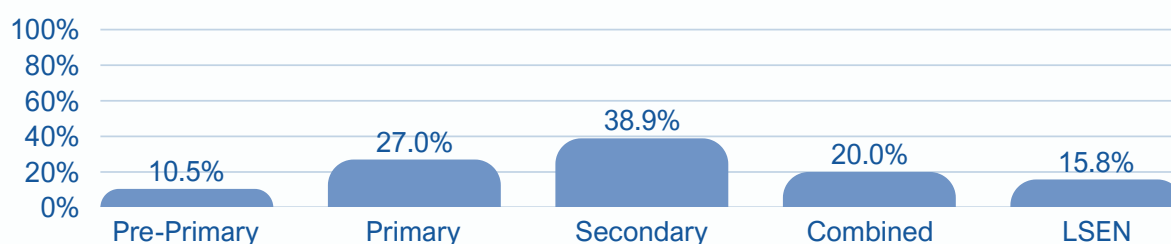


Figure C55: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for CEMIS

By school type, the highest shortfall appears in secondary schools (38.9%), followed by primary schools (27.0%), combined schools (20.0%), LSEN schools (15.8%), and pre-primary schools (10.5%). The pattern suggests that CEMIS is most difficult to support adequately in secondary schools, even though it remains comparatively better resourced than most other functions.

Overall, CEMIS shows the most favourable capacity profile, though meaningful shortfall remains visible in the Western Cape, some middle-quintile groups, mid-sized schools, and especially in secondary school settings.



LTSM

This section examines perceived capacity fit for LTSM, focusing on how well available support is perceived to match the demands of this function.

Capacity Fit across Provinces for LTSM

Province	n	Adequate or Better Capacity	Capacity shortfall
National	302	67.7%	32.3%
Eastern Cape	58	69.5%	30.5%
Gauteng	86	81.6%	18.4%
KwaZulu-Natal	18	68.4%	31.6%
Western Cape	136	58.2%	41.8%

Table C20: Provincial responses for Capacity Fit for LTSM

Nationally, 67.7% of respondents reported Adequate or Better Capacity, while 32.3% reported a Capacity Shortfall. The strongest fit appears in Gauteng (81.6% adequate or better; 18.4% shortfall). The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are fairly similar at 69.5% / 30.5% and 68.4% / 31.6% respectively, while the Western Cape shows the weakest profile, with 58.2% reporting adequate or better capacity and 41.8% reporting shortfall. The pattern suggests that LTSM is comparatively better supported overall, but substantially less so in the Western Cape.

Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for LTSM

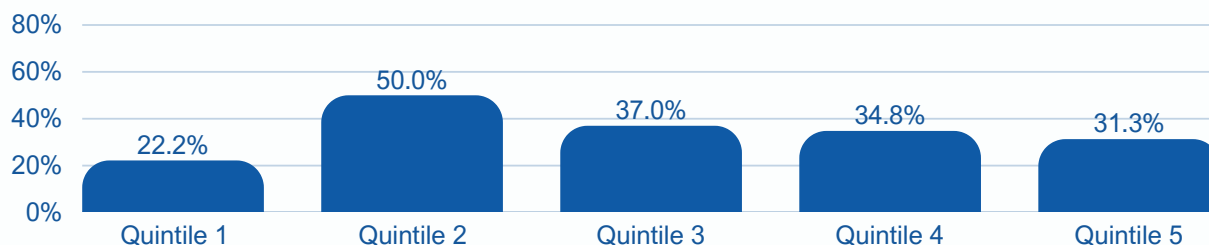
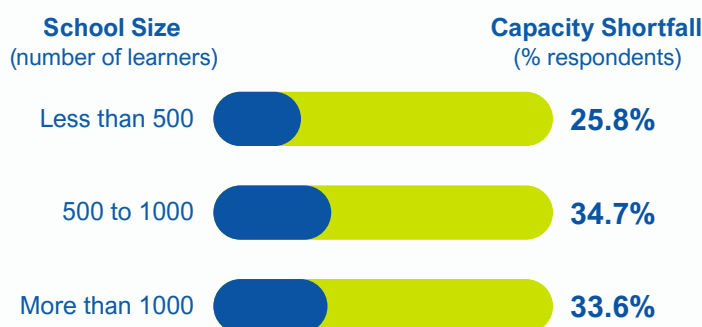


Figure C56: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Quintiles for LTSM

By quintile, the highest shortfall appears in Quintile 2 (50.0%), followed by Quintile 3 (37.0%), Quintile 4 (34.8%), and Quintile 5 (31.3%). Quintile 1 is lower at 22.2%. The pattern suggests that, although LTSM is one of the less capacity-constrained functions overall, pressure remains visible in some middle-quintile contexts.

Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for LTSM



By school size, the strongest shortfall is reported in schools with 500 to 1000 learners (34.7%), followed by more than 1000 learners (33.6%), while schools with fewer than 500 learners are lower at 25.8%. This suggests that LTSM capacity pressures are present across all sizes, but slightly more pronounced in mid-sized schools.

Figure C57: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Size of Schools for LTSM

Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for LTSM

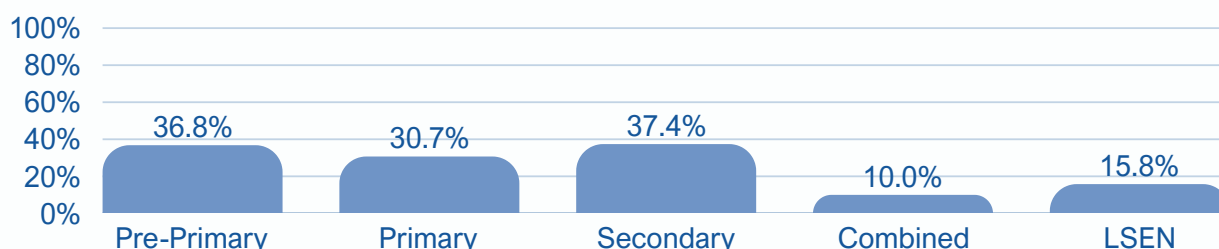


Figure C58: Provincial responses for Capacity Shortfall across Types of Schools for LTSM

By school type, the highest shortfall is found in secondary schools (37.4%), followed by pre-primary schools (36.8%), primary schools (30.7%), LSEN schools (15.8%), and combined schools (10.0%). The pattern suggests that LTSM is comparatively manageable overall, but that secondary schools still show a somewhat higher level of strain.

Overall, LTSM shows a relatively favourable capacity profile, although weaker fit remains visible in the Western Cape, some middle-quintile groups, mid-sized schools, and particularly in secondary school contexts.



Conclusion on Capacity fit across Functions

The Capacity Fit dimension reveals a systemic resourcing problem. Across all 13 functions, the proportion of principals reporting capacity as 'less than needed' or 'far less than needed' ranges from 29% (CEMIS) to 47% (Management and Accountability Tools). In no function does the majority report that their capacity is well-matched to demand. The highest 'about right' rating is for CEMIS (56%), but even there, 29% feel under-resourced. For Curriculum Administration, Human Resource Administration, Governance Compliance, Admin/Compliance Requests, and Management and Accountability Tools, approximately 45% of principals report inadequate capacity.

Across the functions, three recurring patterns are clear. First, the Western Cape and, in several functions, KwaZulu-Natal, often show weaker provincial capacity fit than the Eastern Cape and Gauteng. Second, capacity shortfall does not follow a simple pattern by quintile, but frequently appears most strongly in Quintile 4, and in some cases Quintile 2 or 3, rather than consistently in Quintile 5. Third, secondary schools repeatedly show some of the highest shortfall levels, while mid-sized schools also emerge frequently as a vulnerable group. Taken together, the data suggests that capacity fit is shaped not by one school characteristic alone, but by the interaction between function, province, quintile, school size, and school type.



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Section D

FACTORS CREATING PRESSURE



D1. National Factors Creating Pressure

This section examines the specific factors that principals identified as creating significant administrative pressure. Respondents were asked to select all applicable factors, meaning that this is a multiple-response item and percentages therefore do not add to 100%. The analysis is presented at national level, comparatively across the four main provinces. Together, these findings provide important insight into not only how much pressure principals experience, but also what is driving it.

Total National Responses

This figure shows the national distribution of the main factors that principals identified as creating administrative pressure, ranked by the percentage of respondents selecting each factor.

Pressure Factor	Respondents	Percentage
Short notice for submission	277	90.8%
Duplication of information	274	89.8%
Overwhelming support documentation required	250	82.0%
Unrealistic deadlines	243	79.7%
Last-minute departmental changes	232	76.1%
Unclear/contradictory guidance	172	56.4%
Length of departmental meetings	165	54.1%
System/portal issues	159	52.1%
Timing of circulars release	141	46.2%
Clustering/spacing/spread of tasks	139	45.6%
Timing of calendar release	103	33.8%

Table D1: National ranking of factors creating administrative pressure (multiple-response item; percentages do not add to 100%)

The national data shows a very clear hierarchy of pressure factors. The top five factors are all selected by more than three-quarters of respondents, making them near-universal complaints rather than isolated concerns. The dominance of short notice for submission (90.8%) and duplication of information (89.8%) is particularly significant, as it suggests that the administrative burden is not only about the volume of tasks, but about the way those tasks are organised, communicated, and repeated. When nearly nine out of ten principals report that they are required to submit the same information in multiple formats, and that requests frequently arrive with inadequate lead time, the problem appears to lie as much with system design and departmental process as with school-level workload.

The prominence of overwhelming support documentation required (82.0%), unrealistic deadlines (79.7%), and last-minute departmental changes (76.1%) reinforces this point. These responses suggest an administrative environment in which principals are not simply dealing with many tasks, but with tasks that are poorly sequenced, weakly coordinated, and excessively compliance-driven. This is important because it shifts the analysis away from a narrow view of principal workload as merely “too much admin” and towards a more structural understanding of the burden as shaped by the way administrative systems operate.

A second level of factors remains highly relevant. Unclear or contradictory guidance (56.4%), length of departmental meetings (54.1%), and system/portal issues (52.1%) all affect more than half of respondents. This suggests that pressure is also created by the quality of guidance and the efficiency of systems intended to support administration.

Particularly notable is the fact that system and portal issues are reported by more than half of respondents, indicating that digital tools and platforms may themselves be a source of friction rather than relief.

The lower-ranked factors, namely; timing of circulars release (46.2%), clustering or spread of tasks across the year (45.6%), and timing of calendar release (33.8%) still affect substantial proportions of the sample and should not be dismissed as minor concerns. Overall, the national pattern points to a system in which administrative pressure is driven most strongly by timing, duplication, documentation burden, and poor process coordination.



D2. Provincial Comparison of Factors Creating Pressure

Total Responses per Province

This table compares the main factors creating administrative pressure across the four provinces included in the provincial analysis, highlighting both common patterns and areas of provincial variation.

Pressure Factor	National %	Eastern Cape %	Gauteng %	KwaZulu-Natal %	Western Cape %
Short notice for submission	90.8%	100.0%	92.0%	100.0%	84.6%
Duplication of information	89.8%	88.1%	92.0%	89.5%	89.0%
Overwhelming support documentation	82.0%	72.9%	83.9%	84.2%	83.8%
Unrealistic deadlines	79.7%	83.1%	75.9%	84.2%	80.1%
Last-minute departmental changes	76.1%	91.5%	75.9%	78.9%	68.4%
Unclear/contradictory guidance	56.4%	72.9%	57.5%	84.2%	44.9%
Length of departmental meetings	54.1%	72.9%	58.6%	73.7%	39.7%
System/portal issues	52.1%	35.6%	49.4%	78.9%	57.4%
Timing of circulars release	46.2%	72.9%	54.0%	84.2%	22.8%
Clustering/spacing of tasks	45.6%	33.9%	52.9%	42.1%	44.9%
Timing of calendar release	33.8%	44.1%	39.1%	42.1%	23.5%

Table D2: Factors creating administrative pressure by province (Shading intensity moves from no shading, to light blue, to darker blue, with the highest response concentrations shown in olive)

The provincial comparison shows a strong degree of consistency around the main pressure factors, but also reveals important differences in emphasis. Across all four provinces, short notice for submission, duplication of information, overwhelming support documentation, and unrealistic deadlines remain among the strongest drivers of pressure. This confirms that the national pattern is not driven by one province alone, but reflects a broader systemic experience.

At the same time, the intensity of some factors varies sharply by province. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal stand out for especially high levels of reported pressure in relation to last-minute departmental changes, unclear or contradictory guidance, length of departmental meetings, and the timing of key communications such as circulars and calendar release. In the Eastern Cape, for example, last-minute departmental changes reaches 91.5%, while unclear guidance, length of meetings, and timing of circulars release all stand at 72.9%. In KwaZulu-Natal, the pattern is even more striking, with 84.2% selecting unclear guidance, 84.2% selecting timing of circulars release, and 78.9% selecting system or portal issues. These figures suggest a provincial administrative environment in which both communication and system functioning are perceived as particularly problematic.

