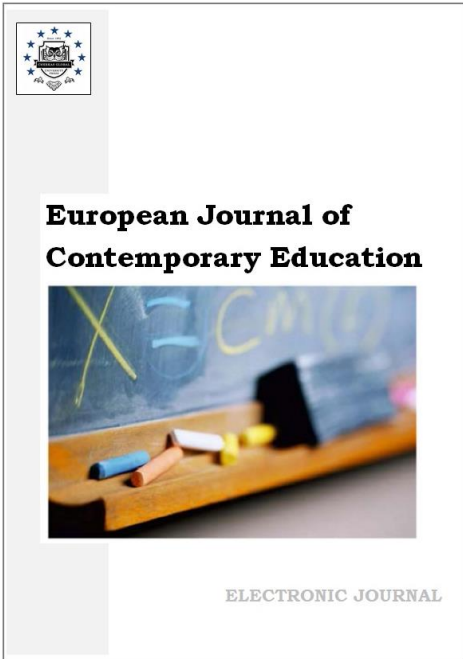




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## The System of Public Education in Sukhumi District in the Period 1900–1914

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### Abstract

This paper explores the system of public education in Sukhumi District in the period 1900–1914. It examines the region's secondary, lower, and primary education sectors and the student body in each of them, with information provided on the latter's size and its gender, ethnic, social-estate, and religious composition.

The work primarily relies on the annual Reports of the Trustee of the Caucasus Educational District and the Most Faithful Reports of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod. In addition, use was also made of certain relevant documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation), which helped establish the total number of school-age children in Sukhumi District. The valuable data on the ethnic composition of the region's population were taken from the First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897.

The study's conclusion is that by 1914 secondary education in the region was accessible to both boys and girls only in its capital, Sukhumi. Lower education was accessible to boys in Sukhumi and Ochamchire. It became accessible to both genders in 1913 in Gudauta. As far as primary education, Sukhumi District had 64 schools run by the Ministry of Public Education and 74 parochial schools run by the Holy Synod, which, combined, had an enrollment of around 6,500 students. Despite the substantial successes of the region's education system, just 68 % of its school-age children attended school in 1914, with these including 33 % of the total number of Abkhazian, 80 % of the total number of Georgian, and 22 % of the total number of Armenian children of school age in the region.

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**Keywords:** Sukhumi District, system of public education, Caucasus Educational District, early 20th century, period 1900–1914.

### **1. Introduction**

Sukhumi District was created in 1883 based on the following three historical regions: Abkhazia, Samurzakano, and Tsebelda. Up to 1903, the district was part of Kutaisi Governorate; it subsequently became a special district treated as a governorate. Its capital was Sukhumi. The system of public education in this region was subordinate to the Sukhumi Inspectorate of the Ministry of Public Education (Otchet, 1915: 684). The district had a fairly motley population, as was the case throughout Transcaucasia. Based on data from the First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897, Sukhumi District had a population of 106,179, with 58,600 (55.2 %) of these being Abkhazians, 23,800 (22.4 %) – Mingrelians, 6,500 (6.1 %) – Armenians, 5,900 (5 %) – Greeks, 5,100 (4.8 %) – ethnic Russians, 1,800 (1.7 %) – Georgians, and 1,300 (1.2 %) – Turks. The rest of the ethnicities, combined, accounted for less than 1% of the population (Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis'..., 1905).

### **2. Materials and methods**

The work primarily relies on the annual Reports of the Trustee of the Caucasus Educational District and the Most Faithful Reports of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod. In addition, use was also made of certain relevant documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation), which helped establish the total number of school-age children in Sukhumi District. The valuable data on the ethnic composition of the region's population were taken from the First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897 (Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis'..., 1905).

In terms of methodology, use was made of the historical-statistical method, which helped determine the numbers and types of educational institutions (secondary, lower, and primary) in the region and establish the size and the ethnic, social-estate, gender, and religious composition of its student body.

