

Refugee students from Ukraine in Polish schools.

What has changed in the 2024/2025 school year?

Data analysis report
Data for October 2024

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This publication was prepared by the Center for Citizenship Education in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



Definitions: student groups

Refugee students from Ukraine – children and adolescents from Ukraine attending Polish schools who came to Poland after 24 February 2022 as a result of the escalation of the war in Ukraine.

Migrant students from Ukraine – children and adolescents who arrived in Poland before the escalation of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Newly enrolled students from Ukraine – refugee students who joined the Polish education system for the first time in the school year 2024/25 and who interrupted their education in the Polish education system in previous school years (incl. kindergarten, primary, secondary school).

School-aged students/children in Poland – children and adolescents attending primary school and enrolled in secondary education, such as high schools, technical schools, or vocational schools, typically from 6 or 7 up to 19 years old.

Adult education learners – refugee students from Ukraine who study in various forms of adult education (primary, secondary & other), but due to different reasons interrupted their education in their youth and resumed it after reaching the age of 18.

Definitions: schools

Public and non-public primary schools and secondary schools: general secondary schools, technical, vocational schools and other types (mainly artistic ones).

Data sources

Ministry of National Education (MoE Poland)

- **Education Information System (SIO)** – number of refugee students from Ukraine in Polish schools and all students registered in Polish schools.
- **Data on the number of migrant and refugee-students from Ukraine newly enrolled** in Polish educational system.

Ministry of Digital Affairs – number of people granted the PESEL number with UKR status.

Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) – number of refugee children from Ukraine for whom the 800+ benefit was paid in 10.2024.

In October 2024, **195.3 thousand refugees from Ukraine** studying at various types of schools and kindergartens in Poland were registered in the Education Information System (SIO).

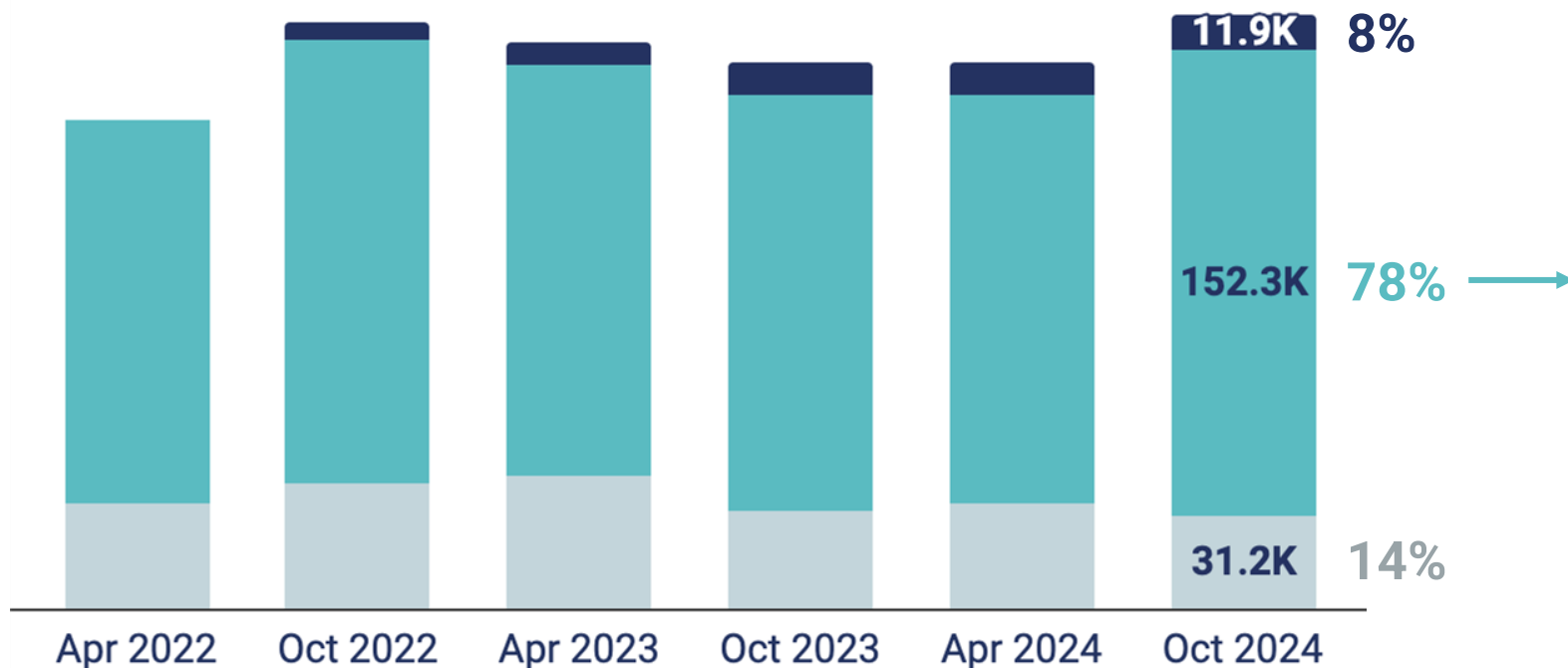
All students attending schools and kindergarten



This is the **highest number of refugee students** in the Polish educational system since the escalation of the war in Ukraine in February 2022.

Of this group (195.3k), at the beginning of 2024/25 school year, **152.3 thousands** were school-age children and adolescents.

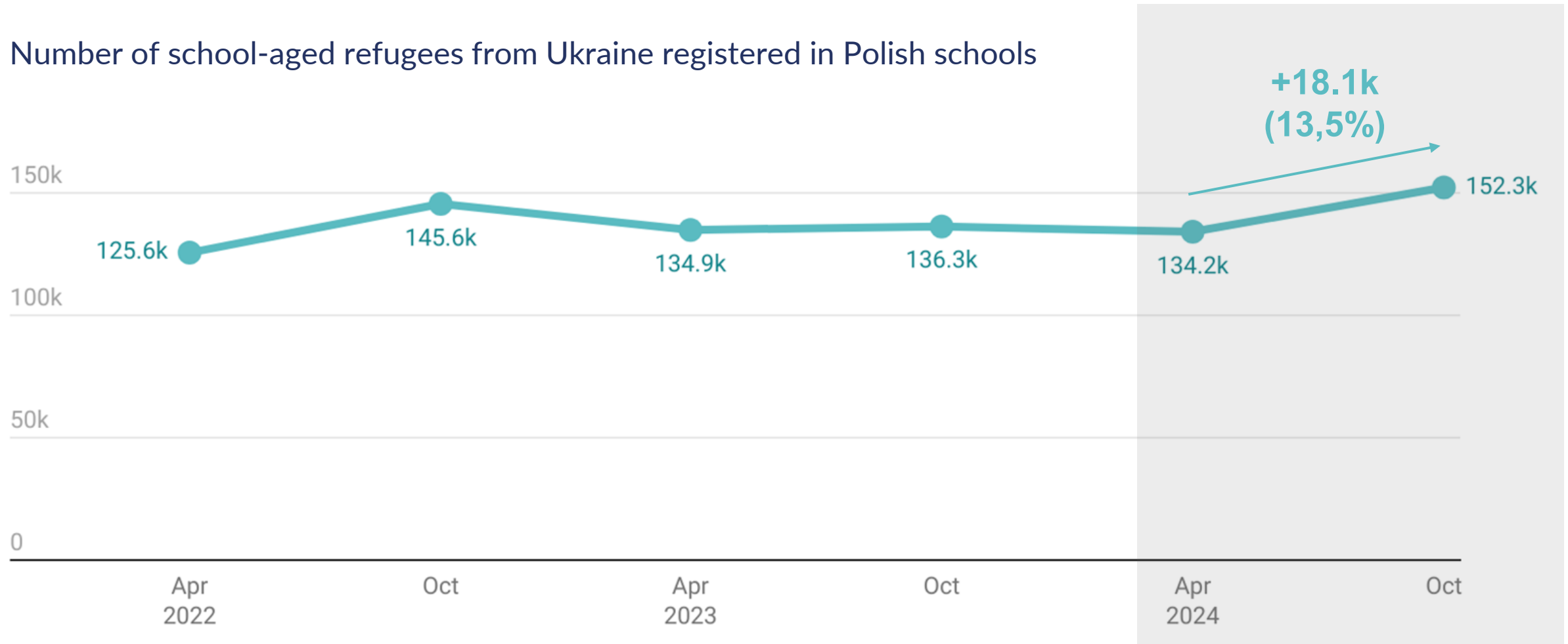
Preschoolers | **Students (children, adolescents)** | Adult education learners



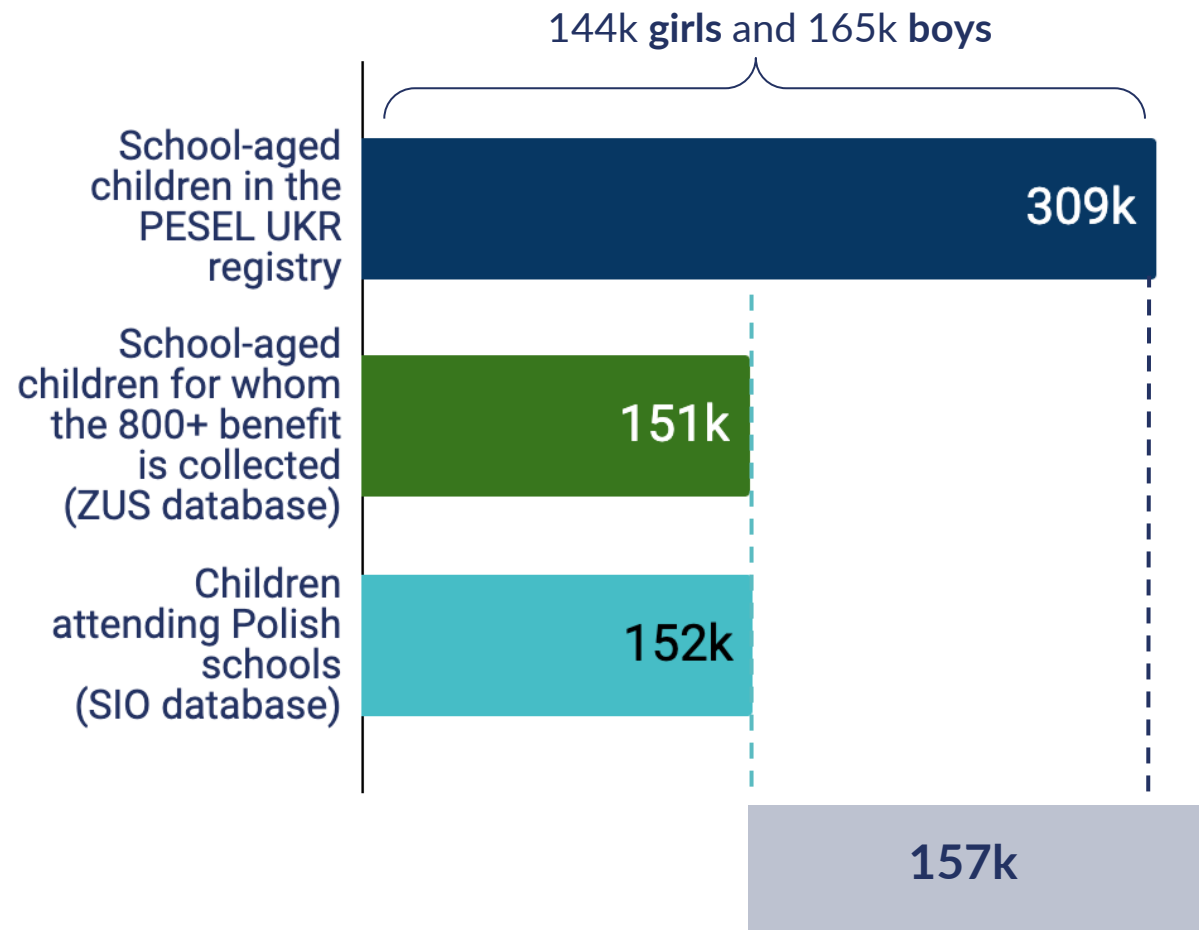
School-age children and adolescents from Ukraine account for 78% of all refugee students from Ukraine in the Polish educational system.