By contrast, the Western Cape shows a more concentrated pattern. While the main top-tier complaints remain strong especially duplication of information (89.0%), overwhelming support documentation (83.8%), and unrealistic deadlines (80.1%), the lower- and middle-ranked factors are notably less prominent than in the other provinces. For example, only 22.8% selected timing of circulars release, 23.5% selected timing of calendar release, and 39.7% selected length of departmental meetings.

This suggests that, in the Western Cape, pressure may be experienced more through the volume, duplication, and documentary burden of tasks than through timing and communication processes. Gauteng sits between these patterns, showing strong concern about the leading factors, but a more moderate profile for most of the second-tier items.

Overall, the provincial comparison suggests that while the broad structure of pressure is shared, the administrative style of the burden differs somewhat by province.

Provincial breakdown

Eastern Cape

This figure shows the pattern of factors contributing to administrative pressure among respondents in the Eastern Cape, ranked by the proportion selecting each factor.

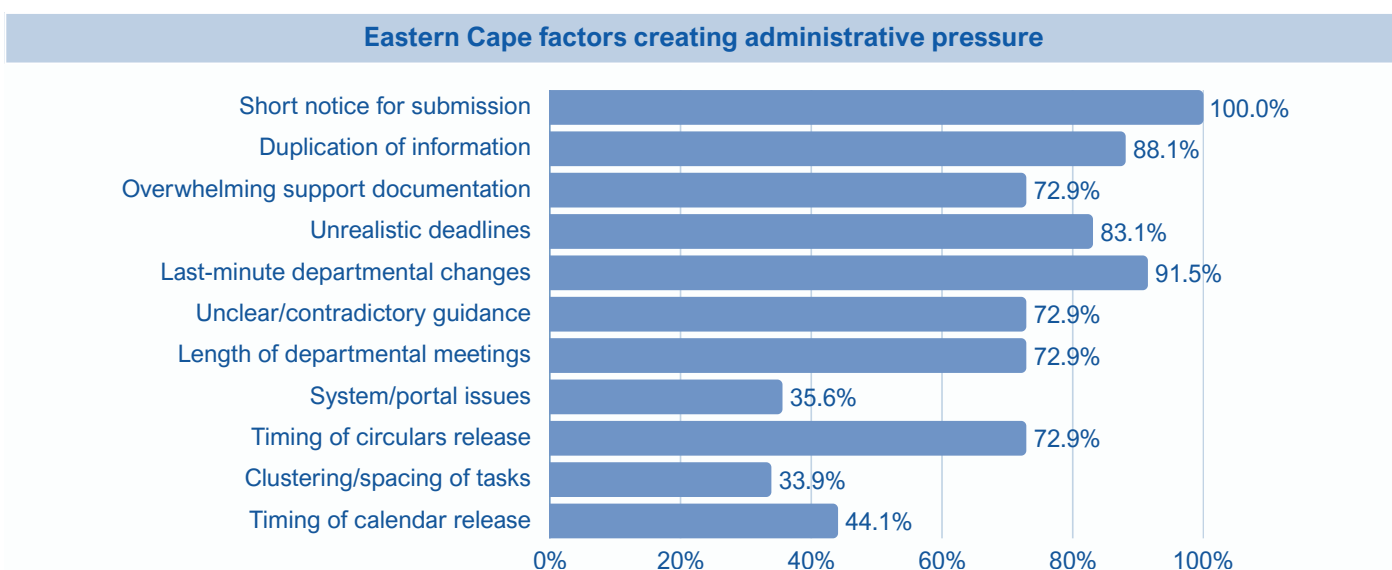


Figure D1: Factors creating administrative pressure in the Eastern Cape (ranked by percentage of respondents selecting each factor)

The Eastern Cape profile is characterised by a particularly strong emphasis on timing, change, and communication-related pressures. While the main national complaints remain prominent, the province stands out for the extremely high proportion selecting short notice for submission (100.0%) and last-minute departmental changes (91.5%). This suggests that pressure in the Eastern Cape is experienced not only through workload volume, but through a sense of instability and reactivity in the way administrative demands are imposed.

A second striking feature is the clustering of several factors at exactly 72.9%: overwhelming support documentation, unclear guidance, length of departmental meetings, and timing of circulars release. This suggests that pressure in the Eastern Cape is spread across several interacting dimensions rather than concentrated in one single type of complaint. By contrast, system and portal issues (35.6%) are relatively less prominent than in some of the other provinces, suggesting that digital or technical systems may be less central to the pressure profile here than broader communication and management process issues.

Overall, the Eastern Cape appears to reflect a pressure environment shaped strongly by short notice, reactive changes, and unclear or poorly timed communication, with principals often operating under conditions that make structured planning difficult.

Gauteng

This figure shows the pattern of factors contributing to administrative pressure among respondents in the Gauteng, ranked by the proportion selecting each factor.

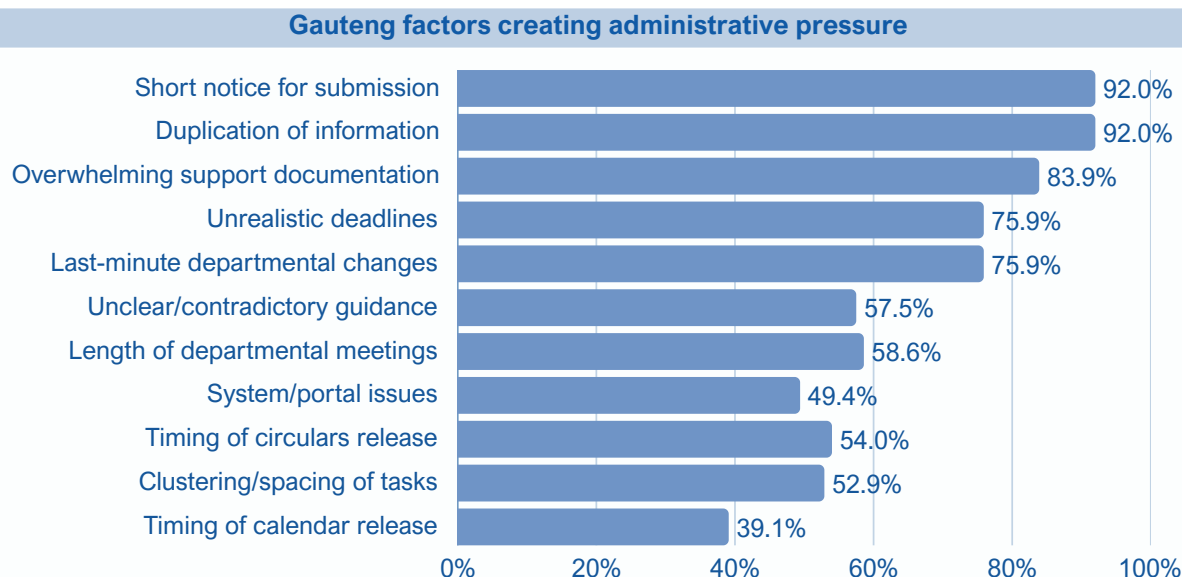


Figure D2: Factors creating administrative pressure in the Gauteng (ranked by percentage of respondents selecting each factor)

Gauteng shows a relatively balanced pressure profile in which the leading complaints align closely with the national picture. Short notice for submission and duplication of information are tied as the most commonly cited factors at 92.0%, followed by overwhelming support documentation required (83.9%). This suggests that principals in Gauteng experience the burden most strongly through the structure and repetition of tasks, rather than through one highly distinctive provincial issue.

The second-tier factors are more evenly distributed than in the Eastern Cape or KwaZulu-Natal. Length of departmental meetings (58.6%), unclear guidance (57.5%), timing of circulars release (54.0%), and clustering of tasks over the school year (52.9%) all affect around half of respondents. This suggests that the Gauteng pressure profile is broad-based but somewhat less sharply concentrated than in some of the other provinces. System and portal issues (49.4%) are also present, though not as dominant as in KwaZulu-Natal or the Western Cape.

Overall, Gauteng appears to show a pressure pattern driven mainly by duplication, documentation, short notice, and deadline pressure, with a secondary layer of more moderate timing and process concerns. The burden is therefore substantial, but somewhat more evenly spread across factors.

KwaZulu-Natal

The figure that follows shows the pattern of factors contributing to administrative pressure among respondents in the KwaZulu-Natal, ranked by the proportion selecting each factor.

KwaZulu-Natal shows the most intense and concentrated pressure profile among the four provinces, although the smaller sample size should be borne in mind. The province stands out not only for short notice for submission (100.0%), but also for the breadth of factors clustering at high levels. Four separate factors; overwhelming support documentation, unrealistic deadlines, unclear or contradictory guidance, and timing of circulars release, all stand at 84.2%. This suggests that pressure in KwaZulu-Natal is being experienced through a combination of volume, timing, communication quality, and documentation burden, rather than through one dominant issue alone.

KwaZulu-Natal factors creating administrative pressure

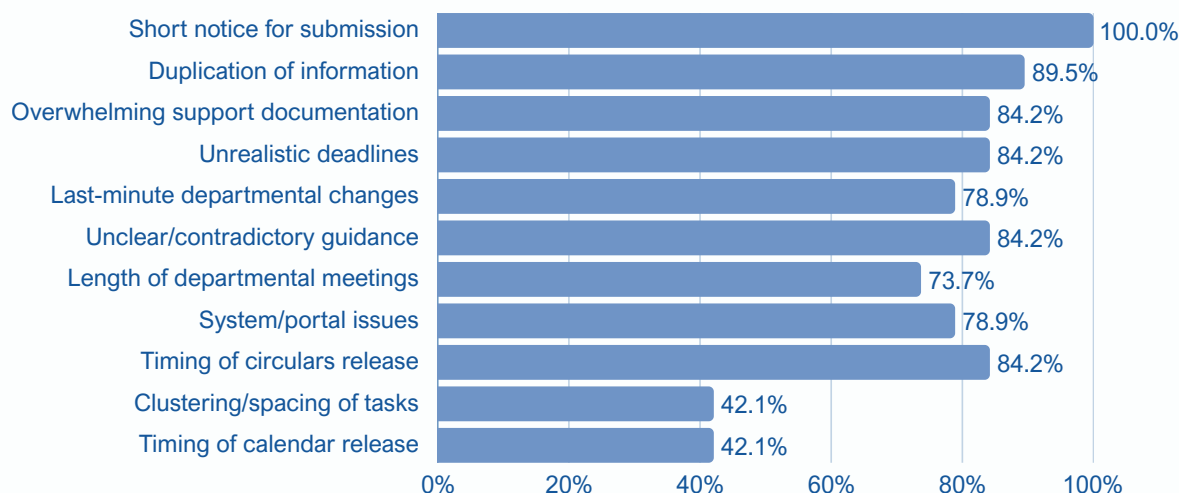


Figure D3: Factors creating administrative pressure in the KwaZulu-Natal (ranked by percentage of respondents selecting each factor)

Particularly notable is the prominence of system and portal issues (78.9%), which is the highest among the four provinces. This suggests that digital or administrative systems intended to support the work may themselves be a major source of frustration and pressure. The high level of length of departmental meetings (73.7%) also points to time being absorbed not only by tasks and submissions, but by extended process requirements surrounding them. Taken together, the pattern suggests a province where principals are managing a highly pressurised administrative environment shaped by poor timing, unclear guidance, systems difficulty, and procedural overload.

Overall, KwaZulu-Natal appears to show the heaviest and most multi-dimensional pressure profile, with many of the second-tier factors nationally becoming top-tier concerns in the provincial picture.

Western Cape

This figure shows the pattern of factors contributing to administrative pressure among respondents in the Western Cape, ranked by the proportion selecting each factor.

Western Cape factors creating administrative pressure

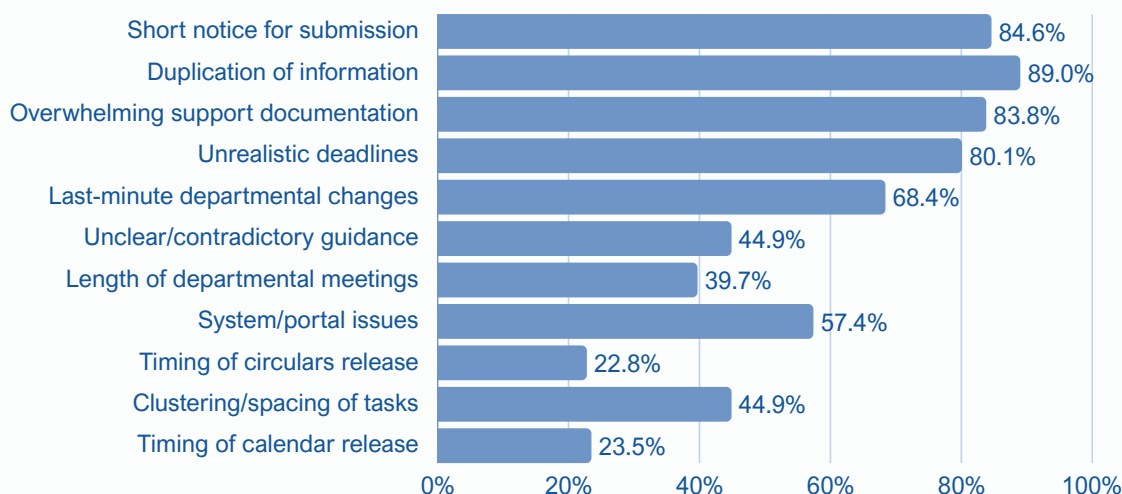


Figure D4: Factors creating administrative pressure in the Western Cape (ranked by percentage of respondents selecting each factor)



The Western Cape shows a somewhat more concentrated pressure profile than the Eastern Cape or KwaZulu-Natal. The dominant concerns are clearly duplication of information (89.0%), short notice for submission (84.6%), overwhelming support documentation (83.8%), and unrealistic deadlines (80.1%). This suggests that pressure in the Western Cape is driven most strongly by the volume, repetition, and documentary burden of administrative tasks, rather than by a broader set of timing and communication issues.