### **3. Discussion**

The historiography on the subject remains fairly thin, as to date there been no dedicated research on the system of public education in this region. Nevertheless, there has been some research on the system of public education in Kutaisi Governorate, which incorporated Sukhumi District in the very late 19th and early 20th centuries (Mamadaliyev et al., 2021; Mamadaliyev et al., 2021a; Mamadaliyev et al., 2021b). In addition, life in the Sukhumi Diocese and the parochial education sector run by it was researched by G. Rajović and colleagues (Rajović et al., 2022). Private education in the Caucasus was researched by K.V. Taran and colleagues (Taran et al., 2021).

In terms of education in other regions close to Sukhumi District, the system of public education in Black Sea Governorate was researched by A.A. Cherkasov and colleagues (Cherkasov et al., 2020; Cherkasov et al., 2020a) and that in Kuban Oblast was researched by V.S. Molchanova and colleagues (Molchanova et al., 2019; Molchanova et al., 2019a; Molchanova et al., 2020).

### **4. Results**

At the start of the 20th century, the system of public education in Sukhumi District was divided into the following three levels: 1) secondary education (Grades 5–8); 2) lower education (Grades 3–4); 3) primary education (Grades 1–2). In the period 1912–1913, the Russian Empire as a whole and the Caucasus in particular witnessed a trend toward the reorganization of urban schools into six-grade higher primary schools, which was facilitative of the development of secondary education. Each level is examined in detail below.

#### **Secondary education**

The development of secondary education in Sukhumi District officially began on September 8, 1882, when Sukhumi Urban School, opened in 1870, was reorganized into Sukhumi Female Progymnasium (Otchet, 1905: 163). By 1900, this school was the only secondary educational institution in Sukhumi District. As a result, secondary education was long inaccessible to boys in the region, with many parents having to place their sons in schools in other regions of the empire.

The situation began to change on May 30, 1904, when the region became home to a secondary educational institution for boys – the seven-grade real school in the capital, Sukhumi (Otchet, 1915: 140).

On September 1, 1909, Sukhumi Female Progymnasium was reorganized into an eight-grade female gymnasium (Otchet, 1915: 256, 302). Thus, by 1909 secondary education was accessible in the district to girls and boys alike. Table 1 displays the numbers of secondary educational institutions run by the Ministry of Public Education and students in this sector in the region in the period 1900–1914.

**Table 1.** Numbers of Secondary Educational Institutions Run by the Ministry of Public Education and Students in This Sector in Sukhumi District in the Period 1900–1914 (Otchet, 1901: 214; Otchet, 1905: 134, 211; Otchet, 1908: 78, 127; Otchet, 1909: 80, 131; Otchet, 1910: 80, 129; Otchet, 1911: 80, 193; Otchet, 1912: 80, 163; Otchet, 1913: 68, 179; Otchet, 1914: 68, 179; Otchet, 1915: 124, 256)

Year	Gymnasiums		Progymnasiums		Real schools	Total	Number of students		
	Male	Female	Male	Female			Boys	Girls	Total
1904	-	-	-	1	1	2	108	148	256
1907	-	-	-	1	1	2	172	172	344
1908	-	-	-	1	1	2	200	212	412
1909	-	1	-	-	1	2	212	253	465
1910	-	1	-	-	1	2	231	274	505
1911	-	1	-	-	1	2	247	306	553
1912	-	1	-	-	1	2	233	306	539
1913	-	1	-	-	1	2	247	300	547
1914	-	1	-	-	1	2	165	280	445

As evidenced in Table 1, by 1913 the size of the student body in the region’s secondary education sector grew nearly 5 times, from 116 to 547 students. In 1914, the number of students in this sector sharply reduced following the beginning of World War I and the region turning into a frontline area. In terms of the gender composition of the student body in this sector, girls outnumbered boys. This in part was due to the fact that secondary education became accessible to girls in the region back in 1882 – i.e., the region already had a tradition of providing secondary education to females. The second reason was that there were no lower educational institutions for girls in the region at the time.

Table 2 displays the distribution of the student body in the region’s secondary education sector by religious affiliation in the period 1900–1914.