Following the introduction of compulsory education in the Polish school system for all children and adolescent from Ukraine, the number of refugee students from Ukraine **increased by 13,5%** comparing to the previous school year (April 2024).

Number of school-aged refugees from Ukraine registered in Polish schools



What do different databases reveal about school-age refugee children and adolescents (aged 7-18) from Ukraine in Poland?



The **PESEL UKR database** is the official government registry, but there are questions to what extent it reflects the actual scale of the presence of children and adolescents from Ukraine in Poland.

It is unlikely that there is a large group of children staying in Poland whose parents have not applied for the 800+ benefit, which is why **it is assumed that data from the ZUS system most accurately reflects** the number of children from Ukraine living in Poland.

The different data sets makes it impossible to unambiguously determine how many refugee children from Ukraine living in Poland are not fulfilling their compulsory education obligation.

It is unclear how many of the 157k school-age children registered in the PESEL UKR database but not attending Polish schools:

- have left Poland;
- are continuing their education online in the last grade of an Ukrainian secondary school;
- are staying in Poland and not fulfilling their compulsory education obligations.

What has changed in the Polish educational system in the school year 2024/2025?

- **Compulsory schooling has been introduced for all children and adolescents from Ukraine, who, like all other children in Poland, must attend Polish schools (previously, due to online education, this was not compulsory), excluding students of last grade of Ukrainian online schooling system.**
- **With the introduction of compulsory education for all refugee students from Ukraine, the MoE announced that the granting of an 800+ allowance will be contingent on fulfilment of compulsory education. These rules will fully come into effect from June 2025.**



Compulsory schooling for all refugee children and adolescents from Ukraine and the 800+ benefit: what do we know from the data?

APRIL 2024

The 800+ benefit was received by approximately **146k school-aged children** (7-17 years old).

At the same time, around 134k refugee students from Ukraine were attending schools, meaning that approx. **12k fewer students were enrolled in school as compared to those receiving the 800+ benefit***.

OCTOBER 2024

The 800+ benefit was claimed for approximately **151k school-aged children** (7-17 years), which is about 5k more than in April 2024.

The figure of 151k school-aged children is close to the number of refugee students from Ukraine registered in primary and secondary schools in Poland (152k).

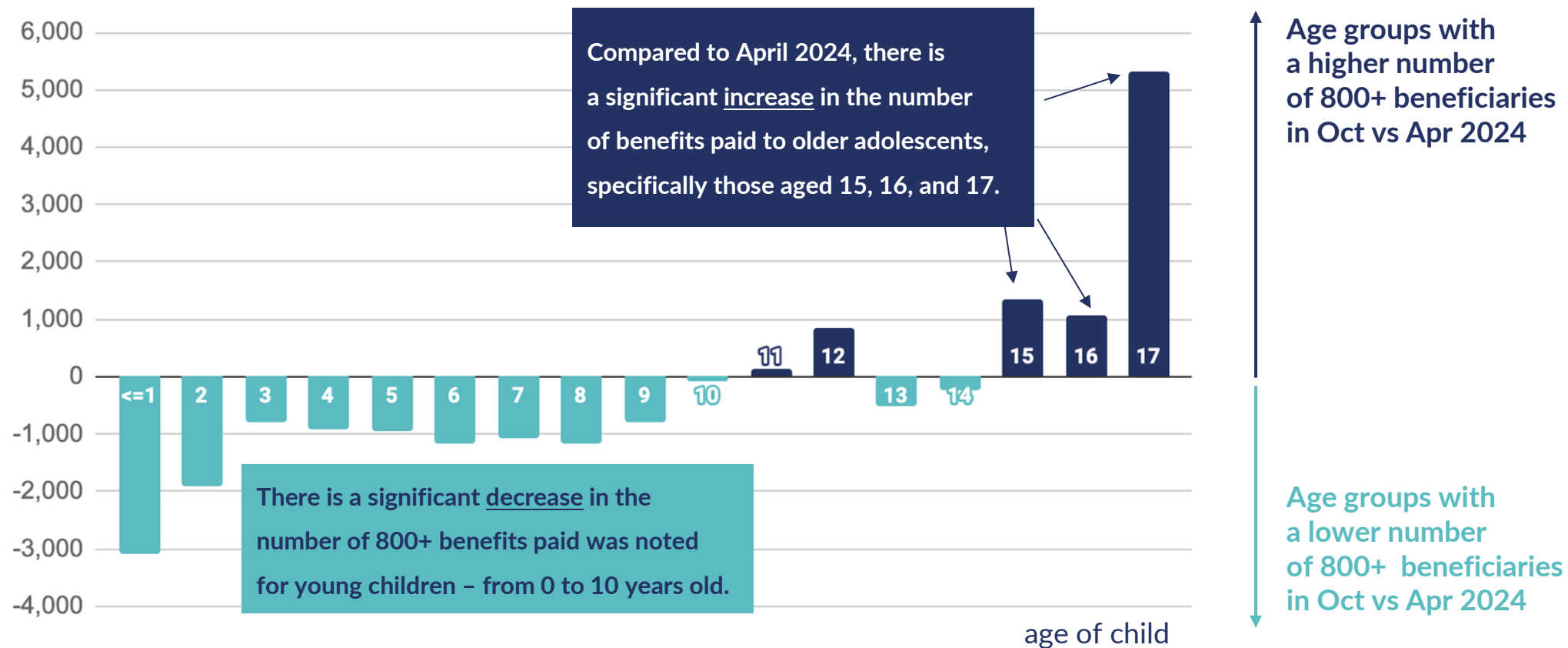
Even though the databases does not provide unique numbers of students, it is highly likely that compulsory education resulted in:

- the enrollment of refugee children from Ukraine who were receiving 800+ benefits in April 2024 but were not attending Polish schools at that time.
- the attendance of almost all children who received the 800+ benefit in Polish schools in October 2024.

*Comparing data on children and adolescents from ZUS and SIO data comes with challenges, as the way age group is determined in the two databases differs. Unambiguous confirmation of these conclusions requires unification of the ZUS and SIO data followed by a detailed analysis.

In October 2024, around 5,000 more 800+ benefits were paid out to school-aged children and adolescents from Ukraine than in April 2024.

The difference in the numbers of 800+ benefits paid to refugee students from Ukraine between April and October 2024, broken down by age of the child



There is a high probability that **announcement of linking the 800+ payments with the compulsory education** has particularly encouraged the oldest group of adolescents' refugees from Ukraine to join Polish schools.

- ➔ This results from the analysis of the ZUS data, combined with the significant increase in the number of refugee students from Ukraine in secondary schools.
- ➔ This trend may be related to the boys' desire to stabilize their situation in Poland and thus avoid the risk of being forced to stay in Ukraine* and/or the previous preference of older adolescents' for online education over attending Polish schools, where they face integration challenges.

* Within the Ukrainian law there is a ban on leaving Ukraine which covers men from 18 to 60 years of age, but also 17-year-olds are often not allowed out of the country. Additionally, from 01.2025 mandatory military training comes into force for all men 18-25.



Refugee students from Ukraine constitute
3% of all students at Polish schools.



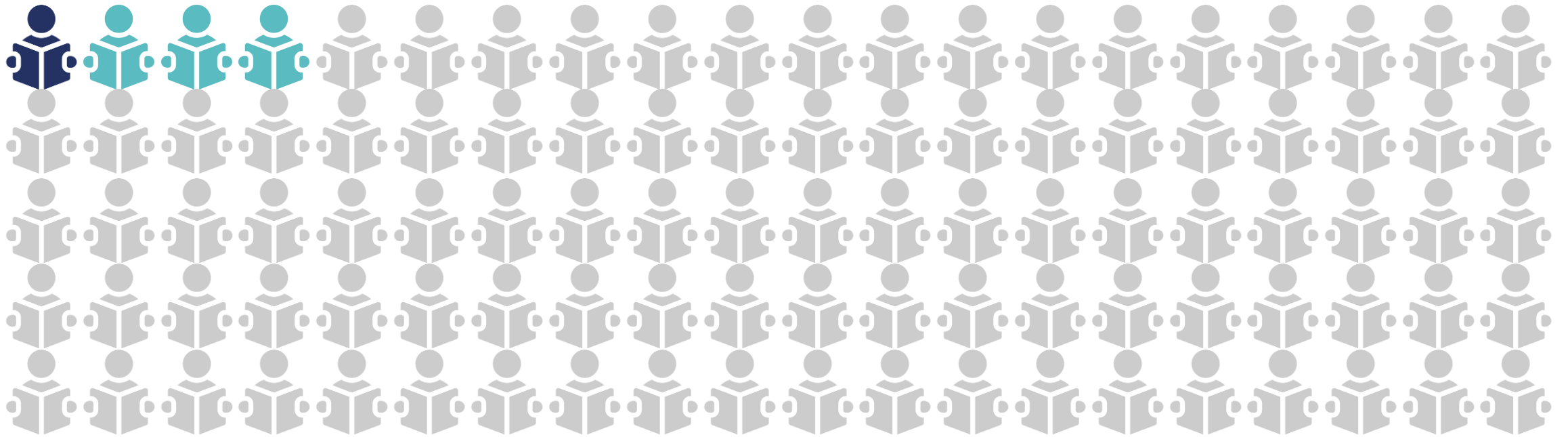


Apart from
152 thousands refugee students
from Ukraine, there are also
51 thousands migrant students
from Ukraine in Polish schools,
who came to Poland before the
escalation of the war in Ukraine
on 24 February 2022.

**In Polish schools there are
203k school-aged students
from Ukraine.**

For every 100 students in Polish schools, there are 4 students from Ukraine.
1 of them is migrant and 3 are refugees.