What distinguishes the Western Cape from the other provinces is the much lower prominence of some of the second-tier factors. Only 22.8% selected timing of circulars release, and only 23.5% selected timing of calendar release, far below the levels reported in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Length of departmental meetings (39.7%) is also notably lower than in those provinces. By contrast, system and portal issues (57.4%) are more prominent, suggesting that in the Western Cape the burden may be experienced less through late communication and more through the format, repetition, and digital administration of the tasks themselves.

Overall, the Western Cape appears to reflect a pressure environment in which the main frustrations are concentrated around duplication, documentation, deadlines, and systems, rather than around the timing of circulars and calendars.



D3. Summary of Provincial Pressure-Creating Factors

Taken together, the findings in this section suggest that the factors creating pressure are not random or isolated, but are strongly concentrated around a set of recurring administrative process problems. Nationally, the dominant issues are short notice, duplication of information, heavy documentation requirements, unrealistic deadlines, and last-minute changes, all of which point to a burden that is shaped not only by the quantity of tasks, but by the way in which those tasks are organised and communicated. This indicates that the pressure principals experience is, to a large extent, structurally produced.

The provincial analysis shows that this broad pattern is shared, but with different emphases. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal show especially strong concern around timing, communication, and reactive change, while the Western Cape shows a more concentrated pattern centred on duplication, documentation, deadlines, and systems. Gauteng reflects a more even spread across the main factors, closely aligned to the national picture. Across all four provinces, however, the data points to a common underlying problem: principals are operating in administrative environments that are often poorly timed, repetitious, compliance-heavy, and difficult to plan around.

A key implication of these findings is that the administrative burden cannot be reduced only by asking schools to “cope better” or by placing greater emphasis on school-level capacity. The patterns suggest that meaningful relief will require changes in departmental process, including better notice periods, reduced duplication, clearer guidance, more realistic deadlines, and better coordination of submissions and support requirements. In this sense, the factors creating pressure are not simply features of workload but they are indicators of how the administrative system itself is functioning.



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Section E

OVERALL PATTERNS, SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING



E1: Change in Administrative Load Over Time

This section examines how respondents perceive the trend of the administrative load over the past five years, providing an indication of whether principals experience the burden as increasing, stable, or decreasing over time. The analysis begins with the national pattern and then compares the four main provinces included in the provincial analysis.

National trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

Response to Trend	Responses	% of respondents
Much higher	212	70.0%
Higher	69	23.0%
About the same	13	4.0%
Lower	2	1.0%
Not applicable (was not in the role then)	9	3.0%

Table E1: National trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

The national pattern is unequivocal. More than two-thirds of respondents (69.5%) reported that the administrative load is now much higher than it was five years ago, and a further 22.6% reported that it is higher.

Taken together, this means that 92.1% of respondents perceive the administrative burden to have increased over time. Only 4.3% reported that it is about the same, while virtually no respondents (0.7%) indicated that it is lower. This is a strong finding, as it suggests that the increase in administrative load is not being experienced as a marginal or isolated shift, but as a broad-based and substantial trend across the system.

Provincial comparison of the trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

Province	n	Much higher	Higher	About the same	Lower	Not applicable
Eastern Cape	59	61.0%	32.0%	7.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Gauteng	87	72.0%	23.0%	3.0%	0.0%	1.0%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	68.0%	26.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Western Cape	134	72.0%	18.0%	4.0%	1.0%	5.0%

Table E2: Provincial comparison of the trend of administrative load over the past 5 years (not applicable indicates that they were not in the role 5 years ago and therefore cannot comment)

The provincial pattern broadly mirrors the national picture, with very high proportions in all four provinces reporting that the administrative load is either much higher or higher than five years ago. The strongest “much higher” response appears in Gauteng (72.4%) and the Western Cape (72.1%), followed closely by KwaZulu-Natal (68.4%), while the Eastern Cape is somewhat lower at 61.0%, but still clearly dominant.

When much higher and higher are combined, the proportions are strikingly high across all four provinces: 93.2% in the Eastern Cape, 95.4% in Gauteng, 94.7% in KwaZulu-Natal, and 89.7% in the Western Cape.

Provincial Comparison and significance

The significance of this pattern lies in its consistency. Although there are some small provincial differences in the balance between much higher and higher, all four provinces show overwhelming agreement that administrative load has increased over time. The fact that the Western Cape and Gauteng have the highest proportions in the much higher category suggests a particularly intense perception of escalation in those provinces, while the Eastern Cape shows a slightly greater tendency to select higher rather than much higher.

Even so, the overall message is the same across provinces: principals do not regard the administrative burden as stable or improving, but as having intensified markedly over the past five years.

Eastern Cape Responses

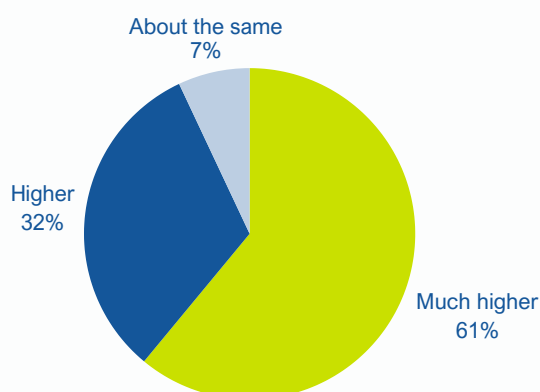


Figure E1: Eastern Cape trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

Gauteng Responses

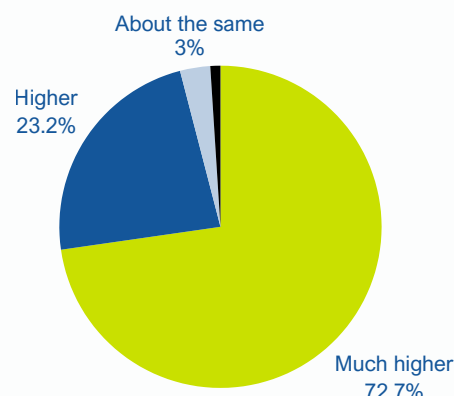


Figure E2: Gauteng trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

KwaZulu-Natal Responses

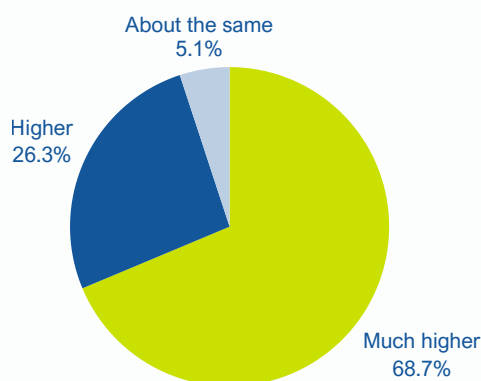


Figure E3: KwaZulu-Natal trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

Western Cape Responses

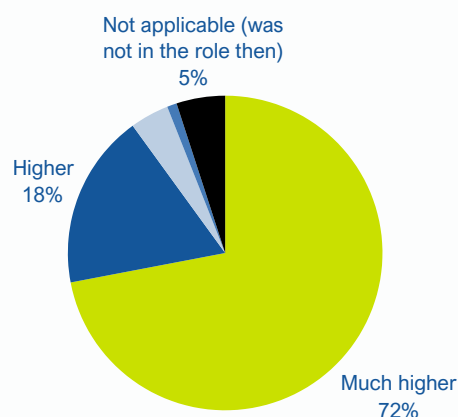


Figure E4: Western Cape trend of administrative load over the past 5 years

The data shows a near-universal perception that the administrative load carried by principals has increased significantly over the past five years. This is not a marginal trend, but a strong and widely shared view across all four provinces, suggesting that principals are experiencing a sustained escalation in administrative burden over time.



E2. Impact on Ability to Perform Core Duties

This section examines the extent to which administrative demands affect principals' ability to perform their core duties and role. It therefore moves beyond the question of workload volume and focuses on whether the burden is interfering with the central leadership and management responsibilities of the principalship.

National impact of administrative demands on core duties and role as principal

Response to Trend	Responses	% of respondents
Severe (substantially prevents)	52	17%
High (often prevents/reduces)	165	54%
Moderate (regularly constrains)	77	25%
Small (noticed but manageable)	10	3%
No impact	1	0%

Table E3: National trend of impact of administrative demands on core duties

The national data suggests that administrative demands are having a substantial effect on principals' core work. More than half of respondents (54.1%) reported a high impact, indicating that administrative demands often prevent or reduce their ability to perform their core role. A further 17.0% reported a severe impact, meaning that for nearly one in five respondents the administrative burden is substantially preventing them from carrying out their duties effectively.

When high and severe are combined, the proportion rises to 71.1%, indicating that for the majority of principals, administrative demands are interfering significantly with their core professional responsibilities. Only 3.3% reported a small impact, and just 0.3% reported no impact at all.

Provincial comparison of the impact of administrative demands on core duties

Province	n	Severe (substantially prevents)	High (often prevents/reduces)	Moderate (regularly constrains)	Small (noticed but manageable)	No impact
Eastern Cape	59	10%	49%	34%	7%	0%
Gauteng	87	20%	49%	28%	3%	0%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	11%	58%	26%	5%	0%
Western Cape	134	20%	58%	20%	1%	1%

Table E4: Provincial comparison of the impact of administrative demands on core duties

All four provinces show strong evidence that administrative demands are affecting principals' core duties. The combined high + severe impact is highest in the Western Cape (78.0%), followed by Gauteng (68.9%), KwaZulu-Natal (68.4%), and the Eastern Cape (59.4%). The Western Cape stands out not only for its high combined burden, but also for the fact that 58.1% selected high and 19.9% selected severe, indicating a particularly strong concentration of serious impact. Gauteng shows a very similar pattern in the severe category (19.5%), though a slightly lower overall combined figure.

By contrast, the Eastern Cape shows a larger share in the moderate category (33.9%), suggesting that although the burden remains serious, respondents there are somewhat more likely to describe it as regularly constraining rather than severely preventing their work.

Provincial Comparison and significance

The provincial differences are meaningful because they suggest variation in intensity rather than in the existence of the problem. All four provinces show that administrative demands are interfering substantially with principals' core work, but the burden appears especially acute in the Western Cape, where more than three-quarters report a high or severe effect.

This is significant because it indicates that the issue is not only one of increased workload, but one of direct impact on leadership, management, and the ability of principals to focus on their central duties. In other words, administrative demands are not simply consuming time; they are displacing the core work of the principalship.

Eastern Cape Responses

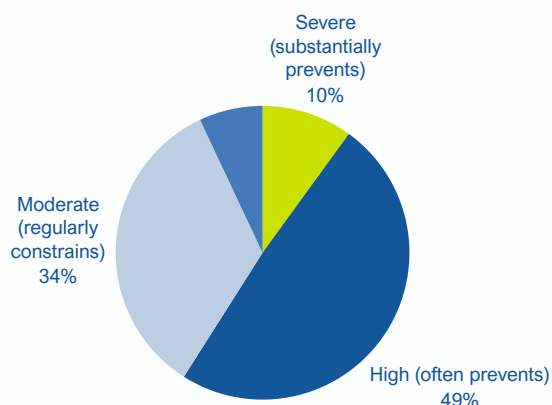


Figure E5: Eastern Cape trend of impact of administrative demands on core duties

Gauteng Responses

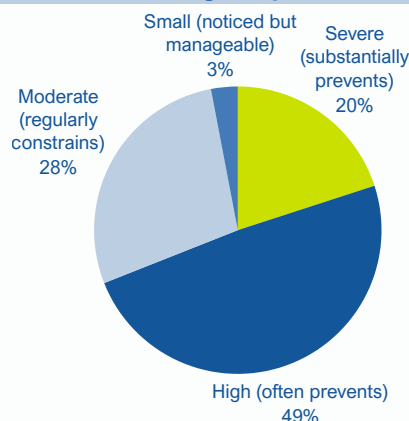


Figure E6: Gauteng trend of impact of administrative demands on core duties

KwaZulu-Natal Responses

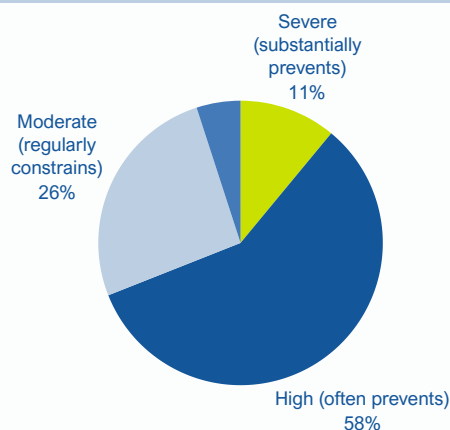


Figure E7: KwaZulu-Natal trend of impact of administrative demands on core duties

Western Cape Responses

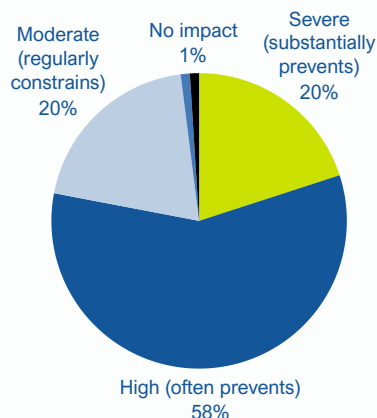


Figure E8: Western Cape trend of impact of administrative demands on core duties

The findings show that administrative demands are affecting not only how much principals work, but how effectively they are able to perform their core role. Across all four provinces, the burden is substantial, and in the Western Cape particularly, it appears to be directly undermining principals' ability to carry out the central duties of school leadership and management.