**Table 2.** Distribution of the Student Body in the Secondary Education Sector in Sukhumi District by Religious Affiliation in the Period 1900–1914 (Otchet, 1901: 215; Otchet, 1905: 134, 211; Otchet, 1908: 78, 127; Otchet, 1909: 80, 131; Otchet, 1910: 80, 129; Otchet, 1911: 80, 193; Otchet, 1912: 80, 163; Otchet, 1913: 68, 151; Otchet, 1914: 68, 179; Otchet, 1915: 126, 262)

Year	Orthodox Christians	Catholics	Armenian Gregorians	Other Christians	Jews	Muslims	Other non-Christians
1900	103	3	1	5	4	-	-
1904	233	6	1	1	8	-	2
1907	305	3	9	8	18	1	-

1908	354	5	13	13	23	2	2
1909	405	3	17	11	27	1	1
1910	449	4	13	9	25	2	3
1911	483	3	20	11	31	3	2
1912	463	5	25	14	29	1	2
1913	456	7	30	16	33	5	-
1914	365	8	24	9	20	3	16

As evidenced in [Table 2](#), in 1900 Orthodox Christians accounted for 88 % of the student body in this sector (96.5 % combined with members of other Christian denominations). The remaining 3.5 % was accounted for by Jews. There were no Muslims. By 1913, i.e. the last pre-war year, Orthodox Christians accounted for 83.3 % of the sector's student body (93 % combined with members of other Christian denominations). The remaining 7 % was accounted for by Jews (6 %) and Muslims (1%). Of note is that the education of the region's Jewish children was characterized by relative permanence – i.e., most of them would go on to the next grade level. This was not the case with Muslim children. Specifically, in 1907–1909 secondary school was attended in Sukhumi District by Muslim boys only. In 1910, it was attended by 1 boy and 1 girl (the first time that a Muslim female attended secondary school in the region). In 1911, there were 2 boys and 1 girl. In 1912, there were no boys and there was 1 girl. In 1913, the number of Muslim students was 5 (3 boys and 2 girls). However, in 1914, there were only 2 boys and 1 girl. By 1914, not a single Muslim student received secondary education in the region.

[Table 3](#) displays the distribution of the student body in the region's secondary education sector by social estate in the period 1900–1914.

**Table 3.** Distribution of the Student Body in the Secondary Education Sector in Sukhumi District by Social Estate in the Period 1900–1914 ([Otchet, 1901: 215](#); [Otchet, 1905: 134, 211](#); [Otchet, 1908: 79, 127](#); [Otchet, 1909: 81, 131](#); [Otchet, 1910: 81, 129](#); [Otchet, 1911: 81, 193](#); [Otchet, 1912: 81, 163](#); [Otchet, 1913: 69, 151](#); [Otchet, 1914: 69, 179](#); [Otchet, 1915: 127, 263](#))

Year	Children of nobles and functionaries	Children of persons of ecclesiastical status	Children of distinguished citizens and merchants	Children of urban commoners and guilded craftspeople	Children of Cossacks	Children of peasants	Children of foreigners	Other
1900	48	3	2	44	12	6	4	-
1904	94	20	9	96	31	-	1	-
1907	141	18	53	85	-	39	8	-
1908	256	24	50	123	-	53	4	2
1909	154	30	69	129	-	59	14	10
1910	168	39	68	124	19	70	12	5
1911	181	37	63	141	-	107	14	10
1912	234	26	40	150	35	143	11	1
1913	158	32	72	146	1	119	19	20
1914	122	23	41	105	2	118	15	18

As evidenced in [Table 3](#), in 1900 children of nobles and functionaries accounted for the majority in the region's secondary education sector, 41.3 %, followed by children of members of the urban estates, 37.9 %, and then children of peasants, 5.1 %. By 1913, there was a sharp increase in the number of peasant children, with the picture being as follows: children of nobles and functionaries – 28.8 %; children of members of the urban estates – 26.6 %; children of peasants – 21.7 %. In addition, there was a sharp increase in the number of children of members of other social estates. Thus, by 1913 children from each social estate made up a sizable share of the student body in the region's secondary education sector.