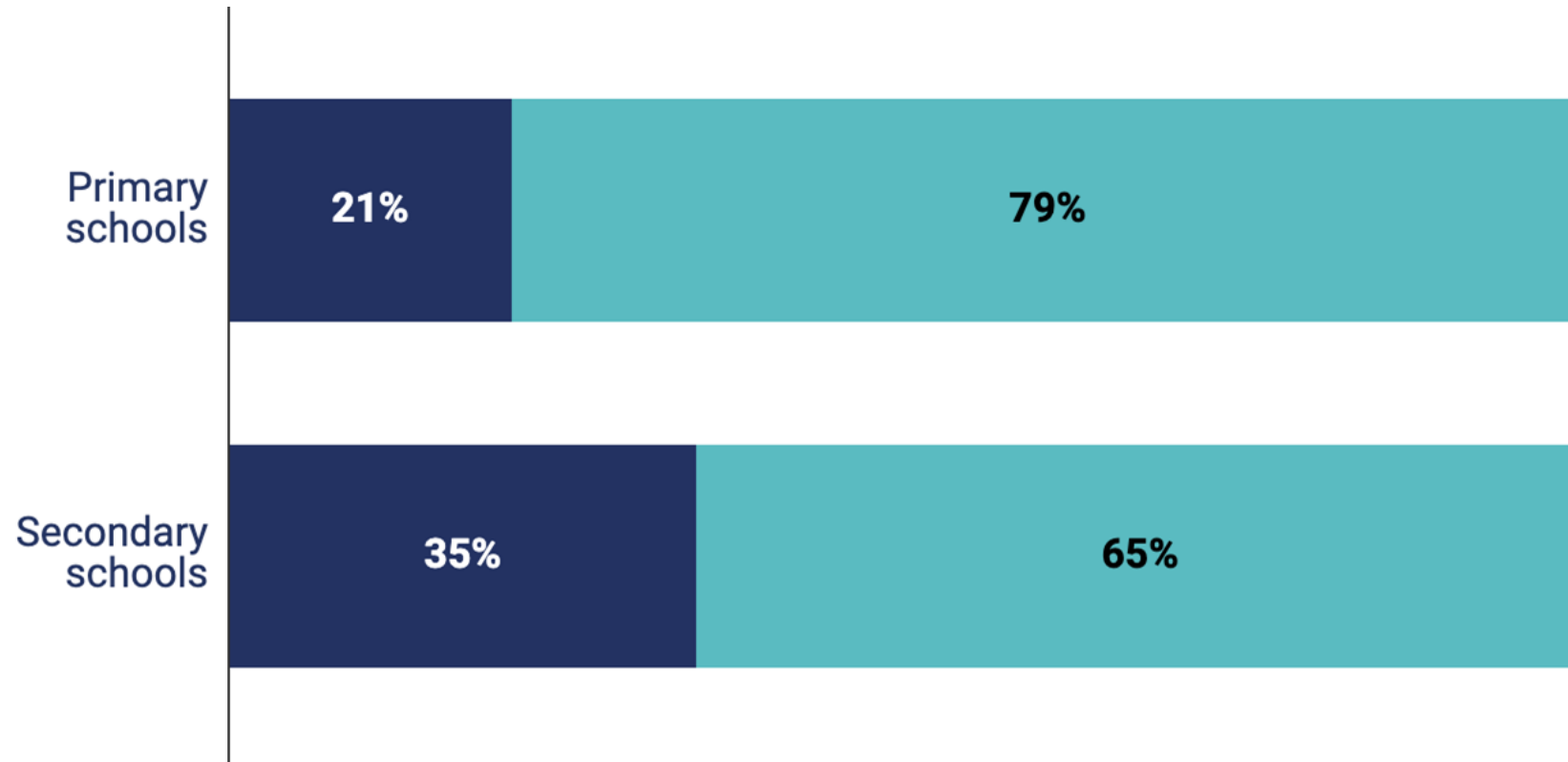
students-migrants from Ukraine | refugee students from Ukraine | other students



Secondary schools have proportionally more student-migrants from Ukraine than elementary schools.

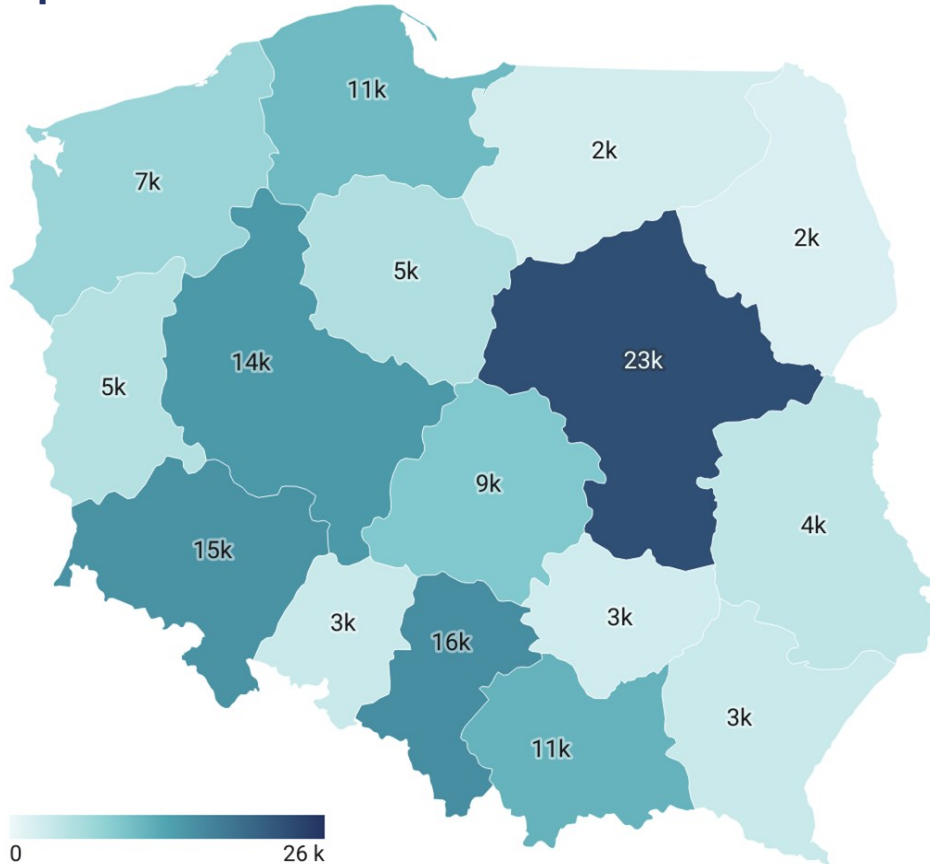
% of **migrants** and **refugee students**

100% = all students from Ukraine



All voivodeships noted an increase in the number of refugee students from Ukraine from April 2024 to October 2024.

April 2024



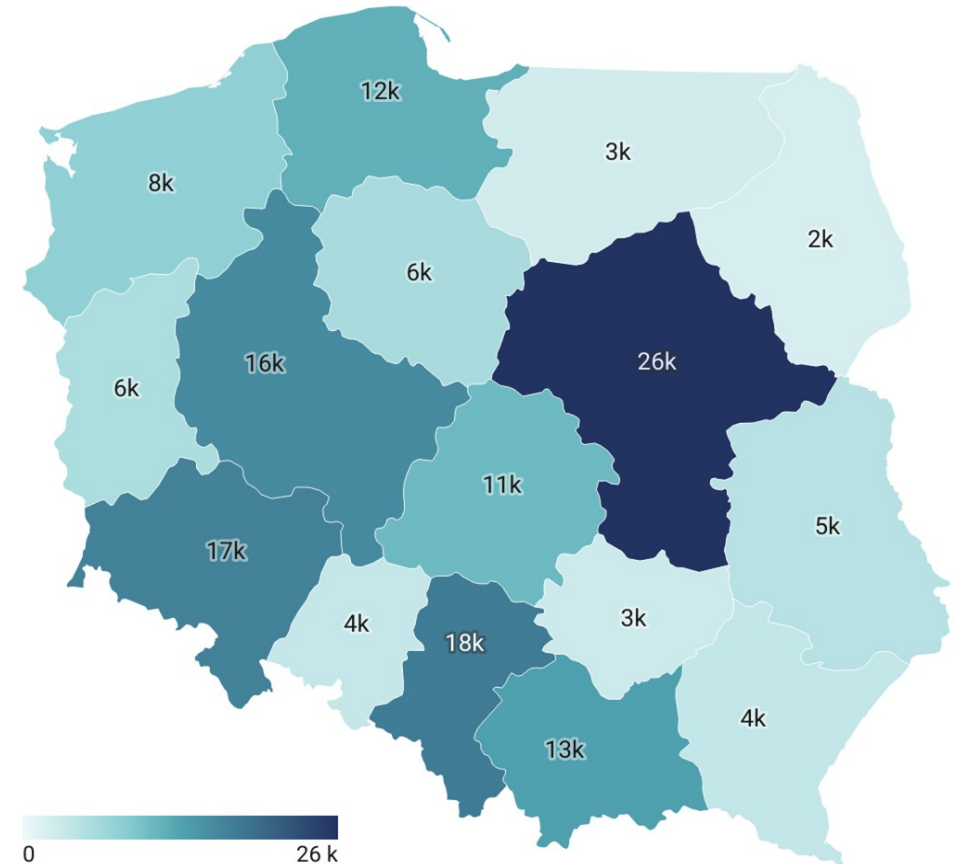
The largest number of refugee students from Ukraine are in the same regions:

- Mazowsze,
- Śląsk,
- Dolny Śląsk,
- Wielkopolska.

The largest relative increase in the number of UA refugee students (15%+) happened in:

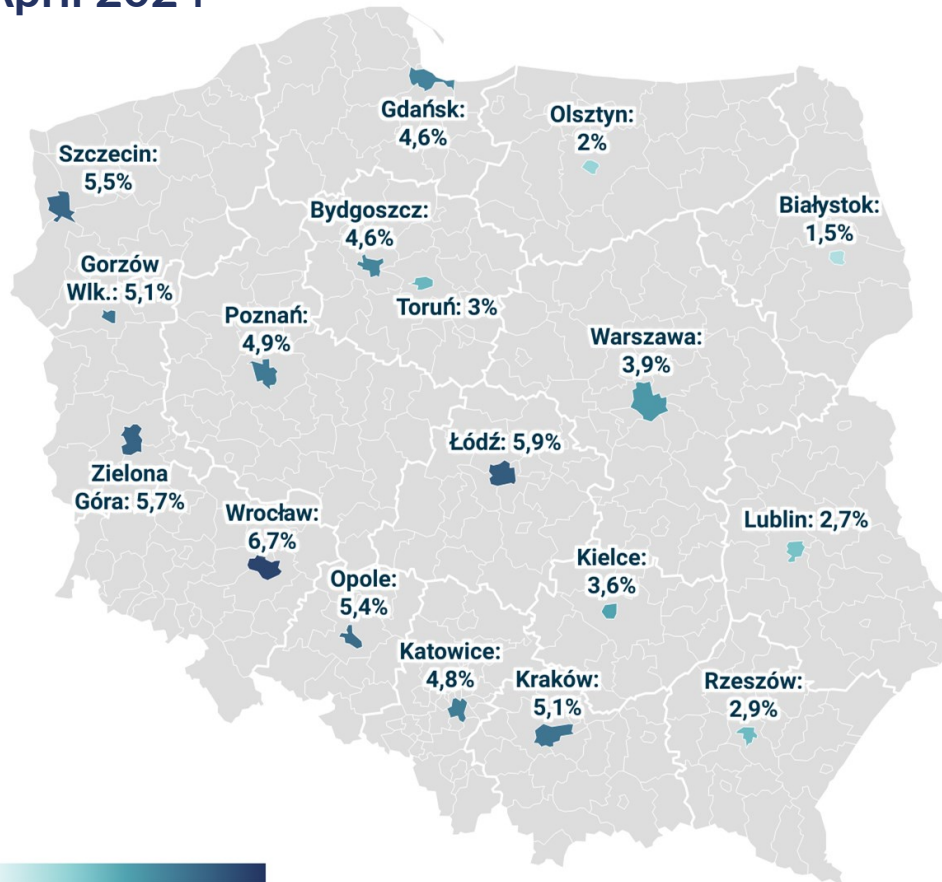
- Małopolskie,
- Łódzkie,
- Lubelskie,
- Podkarpackie,
- Świętokrzyskie.