Principals are appointed to lead teaching, learning, and school culture. When seven in ten say that administrative compliance often or substantially prevents them from doing their job, the administrative system has become the obstacle it was presumably designed to support.



E3. Contribution to Thoughts About Leaving

This section examines the extent to which administrative demands contribute to principals' thoughts about leaving the position. It provides an important indicator of how workload pressure may be affecting not only current role performance, but also the sustainability and attractiveness of the principalship itself.

National contribution to thoughts about leaving the principalship

Response to Trend	Responses	% of respondents
Severe (substantially prevents)	52	17%
High (often prevents/reduces)	165	54%
Moderate (regularly constrains)	77	25%
Small (noticed but manageable)	10	3%
No impact	1	0%

Table E5: National trend of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

The national findings suggest that administrative demands are making a substantial contribution to thoughts about leaving the principalship. The largest single category is to a large extent (35.4%), followed by to a very large extent (23.3%). Combined, this means that 58.7% of respondents indicated that administrative demands contribute to such thoughts to a large or very large extent.

A further 23.0% reported a moderate contribution, while only 11.5% selected to a small extent and 6.9% indicated not at all. These figures suggest that administrative burden is not only a current operational problem, but is also influencing how principals think about the longer-term sustainability of remaining in the role.

Provincial comparison of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

Province	n	Severe (substantially prevents)	High (often prevents/reduces)	Moderate (regularly constrains)	Small (noticed but manageable)	No impact
Eastern Cape	59	10%	49%	34%	7%	0%
Gauteng	87	20%	49%	28%	3%	0%
KwaZulu-Natal	19	11%	58%	26%	5%	0%
Western Cape	134	20%	58%	20%	1%	1%

Table E6: Provincial comparison of the trend of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

All four provinces show that administrative demands are contributing meaningfully to thoughts about leaving the role. The strongest combined large + very large extent response appears in the Western Cape (62.5%), followed by Gauteng (57.5%), KwaZulu-Natal (52.7%), and the Eastern Cape (52.5%).

The Western Cape is again the most pronounced, with 40.4% selecting to a large extent and 22.1% selecting to a very large extent. Gauteng shows the highest provincial percentage in the very large extent category (27.6%), suggesting particularly intense pressure for a sizeable portion of respondents there.

The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal show slightly lower combined figures, but still indicate that more than half of respondents in each province associate administrative demands with thoughts of leaving the principalship.

Provincial Comparison and significance

The provincial comparison is significant because it suggests that administrative burden is not only affecting current workload and role performance, but may also be influencing retention and role sustainability. The strongest pattern in the Western Cape is particularly important, given that it mirrors the province's stronger burden levels in some of the earlier indicators. Gauteng also stands out because of its high very large extent response.

Together, these findings suggest that administrative demands are contributing not merely to frustration, but to deeper questions about whether remaining in the role is viable. This raises an important strategic concern for the system: if administrative burden is linked to thoughts about leaving the principalship, then it may have implications for leadership stability and future recruitment.

Eastern Cape Responses

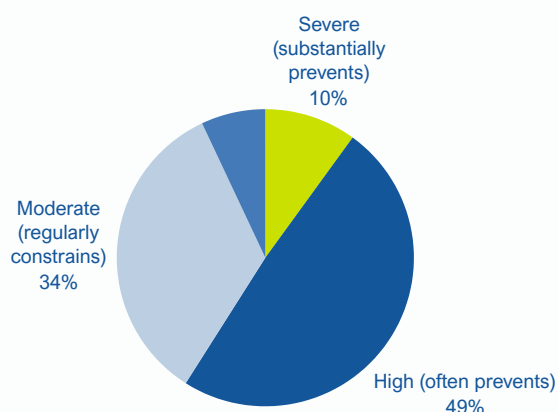


Figure E9: Eastern Cape trend of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

Gauteng Responses

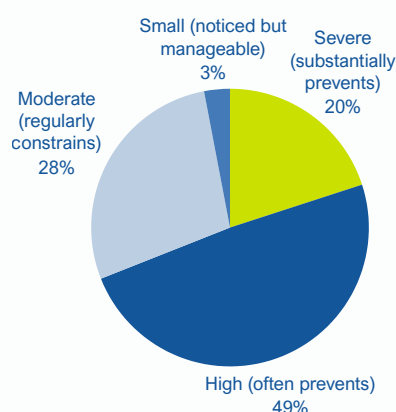


Figure E10: Gauteng trend of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

KwaZulu-Natal Responses

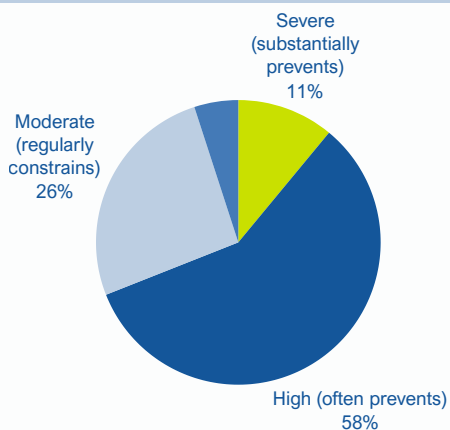


Figure E11: KwaZulu-Natal trend of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

Western Cape Responses

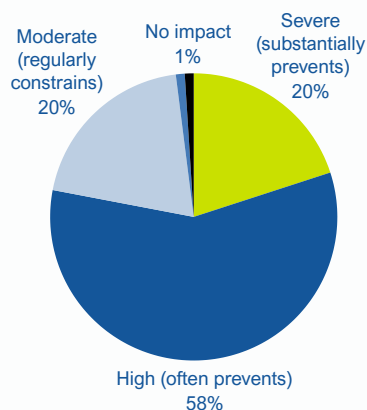


Figure E12: Western Cape trend of impact on thoughts about leaving the principalship

The provincial comparison is significant because it suggests that administrative burden is not only affecting current workload and role performance, but may also be influencing retention and role sustainability. The strongest pattern in the Western Cape is particularly important, given that it mirrors the province's stronger burden levels in some of the earlier indicators. Gauteng also stands out because of its high very large extent response.

Together, these findings suggest that administrative demands are contributing not merely to frustration, but to deeper questions about whether remaining in the role is viable. This raises an important strategic concern for the system: if administrative burden is linked to thoughts about leaving the principalship, then it may have implications for leadership stability and future recruitment.

E4. Impact of Findings of Support and Well-being

Taken together, the findings present a clear and deeply concerning picture of the current administrative burden carried by public school principals. Across all four provinces, respondents overwhelmingly report that the administrative load has increased over the past five years, with the large majority indicating that it is now either higher or much higher than before. This increase is not experienced as a marginal shift, but as a substantial escalation in the volume, intensity, and disruption of administrative work.

The data further shows that this burden is not confined to background compliance tasks, but is directly affecting principals' ability to perform their core role. In all four provinces, most respondents report that administrative demands have a high or severe impact on their core duties, meaning that the burden is regularly constraining, reducing, or even substantially preventing effective school leadership and management. This suggests that the issue is no longer simply one of workload accumulation, but of the displacement of the principal's central professional function.

One of the most concerning findings in the survey is the extent to which administrative demands are contributing to thoughts about leaving the principalship. Nationally, 35.4% of respondents indicated that administrative demands contribute to such thoughts to a large extent, while a further 23.3% reported that they contribute to a very large extent.

Combined, this means that 58.7% of principals associate administrative overload with thoughts of leaving the role to a large or very large extent. A further 23.0% reported that it contributes to a moderate extent, while only 6.9% indicated not at all. This points to a serious risk for leadership sustainability. If administrative burden is contributing materially to thoughts of leaving among such a large proportion of principals, then the issue extends well beyond workload pressure and into the territory of retention and system stability.

The provincial analysis reinforces this interpretation. While there is some variation in intensity, the overall direction of the findings is highly consistent across the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Western Cape. In Gauteng and the Western Cape, the perception that the administrative load is much higher than five years ago is especially strong.

The Western Cape also stands out for the particularly high proportion reporting a high or severe impact on core duties, while both the Western Cape and Gauteng show strong patterns in relation to thoughts about leaving the role. KwaZulu-Natal similarly reflects a heavy administrative burden, while the Eastern Cape, though slightly less severe on some indicators, still shows overwhelming evidence of significant pressure. The consistency of the findings across provinces indicates that the burden is systemic rather than localised.

Overall, the evidence paints a picture of a principalship under sustained strain. Administrative work is widely perceived to be increasing, it is interfering materially with principals' core leadership and management responsibilities, and it is contributing to thoughts about leaving the role. This suggests that administrative overload should not be understood merely as an operational inconvenience or an issue of individual coping, but as a structural challenge with implications for leadership effectiveness, role sustainability, and the long-term stability of school leadership.

The findings therefore point to an urgent need for education departments to review the volume, timing, duplication, and design of administrative demands placed on schools, and to consider reforms that protect principals' capacity to lead.

E5. Qualitative Theme Analysis

Three open-ended questions invited principals to share their ideas for reducing administrative pressure. A total of 263 principals provided substantive answers to the first question, 257 to the second, and 171 to the third. Responses were categorised thematically, and the key themes are summarised below. Note: Responses were often multi-layered and could be coded into more than one category. Percentages therefore reflect the proportion of valid qualitative responses mentioning a theme, rather than exclusive categories.

Question 1

Q1: If you could implement one administrative change to reduce pressure, which would you prioritise?

The ten themes provide a sound and credible summary of the first qualitative question. They reflect the most common ideas raised by respondents and align strongly with the broader survey findings. In particular, the dominant qualitative themes therefore reducing duplication, improving support, simplifying Building Blocks/SIM/SIP/SSE, improving digital systems, and allowing more realistic planning and match the strongest pressure points identified in the quantitative sections. This strengthens the reliability of the interpretation, as the open-ended comments do not contradict the quantitative data; rather, they help explain it in more specific and practical terms.

Categorised National Responses to Question 1	Mentions	% of respondents
Reduce duplication / streamline processes	54	20.5%
Greater district/department support	52	19.8%
Remove or simplify Building Blocks / SIM / SIP / SSE	46	17.5%
Better / unified digital systems	38	14.4%
Realistic deadlines and advance planning	31	11.8%
Reduce number and length of meetings	26	9.9%
Reduce CEMIS / data capture burden	21	8.0%
Reduce circulars and paperwork	19	7.2%
Appoint dedicated admin support staff	15	5.7%
Financial admin support	12	4.6%

Table E7: Summary of the responses to Q1 in categories (themes)

Categorised Provincial Responses to Question 1	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape
Reduce duplication / streamline processes	10	16	0	41
Greater district/department support	12	7	4	8
Remove or simplify Building Blocks / SIM / SIP / SSE	7	2	0	21
Better / unified digital systems	8	5	9	20
Realistic deadlines and advance planning	5	15	2	10
Reduce number and length of meetings	3	14	3	6
Reduce CEMIS / data capture burden	8	2	2	31
Reduce circulars and paperwork	8	11	1	12
Appoint dedicated admin support staff	0	4	0	2
Financial admin support	1	7	0	5

Table E8: Summary of the responses to Q1 in categories for each Province (themes)

The table suggests that the Western Cape contributes the largest number of coded mentions in several of the process-heavy themes, especially Reduce duplication / streamline processes, Remove or simplify Building Blocks / SIM / SIP / SSE, and Reduce CEMIS / data capture burden. The Eastern Cape shows relatively stronger emphasis on Greater district/department support, while Gauteng stands out more clearly on Realistic deadlines and advance planning, Reduce number and length of meetings, and Financial admin support. KwaZulu-Natal, although based on a much smaller number of valid responses, shows a particularly strong concentration around Better / unified digital systems and Greater district/department support, suggesting that systems and support issues may be especially salient there.