In terms of the ethnic composition of this sector's student body, of note is that because information on this characteristic was not published for 1912–1914 there is no separate table in the present study relating to it. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in 1900 Sukhumi Female Progymnasium was attended by 36 ethnic Russians, 7 Georgians, 3 Armenians, 0 Tatars,

48 mountaineers, 1 Jew, and 18 members of other ethnicities (Otchet, 1901: 214). Mountaineers (Abkhazians) led the way in 1900, accounting for 41.3 % of the sector's student body, followed by ethnic Russians, 31 %, and then members of other ethnicities (Greeks), 15.5 %. Georgians accounted for just 6 % of the student body in this sector.

In 1911, the region's secondary education sector had now a student body of 553 learners, with 217 of these being ethnic Russians, 131 – Georgians (of whom 100 were girls), 20 – Armenians, 0 – Tatars, 48 – mountaineers (28 girls), and 137 – members of other ethnicities (23 girls) (Otchet, 1912: 114, 215). The ethnic composition of the student body changed substantially. The number of Abkhazian students remained at the same level – 48 in 1900 and as many in 1911. The way was now led by ethnic Russians, 39.2%, followed by members of other ethnicities (Greeks), 24.7%, and then Georgians, 23.6%, Abkhazians accounted now for just 8.6% of the student body in this sector.

There was a sound focus on independent student work in this sector, which was facilitated by the good library stock in it.

In 1900, Sukhumi Female Progymnasium had a library stock of 1,618 (713 items in the fundamental library section and 905 items in the discipular one) (Otchet, 1901: 170-171).

In 1914, Sukhumi Real School had a library stock of 8,110 items (4,516 items in the fundamental library section and 3,594 items in the discipular one) (Отчет, 1914: 142), and Sukhumi Female Gymnasium had a library stock of 2,715 items (985 items in the fundamental library section and 1,730 items in the discipular one) (Отчет, 1915: 314). The combined library stock was 10,825 items. Thus, over the 14-year period the library stock in the region's secondary education sector increased 6.5 times.

### Lower education

The region's lower education sector was represented by the following two types of educational institution: 1) the mountain school; 2) the urban school.

The region's first lower educational institution was opened back during the Caucasian War – in 1863. It was Sukhumi Mountain School (Otchet, 1915: 530). The system of lower education in the region received further development only in the early 20th century. Specifically, on September 1, 1900, the region became home to Sukhumi Urban School (Otchet, 1913: 274). On September 1, 1909, the region became home to the four-grade urban school in Ochamchire, and on December 12, 1913, it became home to the six-grade higher primary school in Gudauta (Otchet, 1915: 522, 524). On January 1, 1914, Sukhumi Urban School was reorganized into a six-grade higher primary school (Otchet, 1915: 522, 524).

**Table 4.** Numbers of Lower Educational Institutions Run by the Ministry of Public Education and Students in This Sector in Sukhumi District in the Period 1900–1914 (Otchet, 1901: 360, 417; Otchet, 1905: 358, 413; Otchet, 1908: 236, 237; Otchet, 1909: 273, 275; Otchet, 1910: 299, 301; Otchet, 1911: 299, 301; Otchet, 1912: 299, 301; Otchet, 1913: 250-254, 260; Otchet, 1914: 304-306; Otchet, 1915: 466-469, 480)

Year	Higher primary schools	Urban schools	Mountain schools	Tradesman's schools	Total	Number of students		
						Boys	Girls	Total
1900	-	1	1	-	2	185	-	185
1904	-	1	1	-	2	325	-	325
1907	-	1	1	-	2	335	-	335
1908	-	1	1	-	2	316	-	316
1909	-	2	1	-	3	338	-	338
1910	-	2	1	-	3	408	-	408
1911	-	2	1	-	3	467	-	467