October 2024



In October 2024, the percentage of refugee students from Ukraine in the Polish school system increased in all voivodeships capitals.

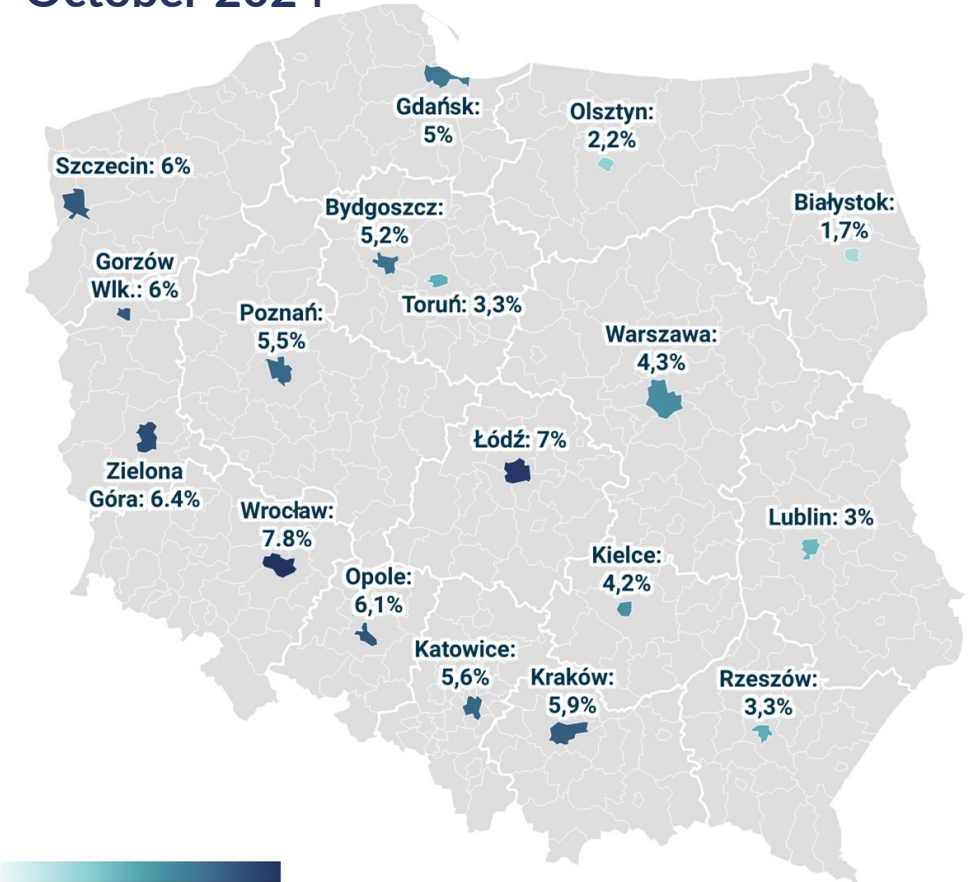
April 2024



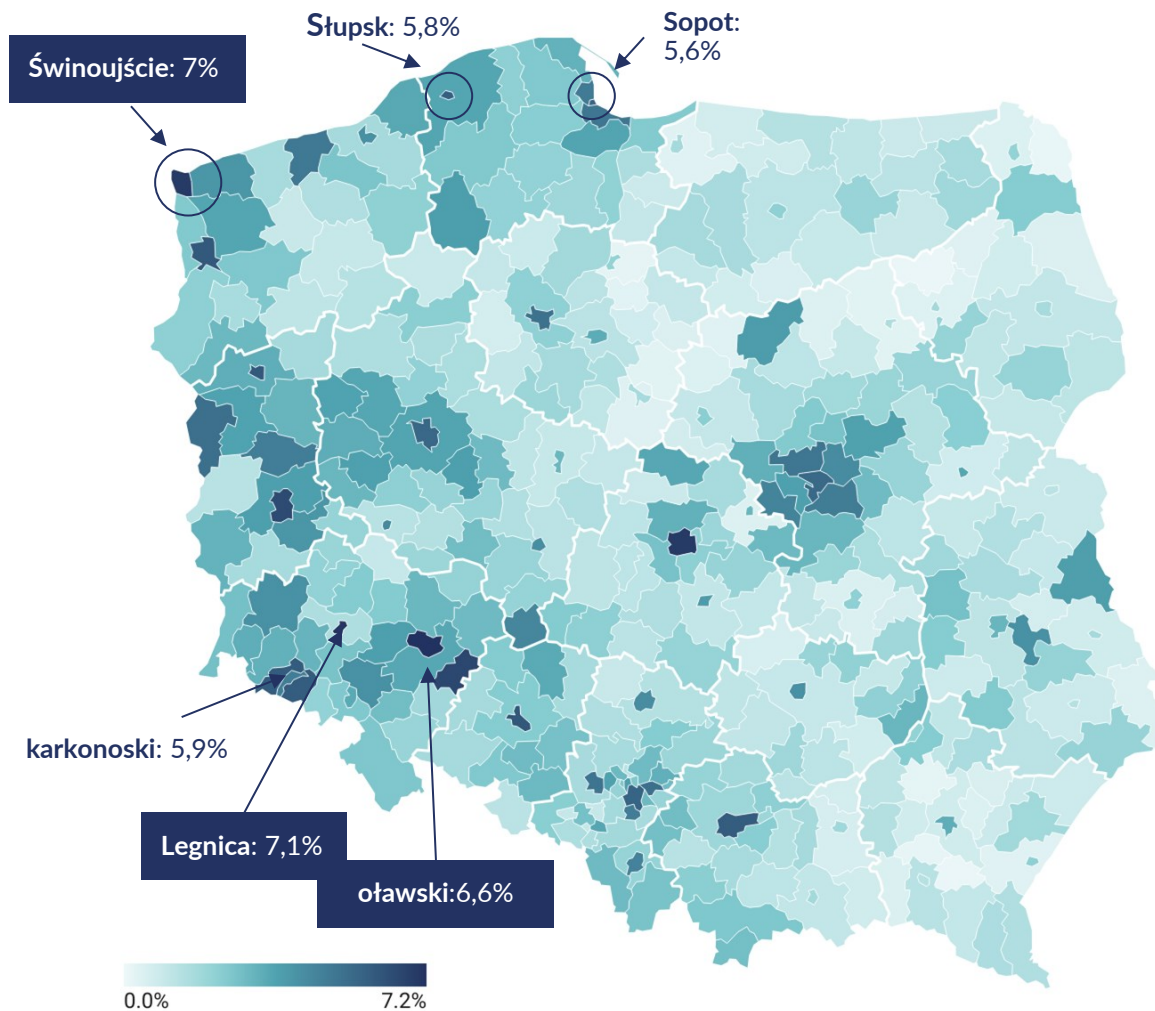
The largest increase in the percentage points of refugee students from Ukraine among all students was observed in:

- Wrocław,
- Łódź,
- Gorzów Wlk.,
- Kielce,
- Katowice,
- Kraków.

October 2024



There are also other cities and districts where refugee students from Ukraine constitute a larger share of the student population compared to other regions in Poland.



Apart from voivodeships capitals, the highest percentage of refugee students from Ukraine among all students was recorded in the following districts:

- Legnica (7,1%),
- Świnoujście (7%),
- Oławski district (6,6%),

On the other hand, there are 70 districts in Poland (out of 370 total) where refugee students from Ukraine constitute less than 1% of all students.

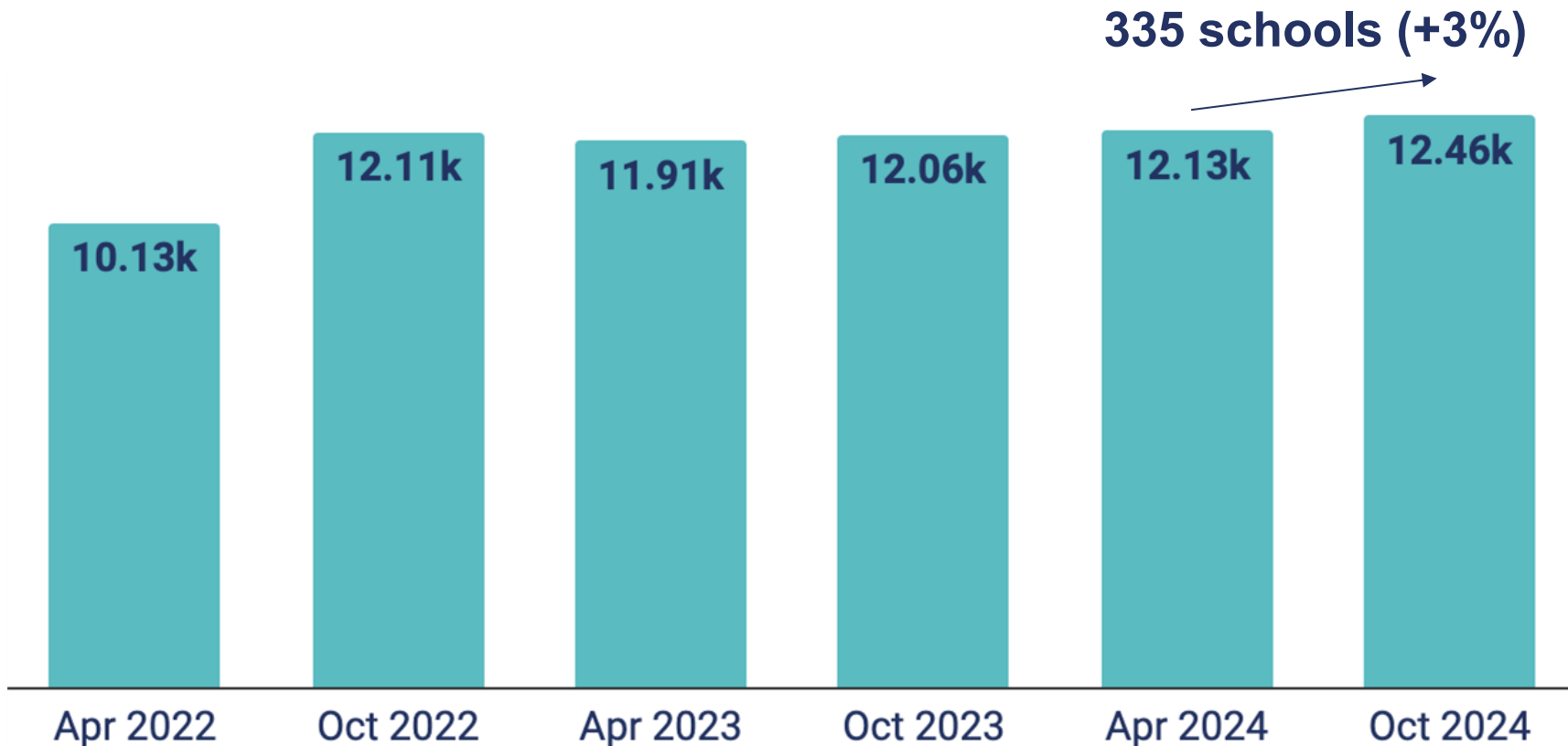


There are 21,5 thousand schools in Poland.