Analysis per Theme of Question 1 Responses

Theme 1: Reduce duplication / streamline processes

54
Mentions

20.5%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- "Take away all duplication of work."
- "Not having to duplicate information annually, but to improve and add on to what is already at the school and on the department's system."
- "Duplication of information and micromanagement."
- "Stop duplicating matters."

This is one of the clearest and most consistent themes in the responses. Principals repeatedly refer to having to provide the same information multiple times, often in different formats and to different recipients. The comments suggest that the issue is not only administrative volume, but also the lack of integration and trust across departmental processes. This category is therefore well founded and should remain one of the lead themes in the analysis.

Theme 2: Greater district/department support

52
Mentions

19.8%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- "The Department defining their role as supportive and limiting significant overlap in information demands."
- "Improve the filing system of the district offices so that principals are not requested to submit duplicate copies of documents they already submitted."
- "Delegation, more accountability from senior management."
- "I would advise the District not to take Principal's out of their schools on such a frequent basis for meetings that are of no value."

This category is appropriate, although it captures both practical support and a broader desire for a more supportive administrative culture. Respondents are not only asking for help, but also for a change in the way districts and departments engage with schools. The theme therefore reflects both a structural and relational concern, which is important in understanding the nature of the burden.

Theme 3: Remove or simplify Building Blocks / SIM / SIP / SSE

46
Mentions

17.5%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- "Building blocks and SFG functionality tools to be scrapped."
- "SIP, building blocks, etc twice a year instead of termly."
- "Clear calendar dates at the beginning of the year, no short notice of meetings, constant change in building blocks and expectations."
- "COMPLETE BUILDING BLOCKS AND SGB FUNCTIONALITY TOOL ONLINE VIA CEMIS... REMOVE SIM EVERY QUARTER – REPETITIVE!"

This is a very clear and well-defined category. A substantial number of principals refer directly to Building Blocks, SIM, SIP, SSE, or functionality tools, often naming them as specific priorities for reduction or redesign. This makes the theme analytically strong, as it is both frequent and highly concrete. It also gives a practical policy target for intervention.

Theme 4: Better / unified digital systems

38
Mentions

14.4%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Support for digital submissions. More efficient flow of information could result in lower admin loads for everyone.”
- “To reduce the immense pressure on school leaders, I would choose the integration and digitisation of reporting systems into a single, automated national portal.”
- “Less hard copy paper work and more efficient e-files and computer, email acceptance.”
- “SSE, SIM, AAPR, APIP, Building blocks and FT should be one logic and easy interactive document that pulls through with data where components ‘talk to each other’.”

This category works well and captures an important forward-looking strand in the responses. Many principals do not simply ask for less administration, but for smarter administration, especially through integrated or automated systems. This theme also overlaps meaningfully with the duplication theme, which is analytically useful rather than problematic, since principals often present digitisation as a solution to duplication.

Theme 5: Realistic deadlines and advance planning

31
Mentions

11.8%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Realistic deadlines; proper planning w.r.t training and meetings.”
- “Stick to realistic deadlines.”
- “Timeous release of meetings and circulars which will allow for better planning.”
- “Meetings for principals available termly in advance so we can plan around them.”

This category clearly reflects a recurring concern about the timing and sequencing of demands. The responses show that principals are not only objecting to the amount of work, but also to the way it is scheduled and communicated. This strongly supports the related quantitative findings on short notice, unrealistic deadlines, and last-minute changes.

Theme 6: Reduce number and length of meetings

26
Mentions

9.9%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Online meeting instead of being called away for hours at a time.”
- “I would advise the District not to take Principal's out of their schools on such a frequent basis for meetings that are of no value.”
- “LESS MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTS TO FILL IN.”
- “Meetings for principals available termly in advance so we can plan around them.”

This category is well supported by the data. Respondents often refer to both the frequency and the time cost of meetings, especially where these remove principals from their schools. The theme also links clearly to quantitative concerns about the length of departmental meetings and broader timing pressures.

Theme 7: Reduce CEMIS / data capture burden

21
Mentions

8.0%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Reduce duplication, specially when the data is already on CEMIS and can be pulled by reports at Head Office.”
- “Dept officials can take data from SASAMS and not repeatedly ask for it in different formats.”
- “Some of the information that is required from time to time is available on SASAMS but it appears that not all departments have access to the information.”
- “Not duplicating managerial records, information, data, etc that are available on the CEMIS platform.”

This is a valid category, although it overlaps with both duplication and digital systems. The distinction is still useful, however, because it highlights frustration with data capture and retrieval systems specifically, rather than with digital systems in general. It may therefore be worth keeping as a sub-theme or stand-alone theme, depending on how much detail you want in the report.

Theme 8: Reduce circulars and paperwork

19
Mentions

7.2%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Too many... unnecessary request[s] from the department including repetition of submissions of documents already sent.”
- “Less hard copy paper work and more efficient e-files and computer, email acceptance.”
- “I don't mind doing the admin but it wastes time going to other schools to submit documents.”
- “I would reduce the requirements for SIM, BB, SGB FT... so repetitive and unnecessary.”

This category is also well grounded, though it overlaps with duplication and systems issues. Its value lies in drawing attention to the very practical burden of paper-based administration, circulated requests, and physical document handling. It adds texture to the broader duplication theme by showing how that duplication is often experienced.

Theme 9: Appoint dedicated admin support staff

15
Mentions

5.7%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Appoint a dedicated person to deal with admissions and speak to parents.”
- “Getting more staff or substitute educators.”
- “Appoint a person just to do the admin.”
- “The shortage of state-funded staff... our SMT are in classes full time as a result, with virtually 0% time for administration during a school day.”

This category is clearly present in the responses and is analytically important because it shifts the focus from process reform to staffing capacity. Although it is less frequently mentioned than duplication or support, it points to a more structural remedy and aligns with the survey's wider concern about capacity fit.

Theme 10: Financial admin support

12
Mentions

4.6%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “More financial support. Pressure to open Grade R but funding is not available.”
- “As a medium-sized primary school, the ratio of PS staff to the school roll is unbalanced... 1 Finance and 1 Secretarial is insufficient.”
- “RELOOK AT AA STAFF ESTABLISHMENT... BETTER FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS.”
- “Audits from district that are forced upon them from head office.”

This category appears less frequently, but it is coherent and worth retaining because it reflects a specific administrative pressure point linked to financial staffing, audit processes, and funding constraints. It may not be one of the dominant qualitative themes, but it is distinct enough to be analytically meaningful.

Summary of Responses from Question 1 (open-ended questions)

The first qualitative question is dominated by calls to reduce duplication, streamline processes, improve departmental and district support, and simplify the most burdensome compliance tools, especially Building Blocks/SIM/SIP/SSE. A second cluster of responses focuses on the way administrative tasks are organised, with repeated calls for better planning, more realistic deadlines, fewer meetings, and better digital systems. Smaller but still important themes relate to CEMIS/data capture, paperwork, and the need for dedicated administrative support staff or stronger financial administrative support.

The responses are therefore not random complaints, but form a coherent pattern that points to a system experienced as duplicative, compliance-heavy, poorly coordinated, and insufficiently supportive. The categories you have used reflect this pattern well. The only adjustment I would suggest is that, in your write-up, you explicitly acknowledge that some themes overlap, especially where principals see digitisation, data integration, and duplication reduction as parts of the same solution.

Question 1 Link to Quantitative Data

The qualitative responses strongly support the quantitative data and help explain why certain factors emerge so prominently in the survey. Quantitatively, principals identified short notice for submission (90.8%), duplication of information (89.8%), overwhelming support documentation (82.0%), unrealistic deadlines (79.7%), and last-minute departmental changes (76.1%) as the main drivers of pressure.

The open-ended responses mirror this almost exactly. Principals repeatedly call for the removal of duplication, more realistic planning and deadlines, fewer meetings, better digital integration, and simplification of Building Blocks and similar tools. In this sense, the qualitative data does not simply add anecdotal colour; it confirms and deepens the quantitative findings by showing that principals experience the burden as rooted not only in the amount of administration, but in the way administrative demands are structured, repeated, timed, and communicated. The qualitative evidence therefore strengthens the conclusion that the problem lies substantially in departmental processes and system design, rather than only in school-level capacity.

Question 2

Q2. Is there anything that you can think of that your Circuit/District/Head Office can do/change that would significantly reduce the administrative pressure?

The responses to the second qualitative question can also be grouped into a coherent set of recurring themes. Overall, the comments focus less on what schools themselves should change and more on what district and head office structures could do differently. The strongest patterns relate to better planning and communication, reducing paperwork and duplication, improving digital systems, reducing meetings, and providing more practical support. As with the first question, responses were often multi-layered and could reasonably be coded into more than one category.

Note: Responses could be coded into multiple categories. Percentages are therefore based on the proportion of valid qualitative responses mentioning a theme, rather than on mutually exclusive categories.

Categorised National Responses to Question 2	Mentions	% of respondents
Better planning / realistic deadlines / timeous communication	54	21.1%
Reduce paperwork / compliance / forms / metrics	42	16.4%
Better digital systems / online systems	40	15.6%
Reduce meetings / training time	38	14.8%
Reduce duplication / use existing data	37	14.5%
Greater district / head office support and responsiveness	36	14.1%
More staff / delegated admin capacity	25	9.8%
Financial / admissions specific support	4	1.6%

Table E9: Summary of the responses to Q2 in categories

Provincial Analysis per Theme of Question 2 Responses

The provincial pattern shows both common concerns and some distinct emphases. The Western Cape contributes the largest number of mentions across several of the main themes, especially greater district/head office support, better planning, and better digital systems.

Categorised Provincial Responses to Question 2	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape
Better planning / realistic deadlines / timeous communication	10	17	4	18
Reduce paperwork / compliance / forms / metrics	4	12	3	16
Better digital systems / online systems	7	7	7	18
Reduce meetings / training time	7	16	2	12
Reduce duplication / use existing data	4	13	2	15
Greater district / head office support and responsiveness	10	10	3	20
More staff / delegated admin capacity	6	8	1	14
Financial / admissions specific support	0	3	0	1

Table E10: Summary of the number of responses to Q2 in categories for each Province

Gauteng stands out more clearly on reducing meetings and reducing duplication/use of existing data. The Eastern Cape shows relatively stronger emphasis on greater support and better planning, while KwaZulu-Natal, despite the small number of responses, stands out very clearly on better digital systems, where more than half of the valid responses in that province refer to this theme. Overall, the provincial pattern suggests that while the burden is widely shared, principals in different provinces place slightly different emphasis on where district and head office action is most urgently needed.

Analysis per Theme of Question 2 Responses

Theme 1: Better planning / realistic deadlines / timeous communication

54
Mentions

21.1%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Earlier notification of deadlines as everything is received ‘last minute’.”
- “Provide a calendar for the whole year when certain paperwork should be completed.”
- “Use better ways to get information to principals and be quicker with communication.”
- “Timeous release of meetings and circulars which will allow for better planning.”

This is the strongest theme in the responses and clearly reflects frustration with the timing and communication of administrative demands. Principals repeatedly refer to the need for advance notice, realistic planning, and more predictable information flow. The category is therefore strong and well supported by the data.

Theme 2: Reduce paperwork / compliance / forms / metrics

42
Mentions

16.4%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Less paperwork and duplication.”
- “Reduce the number of metrics... We are filling in compliance forms for the sake of compliance.”
- “Yes - plan better and ensure that documents for submission are of value.”
- “Focus on education not paper.”

This category is well grounded in the responses and captures a widespread sense that too much of the burden lies in forms, paperwork, and compliance requirements that are seen as excessive or of limited value. The comments often suggest that principals experience administration as becoming detached from practical school improvement.

Theme 3: Better digital systems / online systems

40
Mentions


15.6%
% of Responses
Examples from the survey

- “Improve digital systems.”
- “Online admission system that works for all schools.”
- “Timeous responses on queries, electronic copies of forms, streamlining of processes.”
- “Get their systems to talk to each other to avoid duplication.”

This is a clear and important theme. Many principals are not only calling for less administration, but for better-designed and better-integrated systems. The responses suggest that digital systems are seen as a potential solution, but only if they genuinely reduce duplication and are functional, unified, and easy to use.

Theme 4: Reduce meetings / training time

38
Mentions


14.8%
% of Responses
Examples from the survey

- “Reduce unnecessary long meetings, better communication and timely information.”
- “The amount of insignificant meetings just for them to tick a box...”
- “More online meetings.”
- “TIMEOUS DATES / SHORTER MEETINGS.”

This category is well supported and reflects concern not only about the number of meetings, but about the time they consume and the extent to which they remove principals from their schools. The responses suggest that meetings are often experienced as an added layer of pressure rather than a form of support.