1912	-	2	1	-	3	481	-	481
1913	1	2	1	-	4	576	18	594
1914	3	-	1	-	4	388	29	417

As evidenced in [Table 4](#), the number of lower educational institutions in the region rose 2 times in the period 1900–1914, from 2 to 4. With that said, three of those educational institutions experienced a major qualitative boost by 1914 – they transformed from four-grade urban schools into six-grade higher primary schools. Here, too, World War I had a significant impact on the size of the student body, which in 1914 decreased sharply. Therefore, we will be taking the year 1913 as a basis. By 1913, the number of students in the region’s lower education sector rose 3 times, from 185 learners in 1900 to 594 learners in 1913. The schools in Sukhumi and Ochamchire, as well as the mountain school in Sukhumi, admitted boys only. Only in 1913, following the opening of the higher primary school in Gudauta, would lower education in Sukhumi District become accessible to girls as well (it was the only such facility in the region, though).

**Table 5.** Distribution of the Student Body in the Lower Education Sector in Sukhumi District by Ethnicity in the Period 1900–1914 ([Otchet, 1901: 360, 417](#); [Otchet, 1905: 358, 413](#); [Otchet, 1909: 349, 351](#); [Otchet, 1910: 374-375](#); [Otchet, 1911: 374, 376](#); [Otchet, 1912: 374, 376](#); [Otchet, 1913: 320, 322](#), [Otchet, 1914: 406, 408, 410](#); [Otchet, 1915: 636, 638, 644](#))

Year	Ethnic Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Other ethnicities	Total
1900	28	36	19	-	62	40	185
1904	54	16	24	2	142	73	325
1907	-	-	-	-	-	-	Data not published
1908	62	120	17	-	39	78	316
1909	57	125	34	1	64	57	338
1910	61	185	35	4	79	54	408
1911	70	196	45	6	92	58	467
1912	37	130	46	4	77	187	481
1913	114	118	64	1	155	145	594
1914	79	132	91	-	-	115	417

As evidenced in [Table 5](#), in 1900 the way in terms of the share of the student body by ethnicity was led in the region by mountaineers (Abkhazians), 33.5%, followed by members of other ethnicities (Greeks), 21.6 %, Georgians, 19.4 %, and ethnic Russians, 15.1 %. By 1913, the situation remained pretty much the same: Abkhazians – 26 %, Greeks – 24.4 %, Georgians – 19.8 %, and ethnic Russians – 19.1 %. Thus, in the period under review, the number of Abkhazian students in the region’s lower education sector began to drop, which, among other things, was associated with the opening of new educational institutions there.

**Table 6.** Distribution of the Student Body in the Lower Education Sector in Sukhumi District by Religious Affiliation in the Period 1900–1914 ([Otchet, 1901: 361, 417](#); [Otchet, 1905: 358, 413](#); [Otchet, 1908: 236, 237](#); [Otchet, 1909: 273, 275](#); [Otchet, 1910: 299, 301](#); [Otchet, 1911: 299, 301](#); [Otchet, 1912: 299, 301](#); [Otchet, 1913: 258, 260](#); [Otchet, 1914: 316, 318, 320](#); [Otchet, 1915: 486, 488, 494](#))

Year	Orthodox Christians	Catholics	Armenian Gregorians	Other Christians	Jews	Muslims	Other non-Christians
1900	152	18	1	1	3	5	-
1904	277	22	2	5	13	5	1
1907	294	-	17	7	12	5	-
1908	271	2	17	7	12	7	-
1909	283	2	34	5	11	3	-
1910	347	2	31	5	10	13	-

1911	389	1	44	6	10	17	-
1912	397	2	41	13	9	19	-
1913	490	4	65	9	8	20	2
1914	347	2	41	11	3	13	-

As evidenced in [Table 6](#), the region's lower education sector was always dominated by Orthodox Christians. In 1900, they accounted for 82.1% of the student body (92.9% combined with members of other Christian denominations). In 1913, the number of Orthodox Christians was about the same – 82.4 % (95.6 % combined with members of other Christian denominations). The number of Jews began to drop after some growth up to 1911, and by 1913 the number of Muslims increased 4 times, from 5 to 20 learners.

[Table 7](#) displays the distribution of the student body in the region's lower education sector by social estate in the period 1900–1914.