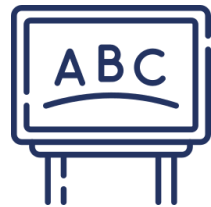
In 12,5 thousand of them
i.e. in **58% of Polish schools**,
refugee students from Ukraine
learn alongside
their Polish peers.

In the 2024/25 school year, **335 schools** that last school year did not have any refugee students from Ukraine in their community, have now enrolled at least one student.

Number of schools in Poland with refugee students from Ukraine in October 2024



Although the total number of schools with refugee students from Ukraine has increased by 3%, this growth applies only to secondary schools.



Primary school



General secondary school



Technical school



1st stage vocational school



Other secondary schools

TOTAL

	Primary school	General secondary school	Technical school	1st stage vocational school	Other secondary schools	TOTAL
Total no. of schools in Poland	14.5k	2.5k	1.8k	1.7k	1.1k	21.5k
Schools in Poland with refugee students from Ukraine	8k	1.7k	1.5k	1k	0.2k	12.5k
% of schools with refugees from Ukraine	55%	65%	82%	61%	17%	58%
Increase in % of schools with refugees from Ukraine in Oct 2024 vs. Apr 2024	-0.5%	+8%	+6%	+13%	+25%	+3%

Among school-aged refugee students from Ukraine in Polish schools:
3 in 4 attend primary school and 1 in 4 learns in secondary school.



Primary schools

112.5k

74%



All secondary schools

39.8k

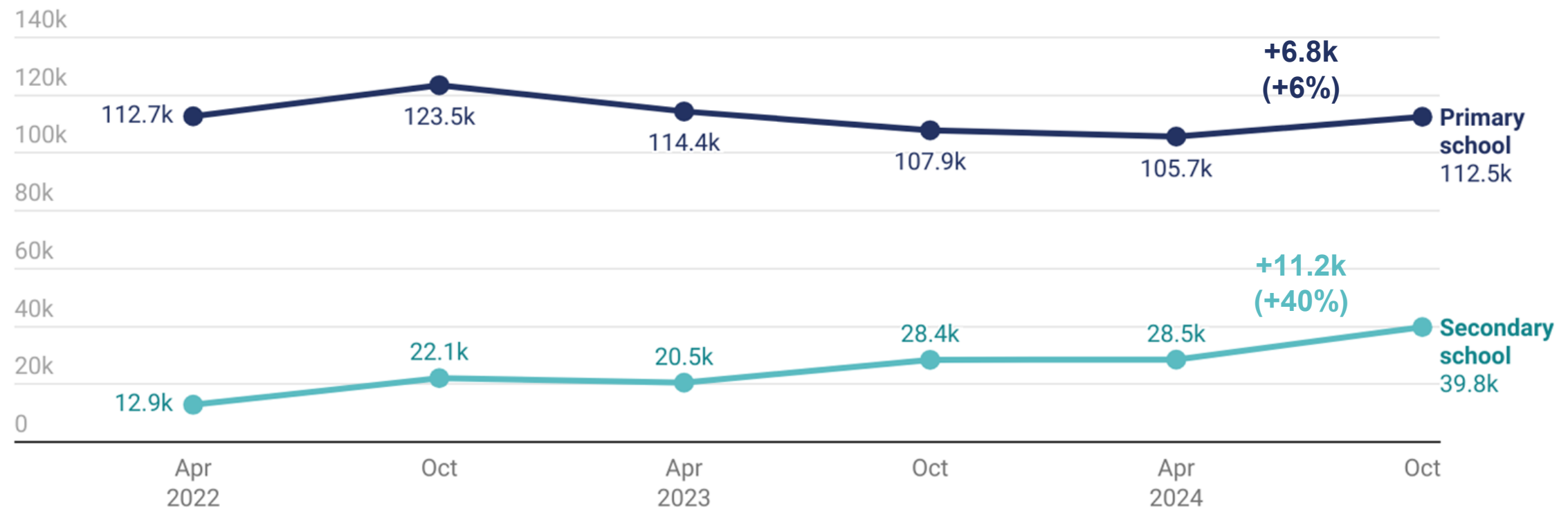
26%

152.3k

Between April and October 2024 the number of refugee students from Ukraine increased:

- by 6% in primary schools
- by 40% in secondary schools*

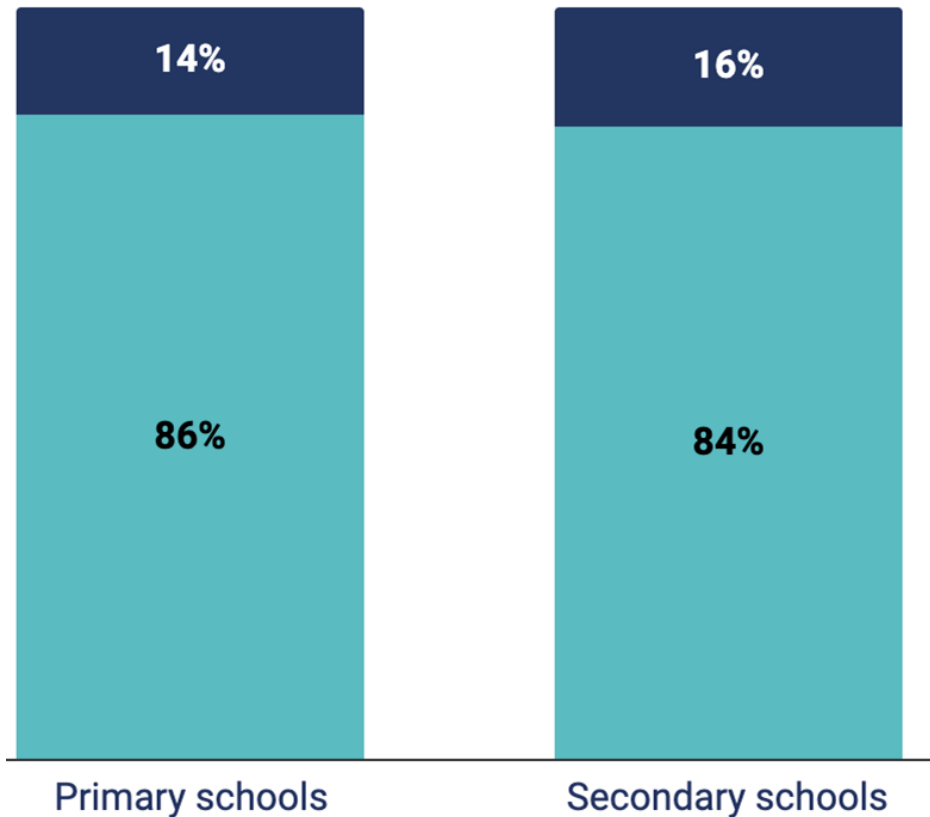
Number of school-aged refugees from Ukraine registered in Polish schools



*The increase in the number of students in both types of schools is due to both the enrollment of newcomers to the system and the natural progression of students to the next stages of education (from preschool to primary school and from primary school to secondary school).

There are **22,4k newly enrolled** refugee-students from Ukraine in Polish schools. This is around **15% of all refugee-students from Ukraine** in the school system. The percentage of newly enrolled students is similar at both school levels.

100% = all refugee students from UA in Polish schools in the 2024/25 school year



Newly-enrolled
= Students who joined the Polish educational system in the 2024/25 school year

Students who entered the Polish educational system between March 2022 and June 2024

Children who ended kindergarten/grade 0 and continue education in primary schools are not calculated as new enrollments in primary school.

Students who finished 8th grade in primary school are not calculated as new-enrollments in secondary school.



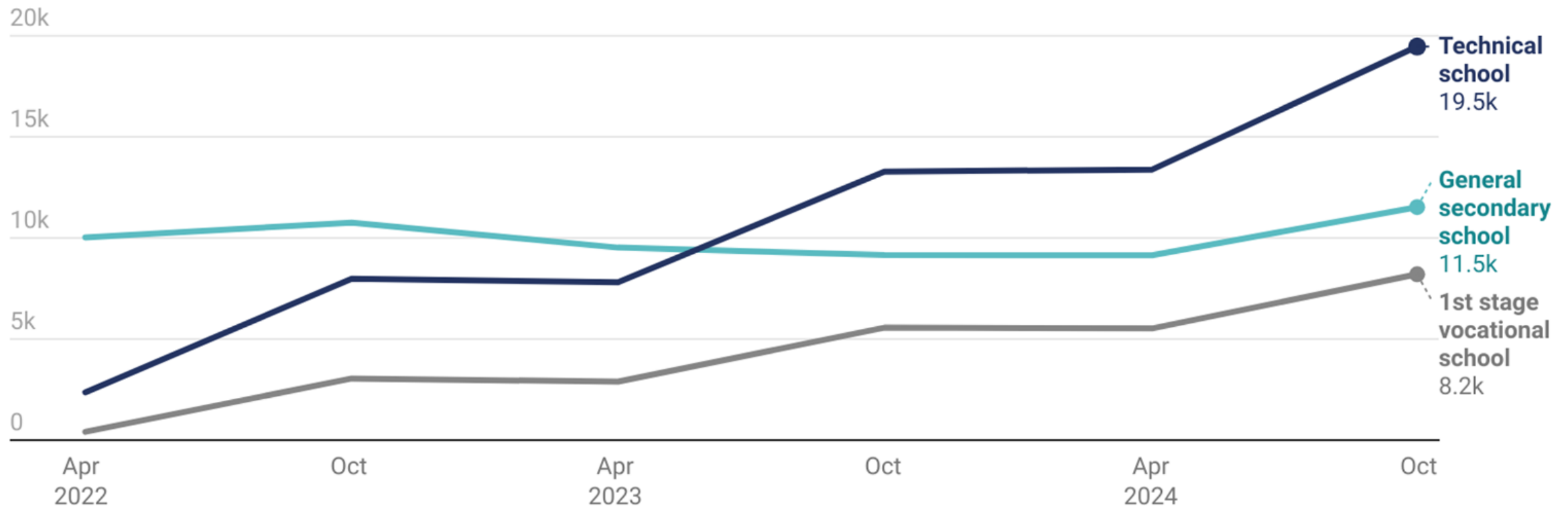
The comparison between the overall increase in the number of refugee students from Ukraine (18.1k) and the number of newly enrolled students (22.4k) indicates that **over 4,000 students left schools between April and October 2024.**

Unfortunately, the available data does not allow us to determine:

- how many of them graduated,
- how many of them left Poland,
- how many of them are no longer attending school due to other reasons.

At the beginning of 2024/25 school year, the greatest relative increase of refugee students from Ukraine (vs. April 2024) was observed in both **technical schools** and **1st stage vocational schools** (45% and 48% respectively).

The number of refugee students from Ukraine in secondary schools between April 2022 and October 2024



Half of secondary refugee students from Ukraine attend Polish technical schools, 29% – general secondary schools and 20% – 1st stage vocational schools.