Theme 5: Reduce duplication / use existing data

37
Mentions


14.5%
% of Responses
Examples from the survey

- “CM to use DDD or centralised system for information, rather than asking for same things using a range of different reporting tools.”
- “Information is available on SASAMS/Dashboard, yet schools are asked to provide it.”
- “GDE to use SASAMS to extract info rather than expecting us to do it.”
- “Once information has been uploaded to CEMIS or any other platform, we should not have to report on it again.”

This theme is very strong and closely aligned to one of the main quantitative findings. Principals repeatedly indicate that the problem is not only collecting information, but resubmitting information that already exists in departmental systems. This category therefore captures one of the clearest practical frustrations in the survey.

Theme 6: Greater district / head office support and responsiveness

36
Mentions


14.1%
% of Responses
Examples from the survey

- “Create more support for administrative tasks to assist schools rather than demand.”
- “Their response times to queries and task delivery is exceptionally poor.”
- “Everyone at circuit to speak to each other. Request and instructions from different people on the same issue but instructions differ.”
- “Staff answering telephone calls should be adequately trained and competent to provide clear, accurate...”

This is an important category because it reflects not only a desire for more assistance, but for more coherent, responsive, and coordinated support from district and head office. Respondents often describe district processes as fragmented, slow, or poorly coordinated, which adds to the pressure they experience.

Theme 7: More staff / delegated admin capacity**25**
Mentions**9.8%**
% of Responses**Examples from the survey**

- “Appoint more district staff to support administrative duties.”
- “See that every school gets a Deputy Principal and Departmental Heads, irrespective of numbers.”
- “Remove the need for principals to teach in a classroom and let them be full managers...”
- “The shortage of state-funded staff... our SMT are in classes full time as a result.”

This category is clearly present in the responses and points to a structural concern about staffing capacity and role overload. Although not as dominant as planning or duplication, it is analytically important because it suggests that some respondents see the solution not only in changing processes, but in expanding the human capacity available to manage them.

Theme 8: Financial / admissions specific support**4**
Mentions**1.6%**
% of Responses**Examples from the survey**

- “Help with the government gazette and formula on exemptions... Financial support.”
- “Online admission system that works for all schools.”
- “No Fee schools’ main struggles are finances and discipline issues. More support is needed.”
- “Appoint a dedicated person to deal with admissions and speak to parents.”

This is a much smaller theme, but it is distinct enough to retain. It captures specific requests linked to financial administration and admissions systems, which for some principals appear as particularly difficult areas requiring targeted intervention.

Summary of Responses from Question 2 (open-ended questions)

The second qualitative question is dominated by calls for better planning, earlier communication, more realistic deadlines, less paperwork, fewer meetings, and better-integrated digital systems. A second cluster of responses focuses on the need for districts and head office to make better use of existing data systems, reduce duplication, and provide more coherent and practical support. A smaller but still important group of responses points to the need for more staffing capacity and more targeted support in areas such as finance and admissions.

Taken together, the responses suggest that principals do not see the solution simply as “less work,” but as better-designed, better-coordinated, and better-supported administration. The comments therefore present a picture of an administrative system that is experienced as reactive, repetitive, poorly integrated, and often insufficiently supportive.

Question 2 Link to Quantitative Data

The qualitative responses to this question strongly support the quantitative findings on the factors creating pressure. Quantitatively, the most commonly cited pressure factors were short notice for submission (90.8%), duplication of information (89.8%), overwhelming support documentation (82.0%), unrealistic deadlines (79.7%), and last-minute departmental changes (76.1%). The open-ended responses mirror these findings closely.

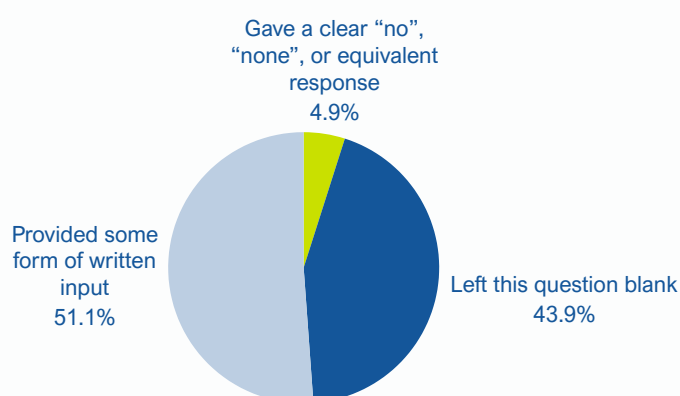
Principals repeatedly ask for better planning, earlier notice, reduced duplication, fewer meetings, better use of existing data, and improved digital systems. In this way, the qualitative responses deepen the quantitative analysis by showing that the burden is experienced not only as a problem of volume, but as a problem of timing, coordination, repetition, and weak administrative design. The qualitative evidence therefore strengthens the conclusion that much of the pressure is being generated by the way district and departmental systems operate, rather than by school-level inefficiency alone.

Question 2

Q3: Any other comments, concerns or clarification?

Of the 305 total survey respondents, 134 left this question blank, 15 gave a clear “no”, “none”, or equivalent response, and 156 provided some form of written input. A small number of these were acknowledgements or very brief remarks, but the great majority contained substantive comments, concerns, or clarifications. The analysis below therefore focuses on the 156 usable written responses.

Initial response profile



Note: Responses could be coded into multiple categories. Percentages are therefore based on the proportion of substantive qualitative responses mentioning a theme, rather than on mutually exclusive categories.

Figure E13: Initial responses to Q3: Any other comments, concerns or clarification

The third qualitative question functions somewhat differently from the first two. Rather than asking respondents for one specific change or for one targeted district/head office intervention, it invited broader reflections, concerns, and clarifications. As a result, the responses are more varied and sometimes more personal in tone. Even so, they can still be grouped into a coherent set of themes.

Broadly, the comments fall into eight main categories: impact on core duties and teaching and learning, staffing/resources/admin support, planning and communication, administrative overload and duplication, district/department support, meetings and training disruption, burnout and retention concerns, and digital systems/data management.

Categorised National Responses to Question 3	Mentions	% of respondents
Impact on core duties / teaching and learning	49	31.4%
More staffing / admin support / resources	44	28.2%
Better planning / communication / coordination / realistic timing	38	24.4%
Reduce admin / compliance / duplication / paperwork	36	23.1%
Greater district / department support and responsiveness	29	18.6%
Reduce meetings / workshops / training disruptions	28	17.9%
Burnout / retention / morale / unattractive role	21	13.5%
Better digital systems / use existing data / online submissions	15	9.6%

Table E11: Summary of the responses to Q3 in categories

Provincial Analysis per Theme of Question 3 Responses

Categorised Provincial Responses to Question 3	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Western Cape
Impact on core duties / teaching and learning	11	11	2	25
More staffing / admin support / resources	13	8	0	23
Better planning / communication / coordination / realistic timing	7	11	3	16
Reduce admin / compliance / duplication / paperwork	2	12	3	18
Greater district / department support and responsiveness	7	6	2	14
Reduce meetings / workshops / training disruptions	5	5	2	16
Burnout / retention / morale / unattractive role	8	5	0	7
Better digital systems / use existing data / online submissions	2	3	2	8

Table E12: Summary of the responses to Q3 in categories for each Province

The provincial pattern suggests both shared and distinctive emphases. The Western Cape contributes the largest number of mentions across several themes, particularly impact on core duties, staffing/resources, reduce admin/compliance, and meetings/training disruption. The Eastern Cape shows relatively stronger emphasis on staffing/resources, burnout/retention, and district support, suggesting a more people- and support-oriented concern profile.

Gauteng stands out more clearly on reduce admin/compliance and planning/communication, while KwaZulu-Natal, although based on a very small number of substantive responses, shows relatively strong concentration around planning/communication, reduce admin/compliance, and digital systems. Overall, the provincial pattern suggests that while the burden is widely shared, principals in different provinces place slightly different emphasis on its consequences and on what sits at the centre of their concern.

Analysis per Theme of Question 2 Responses

Theme 1: Impact on core duties / teaching and learning

49
Mentions

31.4%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “ANY PRINCIPAL SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME MANAGING HIS/HER SCHOOL ... CURRENTLY IT IS THE OTHER WAY AROUND.”
- “Paper work keeps principals from performing their core duties. They should be in touch with learners and staff.”
- “The contact time a principal has for SMT, curriculum monitoring, classroom visits and contact with learners has been greatly reduced.”
- “The job is definitely becoming more about compliance than monitoring and guiding teaching and learning.”

This is the strongest theme in the third question and confirms that many principals experience administrative burden not simply as extra work, but as something that displaces the central work of school leadership. The comments repeatedly refer to reduced time for curriculum leadership, learner contact, staff support, and strategic management. This is a strong and well-defined category and links directly to the quantitative finding that administrative demands are having a high or severe impact on core duties.

Theme 2: More staffing / admin support / resources

44
Mentions

28.2%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Smaller schools have less staff ... in the end you are involved in every aspect of the admin.”
- “The reduction in PS staff makes the completion of tasks that much more difficult.”
- “Shortage of Staff (Admin Teaching and Support Staff).”
- “I am grateful to have a number of admin support staff. I do not know how someone runs a school effectively without them.”

This category is clearly present and analytically important. It shows that many principals interpret the burden not only as a problem of process, but as a problem of insufficient human capacity. The comments refer to shortages of admin, teaching, and support staff, as well as the difficulty of managing complex schools with limited delegation options. This theme is particularly valuable because it complements the formal capacity fit analysis elsewhere in the report.

Theme 3: Better planning / communication / coordination / realistic timing

38
Mentions

24.4%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “Being called out of school with no prior planning put in place.”
- “Little or no planning from DBE, HO and district with regards to dates, timelines, exam dates ...”
- “Communication needs to be done sooner. Schools plan in term 4 for the following year.”
- “WhatsApp is social media. Email is for professional communication. End all official communication over WhatsApp with urgency.”

This is a strong and coherent theme. Respondents repeatedly highlight the effect of late communication, poor coordination, last-minute changes, and inappropriate communication channels on their ability to plan and manage effectively. This aligns closely with the quantitative factors creating pressure, especially short notice, unrealistic deadlines, and last-minute departmental changes.

Theme 4: Reduce admin / compliance / duplication / paperwork

36
Mentions

23.1%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “The abuse of principals needs to stop, supporting documents are insane ...”
- “Building blocks and SGB functionality is too much admin work and repetition.”
- “The endless administrative tick boxing has to end.”
- “Many reports/templates are too cumbersome. E.g. SSE (28 pages), AAPR (37 pages).”

This category is very well supported and reinforces one of the strongest findings from the earlier qualitative and quantitative sections. Principals repeatedly refer to repetition, cumbersome templates, tick-box compliance, and a burden of supporting documents that appears excessive and misaligned with school priorities. The theme is therefore both frequent and highly concrete.

Theme 5: Greater district / department support and responsiveness

29
Mentions

18.6%
% of Responses

Examples from the survey

- “The department has to ensure that the principal is supported and capacitated ...”
- “We as principals feel abandoned by our employer.”
- “There is very little or no support from the Circuit Manager and the Dept in general.”
- “Principals need more support from the Department.”

This category reflects a repeated concern that district and departmental structures are not functioning as sufficiently supportive partners. The comments often go beyond practical assistance and suggest a deeper concern about responsiveness, acknowledgement, and professional respect. It is therefore an important relational as well as structural theme.

Theme 6: Reduce meetings / workshops / training disruptions**28**
Mentions**17.9%**
% of Responses**Examples from the survey**

- “Presentations are up to 165 slides ... Too many meetings.”
- “We have Principal meetings of well over four hours long.”
- “The amount of insignificant meetings just for them to tick a box ...”
- “The number of meetings and online sessions that principals are expected to attend have also increased drastically.”

This is a clear and recurring theme. Principals refer not only to the number of meetings and workshops, but also to their length, timing, and the extent to which they disrupt school functioning. The comments reinforce the survey’s broader finding that meetings are frequently experienced as a source of burden rather than support.

Theme 7: Burnout / retention / morale / unattractive role**21**
Mentions**13.5%**
% of Responses**Examples from the survey**

- “Until the last two years I’ve not thought of retirement much, but now retirement ... is significantly more appealing.”
- “The constant state of management by crisis is leading to high levels of burnout.”
- “I am tired and I am resigning – this is not worth it.”
- “I don’t know how much longer I can cope with the demands of being a Principal.”

This is one of the most serious themes in the third question. Although it is less frequent than some of the more practical categories, it is highly significant because it shows the human and professional consequences of the burden. The comments point to exhaustion, declining morale, early retirement, and resignation, and provide powerful qualitative support for the quantitative finding that administrative demands contribute to thoughts of leaving the principalship.

Theme 8: Better digital systems / use existing data / online submissions**15**
Mentions**9.6%**
% of Responses**Examples from the survey**

- “It is time we move into the digital era and less paperwork.”
- “Use technology and platforms; implement electronic platforms to manage information and tasks more efficiently.”
- “Once information has been uploaded to CEMIS ... we should not have to report on it again.”
- “Digital submissions are the way to go.”