**Table 7.** Distribution of the Student Body in the Lower Education Sector in Sukhumi District by Social Estate in the Period 1900–1914 ([Otchet, 1901: 361, 417](#); [Otchet, 1905: 358, 413](#); [Otchet, 1908: 236, 237](#); [Otchet, 1909: 273, 275](#); [Otchet, 1910: 299, 301](#); [Otchet, 1911: 299, 301](#); [Otchet, 1912: 299, 301](#); [Otchet, 1913: 259, 261](#); [Otchet, 1914: 317, 319, 321](#); [Otchet, 1915: 487, 489, 495](#))

Year	Children of nobles and functionaries	Children of persons of ecclesiastical status	Children of distinguished citizens and merchants	Children of urban commoners and guilded craftspeople	Children of Cossacks	Children of peasants	Children of foreigners	Other
1900	38	1	-	24	4	110	3	-
1904	42	6	-	61	2	212	2	-
1907	43	2	16	75	1	189	4	5
1908	45	3	11	65	1	181	6	4
1909	34	2	2	54	1	243	2	-
1910	59	3	3	61	-	282	-	-
1911	67	5	-	45	-	322	28	-
1912	66	4	3	42	1	364	-	1
1913	69	8	-	79	-	439	4	-
1914	45	4	2	47	-	317	-	-

As evidenced in [Table 7](#), in 1900 the region's lower education sector was dominated by peasant children, 59.4 %, followed by children of nobles and functionaries, 20.5 %, and then children of members of the urban estates, 12.9 %. In 1913, the share of children of peasants became larger, growing to 73.9 %, with this group followed by children of members of the urban estates, 13.2 %, and then children of nobles and functionaries, 11.6 %. The reason behind the sharp drop in the number of children of nobles and functionaries attending lower school in the region must have been the opening of Sukhumi Real School, which made possible the pursuit of a higher level of education.

In terms of the sector's library stock, in 1900 the newly established Sukhumi Urban School had a library stock of 34 books in the fundamental library section (it had no discipular section as of yet) ([Otchet, 1901: 298](#)). Sukhumi Mountain School had a library stock of 1,436 items (1,078 items in the fundamental section and 358 items in the discipular one) ([Otchet, 1901: 402](#)). In 1900, the combined library stock was 1,470 items.

In 1914, the sector's library stock was as follows: Gudauta Higher Primary School – 272 items (46 items in the fundamental section and 226 items in the discipular one) ([Otchet, 1915: 532](#)); Ochamchire Higher Primary School – 997 items (560 items in the fundamental section and 437 items in the discipular one) ([Otchet, 1915: 534](#)); Sukhumi Higher Primary School – 3,254 items (1,556 items in the fundamental section and 1,698 items in the discipular one) ([Otchet, 1915: 534](#)); Sukhumi Mountain School – 1,934 (1,313 items in the fundamental section and 621 items in the discipular one) ([Otchet, 1915: 540](#)). The combined library stock was 6,457 items.

Thus, in the period from 1900 to 1914 the library stock in the region's lower education sector rose 4.3 times.

### Primary education

In 1911, data on the number of primary educational institutions in Sukhumi District were published as part of the information on the number of primary educational institutions in Kutaisi Governorate, which makes it difficult to tell what the region's figure was in that year (Otchet, 1912: 448). Table 8 displays the data for the period 1912–1914.

**Table 8.** Numbers of Primary Schools Run by the Ministry of Public Education and Students in This Sector in Sukhumi District in the Period 1912–1914 (Otchet, 1913: 336; Otchet, 1914: 428; Otchet, 1915: 672, 682-683)

Year	Number of schools	Number of students		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1912	54	1,977	642	2,619
1913	60	2,307	748	3,055
1914	64	2,410	805	3,215

As evidenced in Table 8, compared with the region's secondary and lower education sectors, World War I had no impact on the size of the student body in its primary education sector following the start of the military conflict, with the number of schools in the sector continuing to increase as well.