General
secondary schools

11.5k

29%



Technical
schools

19.5k

50%



1st stage
vocational schools

8.2k

20%



Other secondary
schools

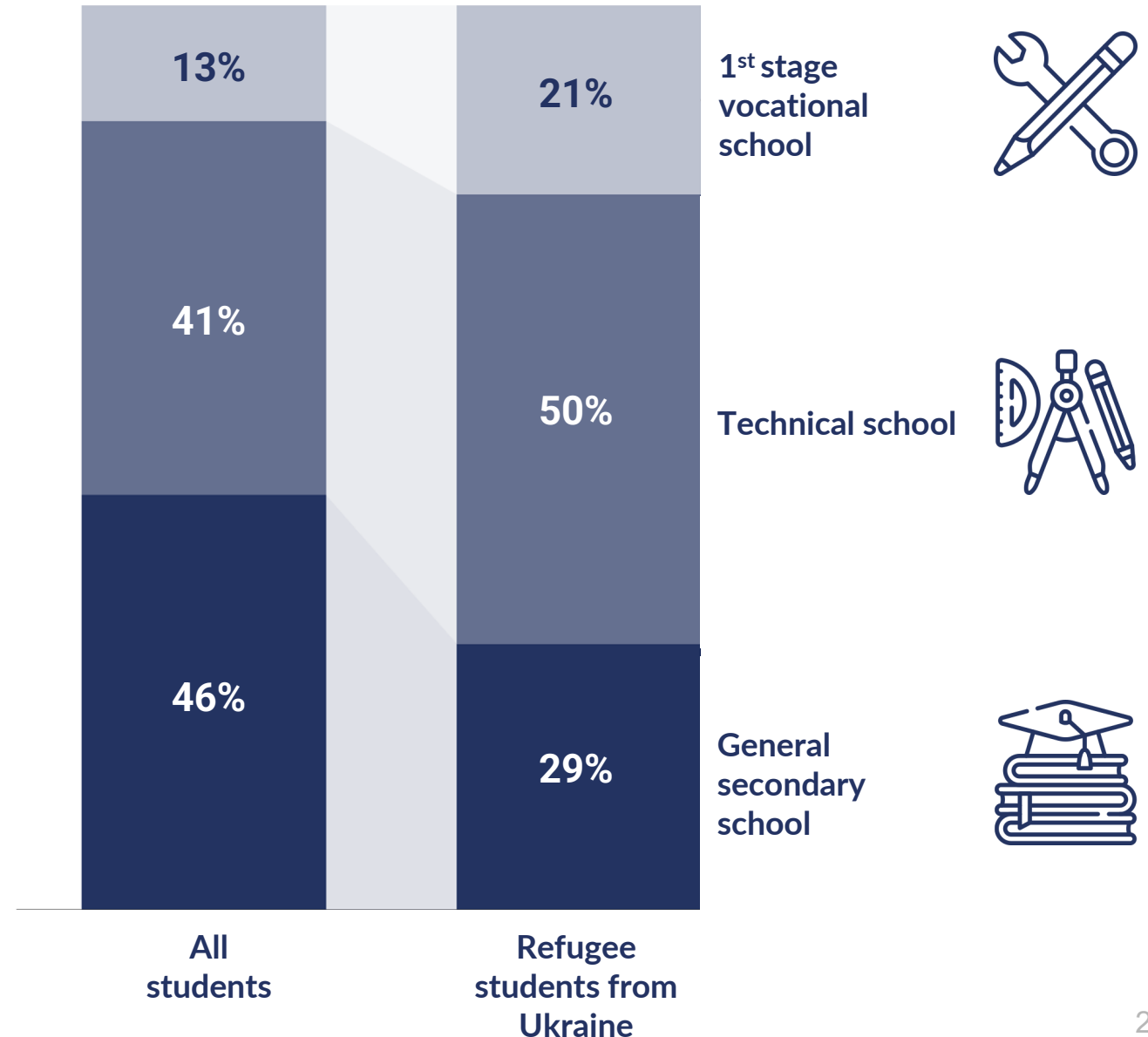
0.6k

1%

39.8k

Compared to their peers, refugee students from Ukraine more often continue on to technical and vocational schools, less often choosing general secondary schools.

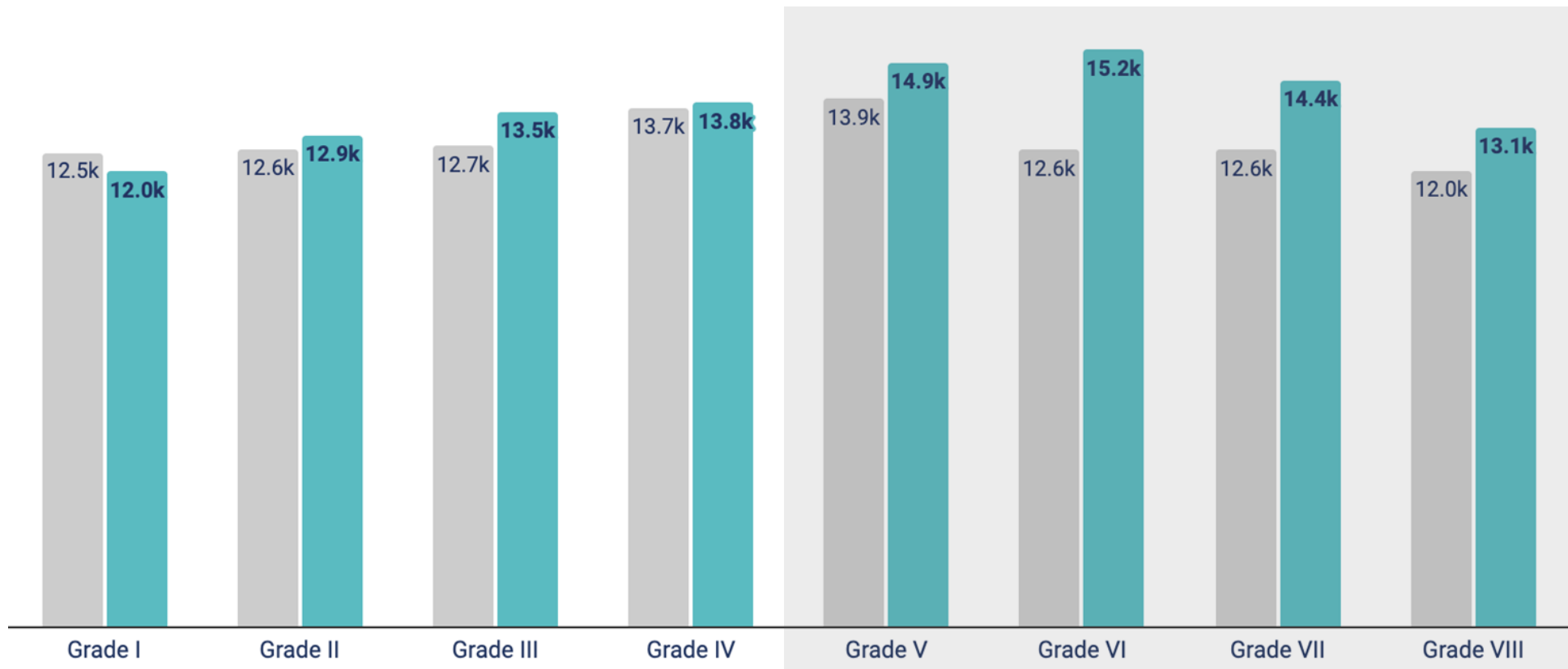
Share of all secondary school students by type of school



The percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. In cases where the sum of the rounded percentages doesn't equal 100%, minor adjustments were made to ensure the total equals exactly 100%.

With the introduction of compulsory education, more refugee students from Ukraine join the higher grades of primary school (above grade IV) than the early grades.

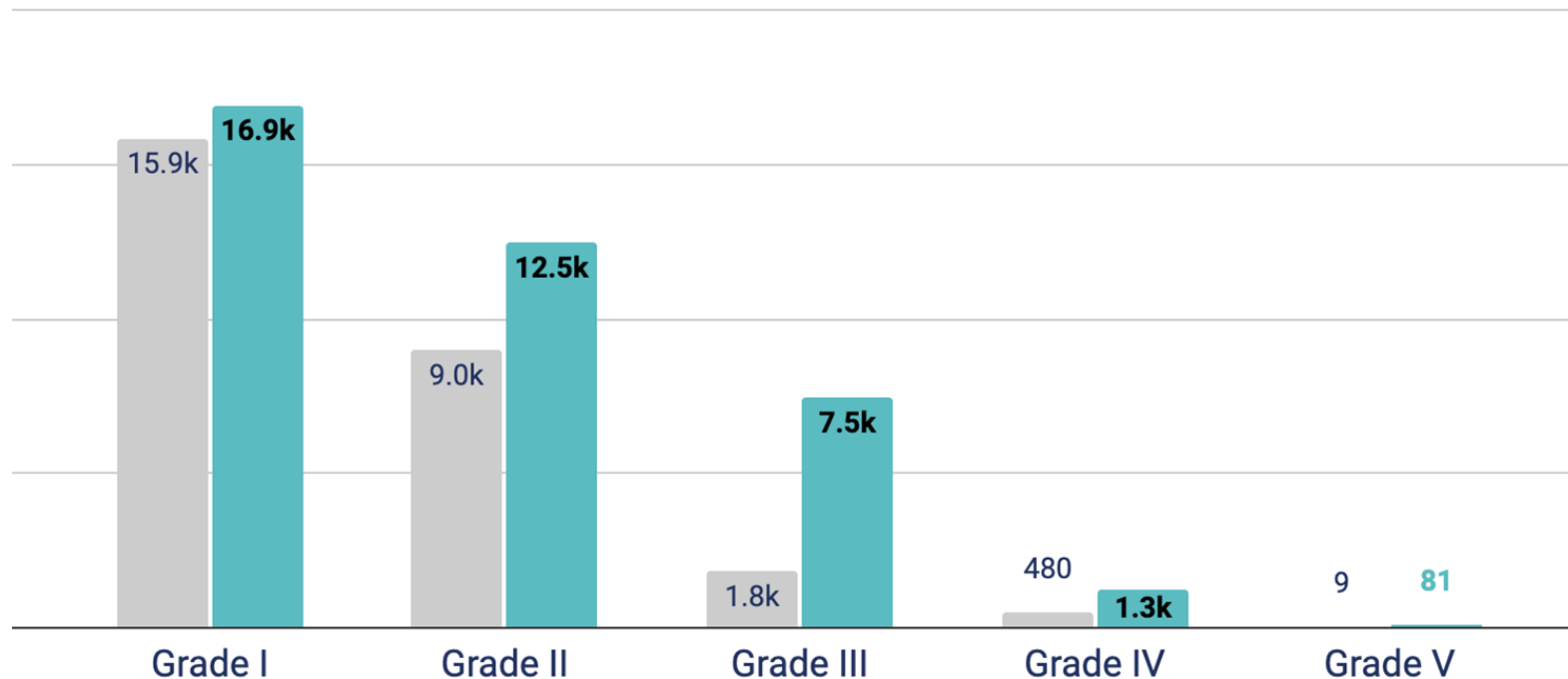
The number of refugee students in primary school grades in **April 2024** | **October 2024**



NOTE: There are approx. 30 thousand additional migrant students from Ukraine attending primary schools. There is no data on the age breakdown of this group, so it can be assumed that there is, on average, an additional 4 thousand children in each grade.