Although this is a smaller theme than in Question 1 or 2, it remains an important strand in the comments. Principals continue to identify digitisation, data integration, and electronic submissions as practical ways of reducing burden, especially duplication and paper-heavy processes. The category is therefore worth retaining, even if it is not among the top three themes in this question.

Summary of Responses from Question 3 (open-ended questions)

The third qualitative question broadens the picture provided by the earlier open-ended responses. While Questions 1 and 2 focus more directly on what should change, this question reveals how principals are experiencing the burden more deeply and more personally. The strongest themes are not only about reducing paperwork and improving systems, but about the effect of administrative demands on core duties, teaching and learning, staffing strain, and the wider sustainability of the role.

What is especially striking is that many respondents use this final question to explain that administrative work is no longer simply excessive; it is now competing directly with the central purpose of the school and, for some, making the role of principal increasingly unattractive or unsustainable. The categories used here therefore capture both the practical and human dimensions of the responses.



Question 3 Link to Quantitative Data

The comments in this final qualitative question strongly reinforce the quantitative findings from the survey. Quantitatively, respondents reported that the administrative load has become higher or much higher over the past five years, that it has a high or severe impact on their core duties, and that it contributes significantly to thoughts about leaving the principalship. The qualitative responses support this directly.

Principals repeatedly describe losing time for leadership, teaching and learning, curriculum oversight, learner engagement, and staff support. They also refer to exhaustion, burnout, resignation, and early retirement. In this sense, the open-ended comments do not simply echo earlier complaints about paperwork and duplication; they show the consequences of that burden. The qualitative evidence therefore strengthens the conclusion that administrative overload is not only an operational issue, but one that affects leadership effectiveness, morale, and the longer-term sustainability of school leadership.



National Survey Report 2026:
Administrative Load of Public School Principals

Section F

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



The Core Problem



Administrative Overload as a Systemic Problem

This survey provides a strong and coherent evidence base showing that the administrative load carried by public school principals is not only heavy, but increasingly unsustainable. Across the national sample, and consistently across the four main provinces included in the provincial analysis, principals describe an environment in which administrative work has expanded, intensified, and increasingly displaced the core work of school leadership. The findings show that this is not a marginal or isolated issue. It is systemic, deeply embedded, and affecting principals across school contexts, including primary and secondary schools, different school sizes, and all quintile groupings represented in the survey.



After-Hours Work as a Normalised Part of the Principalship

At the broadest level, the data shows that administrative overload has become normalised within the principalship. Nationally, 83.9% of respondents reported that they are required to do administrative work after-hours often or very often, and 40.3% reported spending more than 9 hours per week on after-hours administration. This means that for a substantial proportion of principals, administration is not contained within the formal school day but extends significantly into evenings and weekends. The burden is therefore not simply one of inconvenience; it is one of time displacement on a weekly and continuing basis.



A Burden That Is Increasing Over Time

The data also shows that this burden is worsening. Nationally, 69.5% of respondents reported that the administrative load is much higher than it was five years ago, while a further 22.6% reported that it is higher, meaning that 92.1% of respondents perceive a clear increase over time. Only 0.7% reported that it is lower, and only 4.3% said it is about the same. This is a very strong finding. It indicates that principals are not merely describing a longstanding challenge, but a burden that is actively intensifying.



The Impact on Core Leadership and Management Duties

A central finding of the survey is that this administrative load is now materially affecting the core duties of principals. Nationally, 54.1% reported that administrative demands have a high impact on their role, while 17.0% reported a severe impact. Combined, this means that 71.1% of respondents say that administrative demands are having a high or severe effect on their ability to perform their core duties. The significance of this is profound. The issue is no longer only that principals are busy; it is that administrative compliance is displacing the central work of leadership, including instructional oversight, staff support, learner engagement, planning, monitoring, and the broader management of the school.



Administrative Burden and the Sustainability of the Principalship

Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicate that administrative demands contribute "to a large extent" or "to a very large extent" towards thoughts about leaving the principalship. This represents a significant retention crisis.



Management and Accountability Tools are the biggest drivers.

One of the most serious findings in the survey is the extent to which administrative demands are contributing to thoughts about leaving the principalship. Nationally, 35.4% of respondents indicated that administrative demands contribute to such thoughts to a large extent, while 23.3% reported that they contribute to a very large extent. Combined, this means that 58.7% of respondents associate administrative overload with thoughts of leaving the role to a large or very large extent. A further 23.0% indicated that it contributes to a moderate extent. Only 6.9% reported not at all. This points to a serious risk for leadership sustainability. The administrative burden is not merely making the role harder; it appears to be undermining its long-term viability for many principals.

This report has been compiled by Alexandra Pinnock for the **Governing Body Foundation (GBF)** from survey responses submitted by participating principals. Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the data analysis and interpretation are accurate and fairly presented. The findings reflect the views and experiences of survey respondents only and should not be read as representing all principals, schools, or provinces. This report is intended for research, advocacy, and policy-engagement purposes and does not constitute a formal audit, legal opinion, or definitive institutional finding.



Key Findings

1. The Highest-Burden Administrative Functions

The detailed function analysis shows that the heaviest burdens are concentrated in a group of compliance-driven and management-heavy functions. The most pressured function overall is Management and Accountability Tools (SIM, SIP, SSE), with a time demand mean of 4.27, a pressure mean of 4.32, and 83.6% of principals rating both time demand and pressure as high or very high. This is followed by Financial Administration (4.20 time demand; 4.27 pressure) and Management Compliance Reporting (4.16 time demand; 4.21 pressure). Learner Admissions also stands out with a pressure mean of 4.23, suggesting that it is experienced as especially pressurised even where the time demand is slightly lower than some other functions. These findings are significant because the highest-burden areas are not peripheral tasks; they are functions that sit at the centre of accountability, compliance, finance, reporting, and system control.

2. Capacity Shortfall and the Limits of Existing Support

The capacity analysis strengthens this picture further. Several of the highest-burden functions are also those in which principals report the weakest capacity fit. Nationally, the highest shortfall is found in Management and Accountability Tools (47.0%), followed by Curriculum Administration (45.5%), Admin/Compliance Requests (45.5%), Governance Compliance Reporting (45.4%), Management Compliance Reporting (45.4%), and Human Resource Administration (45.2%). This means that the functions experienced as most demanding are also often those where principals feel least adequately supported. The issue is therefore not simply workload volume, but workload volume under conditions of insufficient administrative capacity.

3. The Main Factors Driving Administrative Pressure

The pressure-factor analysis shows clearly what is driving this burden. The strongest national pressure factors are short notice for submission (90.8%), duplication of information (89.8%), overwhelming support documentation required (82.0%), unrealistic deadlines (79.7%), and last-minute departmental changes (76.1%). These are particularly important findings because they point not only to the amount of administration, but to the way it is designed and imposed. The burden is being amplified by poor notice, repeated requests for the same information, excessive documentary requirements, unrealistic timing, and reactive changes. In other words, much of the pressure lies not at school level, but in departmental process and system design.

4. Qualitative Responses and the Human Experience of the Burden

The qualitative responses support and deepen these quantitative findings. Principals repeatedly call for the reduction of duplication, greater support from district and head office, the removal or simplification of Building Blocks, SIM, SIP, and SSE, better digital systems, more realistic deadlines, and fewer meetings. In the third qualitative question, respondents go further and describe the consequences of the burden: reduced time for teaching and learning, inability to focus on core duties, lack of staffing support, burnout, and the growing unattractiveness of the role. These comments are highly consistent with the statistical findings and reinforce the conclusion that the burden is being experienced as both practical overload and professional erosion.

5. Burden Across School Contexts

An important strength of the survey is that it shows this problem is not confined to one type of school. Although Quintile 5 schools make up the largest share of the sample, they still report very high burden levels, including high after-hours work and substantial capacity shortfall in several functions. Similarly, the burden is visible across school sizes and types, although certain subgroup patterns are also important. Secondary schools repeatedly show some of the strongest burden and capacity-shortfall patterns. Mid-sized schools often emerge as especially vulnerable in relation to capacity fit. This suggests that the problem is both system-wide and context-sensitive: the burden is broadly shared, but takes different forms and intensities in different school contexts.

6. Provincial Patterns Within a National Problem

The provincial findings reinforce the same conclusion. While the burden is clearly national in nature, there are differences in emphasis across provinces. Among respondents, the Eastern Cape stands out for short notice and last-minute departmental changes, suggesting a burden shaped strongly by planning and timing failure. Gauteng stands out for the intensity of after-hours burden and the particular prominence of Learner Admissions, suggesting strain associated with scale, enrolment pressure, and large-school complexity. KwaZulu-Natal shows the most extreme after-hours profile and very high concern around unclear guidance, circular timing, and system issues, suggesting a burden shaped by communication breakdown and systems friction. The Western Cape stands out for particularly high shortfall in governance and management compliance functions, strong concern about duplication, and the strongest link between administrative burden, core role impact, and thoughts about leaving the principalship. These provincial differences are important, but they do not weaken the overall conclusion; rather, they show that a common national problem is being experienced through somewhat different provincial administrative environments.



Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations

Taken together, the findings point to a principalship under sustained strain. Administrative work is widely experienced as increasing, deeply embedded in after-hours work, highly disruptive to core leadership functions, and materially linked to thoughts about leaving the role. The survey therefore suggests that administrative overload should not be understood merely as a background management issue. It is a structural challenge with implications for leadership effectiveness, school functioning, principal wellbeing, retention, and the longer-term stability of school leadership in the system.

The findings also point clearly towards where intervention is most needed. The strongest evidence supports action in the following areas:

-  **Eliminate duplication**
reduce duplication by eliminating repeated requests for the same information across systems and units
-  **Review and simplify compliance tools**
review and simplify major compliance tools, especially those that combine high time demand, high pressure, and weak perceived capacity fit
-  **Establish minimum notice periods**
improve notice periods and planning, including minimum lead times for submissions and meetings
-  **Coordinate the administrative calendar**
coordinate the administrative calendar more effectively to avoid clustering and last-minute overload
-  **Invest in unified digital systems**
improve digital systems so that they reduce rather than reproduce duplication and friction
-  **Strengthen school-level administrative support**
strengthen school-level administrative support, particularly where principals are expected to carry complex compliance and management functions alongside their core leadership work

Recommendations for Education Departments

The findings suggest that the greatest leverage for reducing administrative pressure lies at system level and fall within the control of provincial and national education departments. This means that meaningful improvement will require changes not only in school practice, but in the way administrative demands are designed, communicated, timed, and monitored.

Recommended action points:

-  **Create a 'capture once, use many times' data principle**
Reduce duplication by using existing provincial systems and school-held data before asking schools to resubmit the same information in different formats.
 -  **Rationalise compliance tools and evidence requirements**
Review management, governance and accountability tools together and eliminate overlap, especially where multiple files or tools request substantially the same evidence.
 -  **Introduce stronger notice and calendar discipline**
Publish annual calendars earlier, minimise late circulars and last-minute meetings, and enforce realistic submission windows.
 -  **Shift from blanket compliance to risk-based accountability**
Where schools are stable and high-performing, reduce routine reporting intensity and focus oversight on areas of genuine risk or underperformance.
 -  **Strengthen administrative support capacity at school level**
Publish annual calendars earlier, minimise late circulars and last-minute meetings, and enforce realistic submission windows.
 -  **Reduce meeting load and make better use of digital channels**
Use shorter online meetings where possible, keep training targeted, and avoid repeated daytime pull-outs that interrupt the running of schools.
 -  **Target support, communication and messaging to be focussed and effective**
Review frequency, length, and necessity of district and departmental communication, meetings and training, with a stronger preference for shorter, well-planned, and, where appropriate, virtual formats.
-  **Reduce pressure without weakening accountability.**

Recommendations for School Management and School-Level Leadership

Although the survey clearly shows that much of the burden is structurally generated, there are still school-level practices that may help reduce avoidable pressure, improve internal coordination, and protect leadership time. These actions should not be seen as substitutes for system reform, but as practical measures that may help principals and school management teams manage the burden more effectively while broader advocacy continues.

Recommended action points:

- * Review the internal distribution of administrative responsibilities across the school management team so that routine burdens are delegated appropriately where possible.
- * Strengthen administrative planning at school level, including internal calendars, submission trackers, and clear responsibility allocation for recurring tasks.
- * Keep a central record of repeated information requests, especially where the same information is submitted multiple times, so that duplication can be identified and raised with the relevant authorities.
- * Use existing school data systems more strategically to reduce repeated manual recapture of information and to prepare standard reporting templates where possible.
- * Protect core leadership time deliberately, including scheduling time for curriculum leadership, staff support, learner engagement, and strategic management that is not easily overtaken by administrative flow.
- * Monitor the after-hours burden within the school leadership team, and where it becomes excessive, raise this as an organisational and governance concern rather than treating it as normal practice.
- * Use governing body structures appropriately to support advocacy, especially where administrative overload is affecting school functioning, finances, admissions, or compliance obligations.
- * Identify areas where additional administrative or clerical support is most urgently needed and motivate clearly for these where staffing or funding opportunities arise.
- * Encourage consistent internal communication and document management practices, so that avoidable confusion, duplication, and unnecessary recirculation of documents within the school are reduced.