With the introduction of compulsory education, there are more refugee students from Ukraine in all types of secondary schools and **the greatest increase is observed in grades II and III** compared to April 2024.

The number of refugee students in secondary school grades in **April 2024** | **October 2024**



16% of secondary school refugee students are new to the system.

The others 84% refugee students are graduates of primary schools or earlier grades of secondary schools.

The increased interest in secondary education can be also inferred from data on the 800+ benefit from Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) (slide no. 9).

Grade V refers only to technical schools - that's why it is attended by a very small number of students.



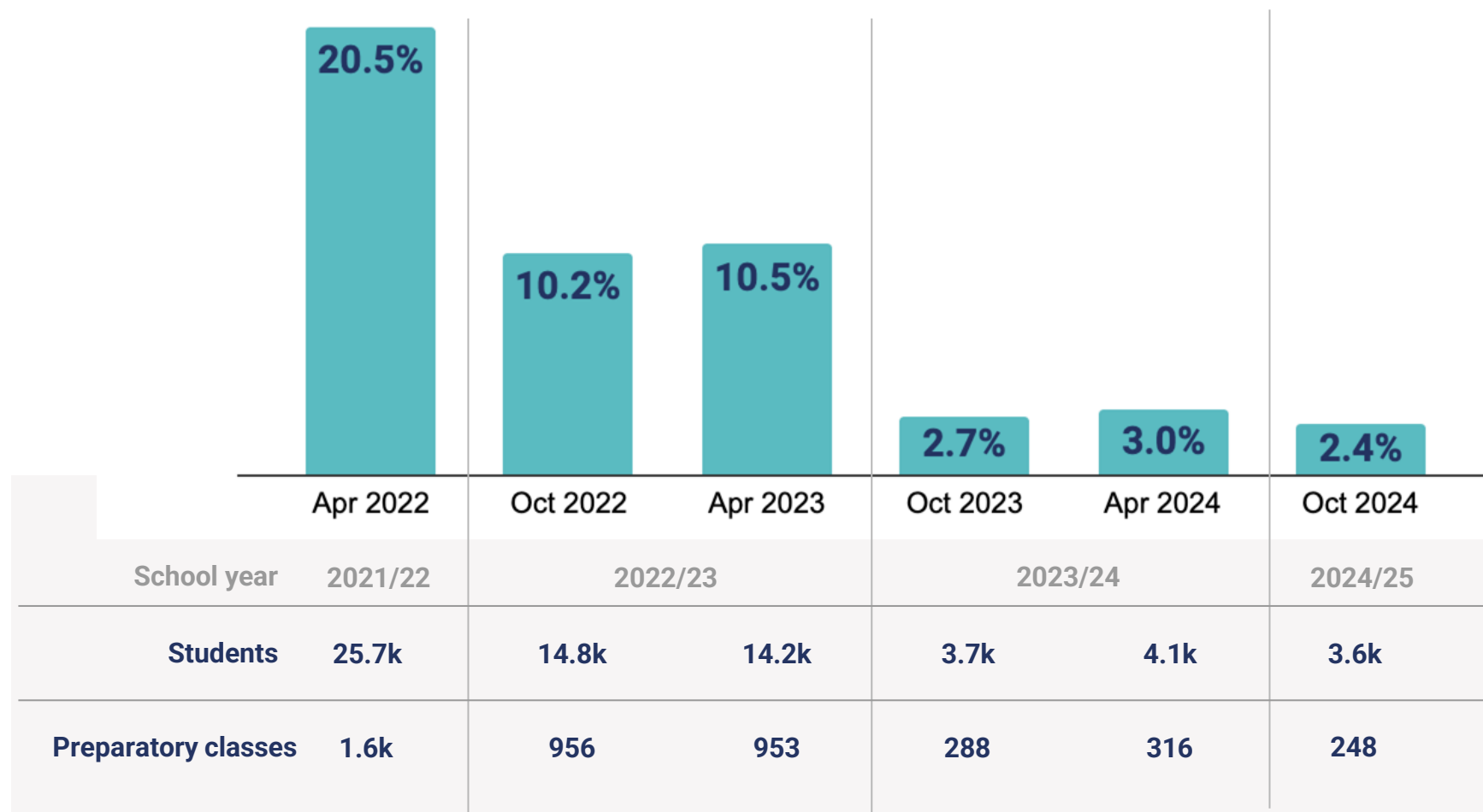
2.4% of refugee students from Ukraine attend preparatory classes.

The remaining **97.6%** attend regular classes.

Proportionally more students attend preparatory classes in secondary schools (2,6%) than in primary schools (2,3%).

At the beginning of 2024/25 school year the percentage of preparatory classes is nearly the same as at the beginning of previous school year.

% of refugee students from Ukraine attending preparatory classes

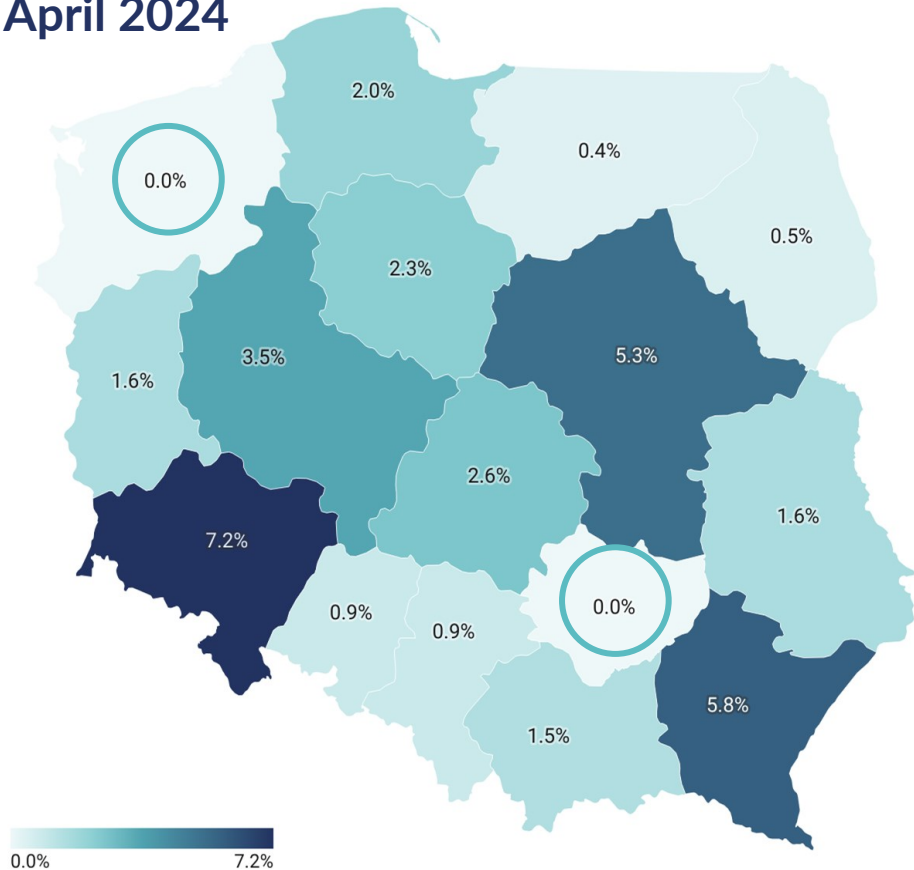


In the course of the **last 3 years**, the number of preparatory classes decreased by **85%**.

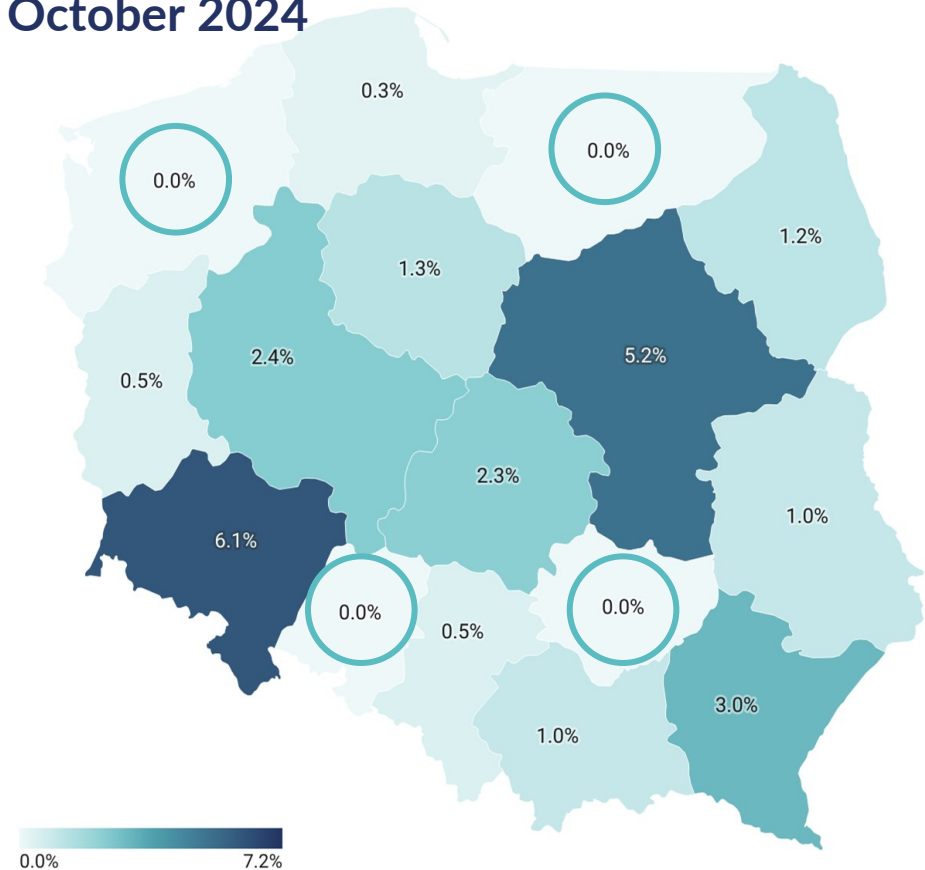
There are no preparatory classes in four voivodeships (vs. two in April 2024).

% of refugees from Ukraine who attend preparatory classes

April 2024

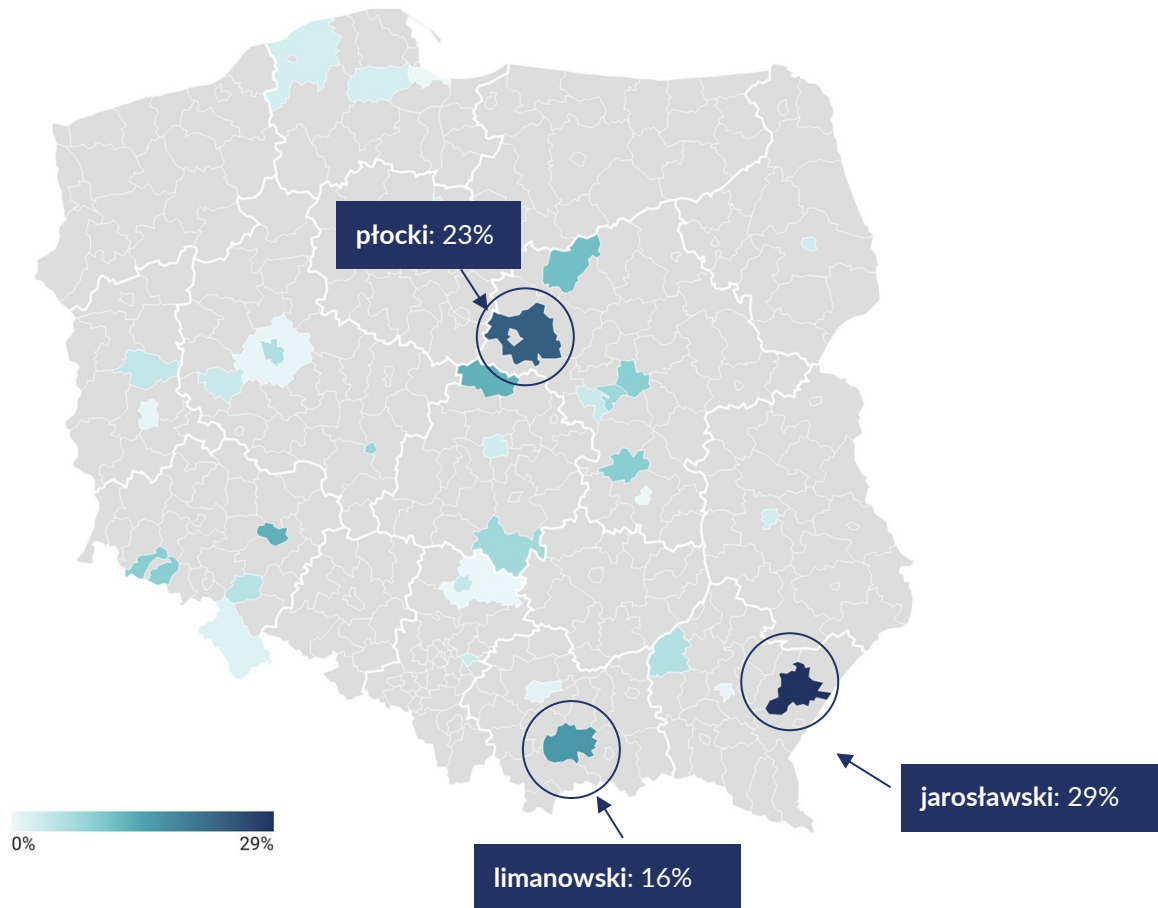


October 2024



Refugee students from Ukraine who attend preparatory classes in Poland are concentrated in only 34 out of 371 Polish districts.

% of refugee students from Ukraine who attend preparatory classes



In relative terms, the highest percentage of refugee students from Ukraine who attend preparatory classes was recorded in the following districts:

- jarosławski: 29% (90/220 students)
- płocki: 23% (25/82 students)
- limanowski: 16% (44/232 students)

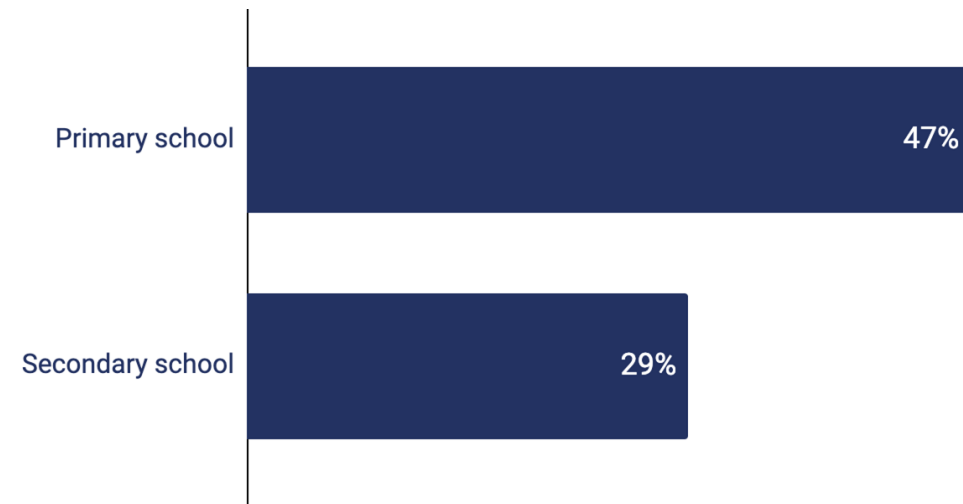
However, the highest number of refugee students from Ukraine who attend preparatory classes was seen in two voivodeships capitals:

- Warsaw: 1.2k,
- Wrocław: 1k.



Only 42% of refugee students from Ukraine attend extracurricular, free Polish as a second language classes held at their schools.

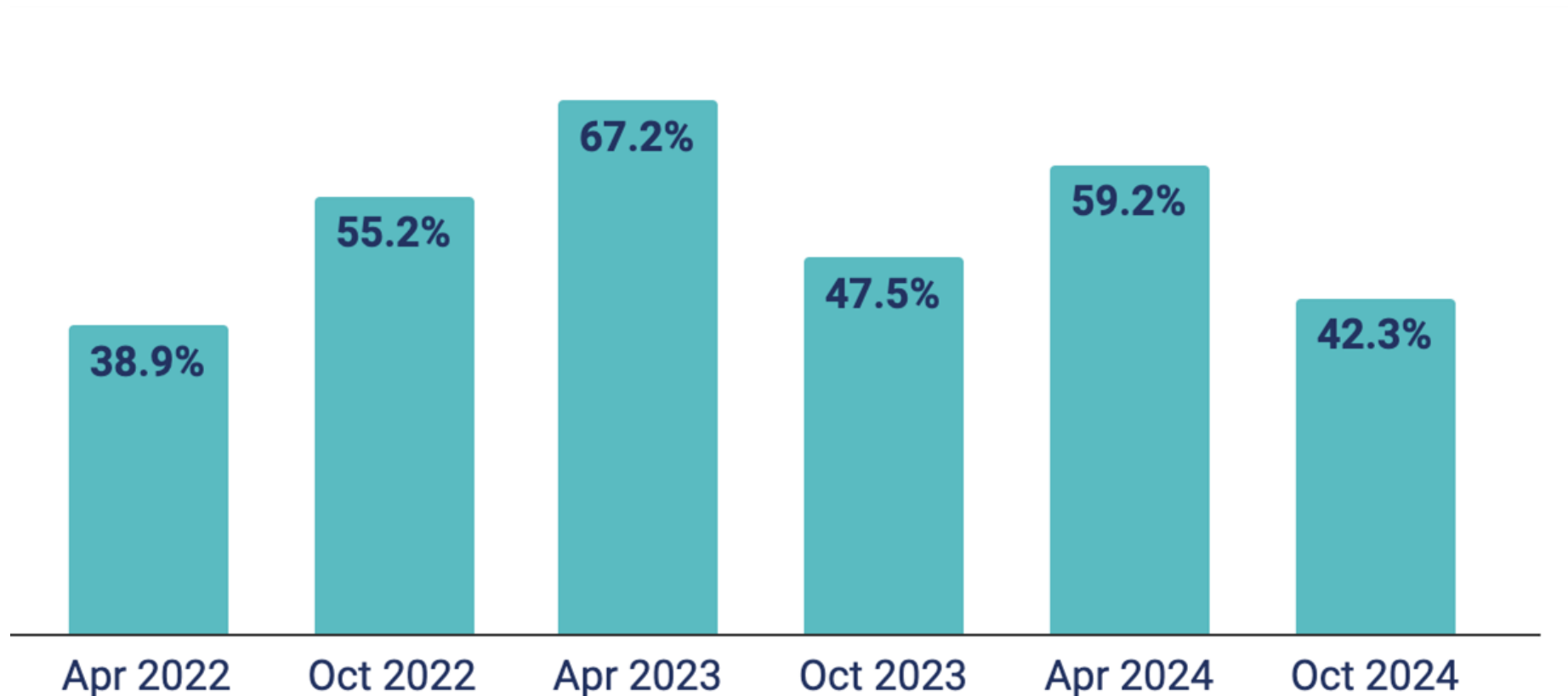
In primary schools the participation in Polish lessons is higher than in secondary schools:



% of students attending Polish language classes, by type of school

Attendance in Polish as a second language classes has decreased compared to April 2024, but remains at a similar, fairly low level as at the beginning of the previous school year.

% of refugee students from Ukraine who attend extracurricular, free Polish as a second language classes



Definitions: schools

Schools – public and non-public schools, excluding preschools, schools for adults, post-secondary schools.

Primary schools:

primary schools excluding pre-primary education sections (so-called year zero):

- general primary school,
- eight-year 1st stage music school with general education,
- eight-year Poznań Choir School.

Secondary schools:

- four-year general secondary school,
- five-year technical school,
- three-year 1st stage vocational school,
- other secondary schools:
 - three-year special preparatory school for work,
 - two-year 2nd stage vocational school,
 - four-year Bednarska Szkoła Realna,
 - art schools with general education:
 - five-year secondary art school,
 - nine-year ballet school with general education,
 - six-year 2nd stage music school with general education.

Data sources

Ministry of National Education - Education Information System (SIO)

Data via Open Data – dane.gov.pl:

number of students from Ukraine in Polish schools by types of schools, grades, voivodeship and percentage of refugee students from Ukraine who attend extracurricular, free Polish as a second language classes, in subsets:

- [Refugee students from Ukraine:](#)
 - ❑ [Refugee students from Ukraine](#) – [30.09.2024](#)
 - ❑ [Refugee students from Ukraine - Polish as a second language](#) – [30.09.2024](#)
 - ❑ comparable data from 2022-2024
- [Unit data of preschools, schools and educational facilities between 2012 and 2023](#)

Databases received directly from MoE:

- Aggregated data on the number of all students registered in Polish schools, provided by MoE, [data for 10.12.2024](#)
- **Data received by Committee on Educational Integration of Children - Citizens of Ukraine** - aggregated data on the number of migrant and refugees-students from Ukraine newly enrolled in the Polish educational system, [data for 17.10.2024](#).

Data sources

Ministry of Digital Affairs

Data via Open Data - dane.gov.pl:

- [Statistical data concerning applications to grant UKR foreigner status in connection with the conflict in Ukraine](#) – the so-called database of applications for PESEL number with UKR status) – [data for 8.10.2024](#)

Social Insurance Institution (ZUS)

Overview "Number of children with UKR status with Ukrainian citizenship for whom the Social Insurance Institution paid child-rearing benefit by age and province in October 2024" provided to CEO in response to a request for access to public information.

NOTE: Due to rounding to one decimal place, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

Database of applications for PESEL number with UKR status

The database contains data of persons who applied for a PESEL number with UKR status, i.e. persons who arrived in Poland from Ukraine after 24 February 2022 in result of the escalation of the war in Ukraine.

Persons who have left the territory of the Republic of Poland for more than 30 days lose their UKR status and are deregistered from the database. In practice, persons who have left the territory of the Republic of Poland for more than 30 days via the internal border of the Schengen Area and have not notified the competent authorities of this fact, remain registered in the database. Therefore, the database may overestimate the actual number of persons staying on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

For the analysis of the 2024/25 school year, data on applications from Ukrainian nationals and citizens born between 2006 and 2017 were used, assuming that these were school-age persons.





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UNICEF Refugee Response Office in Poland

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00-869 Warszawa

www.unicef.org/eca/poland

Contact
poland@unicef.org

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