Recommendations for the Governing Body Foundation and Similar Associations

The survey findings place organisations such as the Governing Body Foundation in a strong position to act as evidence-based advocates. Their role is especially important in consolidating concerns, engaging departments constructively, supporting school leaders, and ensuring that administrative burden remains a visible governance and leadership issue rather than an individual coping problem.

Recommended action points:

ADVOCATE

- * Represent principal concerns clearly and consistently in public and stakeholder platforms.
- * Keep administrative burden visible as a governance and leadership issue.
- * Use the survey findings to strengthen the voice of principals and school communities.
- * Use the findings in structured engagement with provincial and national education departments

SUPPORT

- * Provide practical guidance to principals and governing bodies.
- * Create spaces for sharing challenges, strategies, and solutions.
- * Equip SGB and school leaders with tools for stronger local engagement and response.
- * Facilitate leadership forums, webinars, and discussion spaces and training.

CREATE

- * Create clear guidelines, standardised templates and resources to assist.
- * Develop practical resources that schools can use to reduce administrative overload.
- * Create follow-up tools to track administrative burden over time.

COLLABORATE

- * Work with similar associations and education partners to build a stronger shared voice.
- * Align messaging and recommendations across organisations where possible.
- * Strengthen collective engagement on school leadership and administrative reform.

Use provincial comparisons strategically, recognising that while the burden is systemic, different provinces show different signatures of pressure and may require more tailored engagement.



National Survey Report 2026:
Administrative Load of Public School Principals

Section G

ADDENDA

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Administrative load of Public School Principals

The GBF is conducting this survey following concerns expressed by **principals** that the administrative load placed on them (and the school as whole) is impacting on their ability to perform their roles effectively as leaders and managers of their schools.

It is interesting to note that the new National Minister's Advisory Council has placed a focus on the administrative load which schools carry.

The survey is anonymous. We are interested in the results of the survey and what they reveal at a national and provincial level. We aim to present the results of the survey to both provincial and national education departments.

We ask you kindly to give your considered thought to these questions. *We are interested in the pressure that **you** as a principal are under. Please answer the questions with this in mind.*

* Indicates required question

COMPLETION TIME

The questionnaire has FIVE short sections

- A) School Context (approximately 1 minute)
- B) Time Demand (Timing and After-hours) (approximately 1 minute)
- C) Administrative Demands by Function (approximately 6 minutes)
- D) Factors creating Pressure (approximately 1 minute)
- E) Overall Patterns/Support/Well-being (approximately 2 minutes)

It should not take more than 10 - 12 minutes to complete, and your responses will hopefully help streamline administrative demands.

SECTION A: SCHOOL CONTEXT

Please provide the basic context to support fair comparison across schools and provinces, by selecting the most applicable boxes.

1. Province *

 Dropdown

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Eastern Cape
- ☐ Free State
- ☐ Gauteng
- ☐ KwaZulu-Natal
- ☐ Limpopo
- ☐ Mpumalanga
- ☐ North West
- ☐ Northern Cape
- ☐ Western Cape

2. School type (*Tick more than one, if appropriate*)*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Pre-Primary
- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Combined
- ☐ LSEN

3. Quintile *

Dropdown

Mark only one oval.

☐ Quintile 1

☐ Quintile 2

☐ Quintile 3

☐ Quintile 4

☐ Quintile 5

4. Number of Learners*

Dropdown

Mark only one oval.

☐ less than 500

☐ 500 to 1000

☐ more than 1000

SECTION B: TIME DEMAND (TIMING AND AFTER HOURS)

Select the options that represent a typical pattern of when administrative activity typically peaks during the year and how often.

5. When does administration typically peak during the year? *(Tick all that apply)**
Check all that apply.

☐ Start of year

☐ End of Term

☐ Exam periods

☐ Financial year-end

☐ Random/unpredictable

6. How **often** are you required to do **administrative work after-hours** to keep up with the demand? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very Often

7. How many **after-hours (per week)** do you typically use to complete administrative work *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0 to 1 hour
- ☐ 2 to 4 hours
- ☐ 5 to 8 hours
- ☐ 9 to 12 hours
- ☐ more than 12 hours

SECTION C: ADMINISTRATIVE DEMANDS

Select the most appropriate option by:

1. Rating the **Time demand** (How much time it usually requires)
2. Rating the **Pressure** (How pressured you feel when doing it e.g. deadlines, complexity, consequences)
3. Rating your **Capacity fit** (How well your current people/time/resources match what is needed)

C1. LEARNER ADMISSIONS

ThenextthreequestionsrelateONLY to **Learner Admissions**

8. **TIME DEMAND: (LEARNER ADMISSIONS)***

How much time do you spend on Learner Admissions?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. **PRESSURE: (LEARNER ADMISSIONS)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Learner Admissions (e.g. deadlines, complexity, consequences)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. **CAPACITY FIT: (LEARNER ADMISSIONS)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Learner Admissions?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C2. CEMIS (SNAP, Annual Surveys)

The next three questions relate ONLY to **CEMIS**.

11. **TIME DEMAND: (CEMIS)***

How much time do you spend on **CEMIS** (SNAP, Annual Surveys)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. **PRESSURE: (CEMIS) ***

How pressured do you feel when doing **CEMIS** (SNAP, Annual Surveys)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. **CAPACITY FIT: (CEMIS)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for **CEMIS** (SNAP, Annual Surveys)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C3. CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION (monitoring, term performance, SBST admin, accommodations)

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Curriculum Administration** (e.g. monitoring, term performance, SBST, accommodations)

14. **TIME DEMAND: (CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION)***

How much time do you spend on Curriculum Administration (e.g. monitoring, term performance, SBST, accommodations)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. **PRESSURE: (CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Curriculum Administration (e.g. monitoring, term performance, SBST admin, accommodations)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. **CAPACITY FIT: (CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Curriculum Administration (e.g. monitoring, term performance, SBST admin, accommodations)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C4. LTSM (Learning and Teaching Support Material)

The next three questions relate ONLY to **LTSM**.

17. **TIME DEMAND: (LTSM)***

How much time do you spend on **LTSM**?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. **PRESSURE: (LTSM)***

How pressured do you feel when doing LTSM?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. **CAPACITY FIT: (LTSM)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for **LTSM**?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C5. MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Management and Accountability Tools** (e.g. SIM, SIP, SSE)

20. **TIME DEMAND: (MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS)***

How much time do you spend on Management and Accountability Tools (e.g. SIM, SIP, SSE)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. **PRESSURE: (MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Management and Accountability Tools (e.g. SIM, SIP, SSE)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. **CAPACITY FIT: (MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Management and Accountability Tools (e.g. SIM, SIP, SSE)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C6. MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE REPORTING

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Management Compliance Reporting** (e.g. Building Blocks).

23. **TIME DEMAND: (MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE REPORTING)***

How much time do you spend on Management Compliance Reporting (e.g. Building Blocks)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. **PRESSURE: (MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE REPORTING)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Management Compliance Reporting (e.g. Building Blocks)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. **CAPACITY FIT: (MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE REPORTING)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Management Compliance Reporting (e.g. Building Blocks)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C7. GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE REPORTING

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Governance Compliance Reporting** (e.g. SGB Functionality Tool).

26. **TIME DEMAND: (GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE REPORTING)***

How much time do you spend on Governance Compliance Reporting (e.g. SGB Functionality Tool)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

27. **PRESSURE: (GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE REPORTING)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Governance Compliance Reporting (e.g. SGB Functionality Tool)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. **CAPACITY FIT: (GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE REPORTING)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Governance Compliance Reporting (e.g. SGB Functionality Tool)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C8. HUMAN RESOURCE ADMINISTRATION

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Human Resource Administration** (leave, records, conversions, transfers, progressive discipline, recruitment and selection and appointments).

29. **TIME DEMAND: (HUMAN RESOURCE ADMINISTRATION)***

How much time do you spend on **Human Resource Administration** (leave, records, conversions, transfers, progressive discipline, recruitment and selection and appointments)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. **PRESSURE: (HUMAN RESOURCE ADMINISTRATION)***

How pressured do you feel when doing **Human Resource Administration** (leave, records, conversions, transfers, progressive discipline, recruitment and selection and appointments)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

31. **CAPACITY FIT: (HUMAN RESOURCE ADMINISTRATION)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for **Human Resource Administration** (leave, records, conversions, transfers, progressive discipline, recruitment and selection and appointments)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C9. STAFF EVALUATIONS AND APPRAISALS

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Staff Evaluations and Appraisals** (QMS, SPMDS).

32. **TIME DEMAND: (STAFF EVALUATIONS AND APPRAISALS)***

How much time do you spend on Staff Evaluations and Appraisals (QMS, SPMDS)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

33. **PRESSURE: (STAFF EVALUATIONS AND APPRAISALS)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Staff Evaluations and Appraisals (QMS, SPMDS)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

34. **CAPACITY FIT: (STAFF EVALUATIONS AND APPRAISALS)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Staff Evaluations and Appraisals (QMS, SPMDS)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C10. SAFETY AND SECURITY COMPLIANCE

The next four questions relate ONLY to **Safety and Security Compliance** (school safety, transport, outings, tours).

35. **TIME DEMAND: (SAFETY AND SECURITY COMPLIANCE)***

How much time do you spend on Safety and Security Compliance (school safety, transport, outings, tours)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

36. **PRESSURE: (SAFETY AND SECURITY COMPLIANCE)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Safety and Security Compliance (school safety, transport, outings, tours)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

37. **CAPACITY FIT: (SAFETY AND SECURITY COMPLIANCE)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Safety and Security Compliance (school safety, transport, outings, tours)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C11. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Financial Administration** (budget, audits, procurement, reports, exemptions, Gr R subsidy).

38. **TIME DEMAND: (FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION)***

How much time do you spend on Financial Administration (budget, audits, procurement, reports, exemptions, Gr R subsidy)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

39. **PRESSURE: (FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Financial Administration (budget, audits, procurement, reports, exemptions, Gr R subsidy)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

40. **CAPACITY FIT: (FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Financial Administration (budget, audits, procurement, reports, exemptions, Gr R subsidy)?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C12. INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE REPORTING

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting**.

41. **TIME DEMAND: (INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE REPORTING)***
How much time do you spend on Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

42. **PRESSURE: (INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE REPORTING)***
How pressured do you feel when doing Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

43. **CAPACITY FIT: (INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE REPORTING)***
How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Infrastructure and Maintenance Reporting?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C13. ADMIN/COMPLIANCE REQUESTS

The next three questions relate ONLY to **Admin/Compliance Requests** by District/Circuit Manager.

44. **TIME DEMAND: (ADMIN/COMPLIANCE REQUESTS)***

How much time do you spend on Admin/Compliance Requests by District/Circuit Manager?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Time demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

45. **PRESSURE: (ADMIN/COMPLIANCE REQUESTS)***

How pressured do you feel when doing Admin/Compliance Requests by District/Circuit Manager?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not applicable
Pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

46. **CAPACITY FIT: (ADMIN/COMPLIANCE REQUESTS)***

How well do your current people and resources match what is needed for Admin/Compliance Requests by District/Circuit Manager?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Far more than needed	More than needed	About right / Good fit	Less than needed	Far less than needed	Not applicable
Capacity Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: FACTORS CREATING PRESSURE

Select the factors that **create / add pressure**.

47. Which of these **create significant pressure** ? (tick all that apply)*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Short notice for submission
- ☐ Unrealistic deadlines
- ☐ Duplication of information
- ☐ Last-minute departmental changes
- ☐ Length of departmental meetings
- ☐ Clustering/spacing/spread of tasks over school year
- ☐ Timing of calendar release
- ☐ Timing of circulars release
- ☐ System/portal issues
- ☐ Unclear/contradictory guidance
- ☐ Overwhelming support documentation required

SECTION E: OVERALL PATTERNS, SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING

Please choose the option that most reflects your current situation and thoughts.

48. What is the trend of the Administrative load over the past 5 years till now?*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Much lower
- ☐ Lower
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Higher
- ☐ Much higher
- ☐ Not applicable (was not in the role then)

49. Indicate the extent to which administrative demands affect your ability to perform the core duties and role as a Principal. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ No impact
- ☐ Small (noticed but manageable)
- ☐ Moderate (regularly constrains)
- ☐ High (often prevents/reduces)
- ☐ Severe (substantially prevents)

50. To what extent do these administrative demands contribute towards thoughts you may have about leaving the position of principal? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a large extent
- ☐ To a very large extent

51. If you could implement one administrative change to reduce pressure, which would you prioritise and why?

52. Is there anything that you can think of that your Circuit/District/Head Office can do/change that would significantly reduce the administrative pressure?

53. Any other comments, concerns or clarification

THANK YOU

Thankyoufor completing the survey. Your input will guide GBF's engagement with provincial and national education departments to streamline administration and better support principals and schools.

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