It is worth noting that in 1914 the majority of primary educational institutions in the region were mixed – 46 out of the 64. Among the rest of its educational institutions, 10 were boys- and 8 were girls-only (Otchet, 1915: 682-683).

**Table 9.** Distribution of the Student Body in the Primary Education Sector in Sukhumi District by Ethnicity in the Period 1912–1914 (Otchet, 1913: 343; Otchet, 1914: 435; Otchet, 1915: 682-683)

Year	Ethnic Russians	Georgians	Armenians	Tatars	Mountaineers	Other ethnicities	Total
1912	189	242	40	-	943	1,717	2,619
1913	234	1,073	63	16	1,172	497	3,055
1914	236	1,295	83	10	1,118	473	3,215

As evidenced in Table 9, a large ethnic group became part of the 'Other Ethnicities' grouping in 1912. The size of this grouping was much smaller in 1913 and in 1914. Considering that in 1913 and in 1914 there was a significant increase in Georgian students in the sector, it appears that in 1912 Mingrelian students were part of the 'Other Ethnicities' grouping, whilst in 1913 and in 1914 they now figured as part of the Georgian students group. This seems the only explanation for this phenomenon.

In 1914, the student body in the region's primary education sector was dominated by Georgians, followed by mountaineers (Abkhazians) and then members of other ethnicities (Greeks). As mentioned earlier, as at 1897 Sukhumi District had the following population composition: Abkhazians – 55 %, Mingrelians jointly with Georgians – 24.1 %, Armenians – 6 %, and Greeks – 5 %. It is known that as at January 1, 1915, the region had 12,852 children of school age (8 to 11 years), who accounted for about 9 % of its total population (RGIA. F. 733. Op. 207. D. 39. L. 1). Using this information, we can estimate the district's total population in 1914. If 12,852 people accounted for 9 % of the population, then 1 % equaled 1,428 people, which means that the region had a population of 142,800. Based on the 1897 proportions, it can be surmised that in 1914 the region was inhabited by 78,540 Abkhazians, 36,556 Georgians (inclusive of Mingrelians), 8,568 Armenians, and 7,140 Greeks. This enables us to determine the approximate numbers of school-age children across the region's ethnicities. Specifically, in 1914 there were approximately 7,000 Abkhazian, 3,289 Georgian, 765 Armenian, and 639 Greek children of school age. It appears that primary school under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education was attended by 15.9 % of the region's Abkhazian, 39.2 % of its Georgian, and 10.8 % of its Armenian children of school age. Combined with the numbers for its primary parochial education sector



(Table 10), Sukhumi District had the following figures on school-age children attending primary school across its ethnicities – 33% of the total number of Abkhazian, about 80 % of the total number of Georgian, and about 22% of the total number of Armenian children in the region. These estimates do not, obviously, factor in the data for the region’s secondary and lower educational institutions, as well as its private schools.

### Parochial schools

Sukhumi District had an entire network of primary schools subordinate to the Holy Synod. Up to 1908, information on the region’s parochial schools was available only as part of aggregate information for the Sukhumi Diocese (which incorporated Black Sea Governorate too). Only in 1908 would Sukhumi District begin to figure in the Most Faithful Report of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod.

**Table 10.** Numbers of Parochial Schools and Students in This Sector in Sukhumi District in the Period 1908–1914 (*Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1911: 220-221, 244-245; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1913: 112-113; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1913a: 178-179, 206-207; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1915: 122-123; Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1916: 124-125*)

Year	Number of schools				Number of students		
	Two-grade	One-grade	Literacy schools	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1908	10	44	22	78	2,162	552	2,714
1909	10	64	-	74	2,135	586	2,721
1910	10	64	-	74	2,032	497	2,529
1911	11	65	-	76	2,613	748	3,361
1912	10	66	-	76	2,665	774	3,439
1913	9	65	-	74	2,714	825	3,539
1914	10	64	-	74	2,585	857	3,442

As evidenced in Table 10, in 1914 the region witnessed a small decrease in the size of the student body in this sector. The figure had remained virtually unchanged since 1909. In 1908, girls attending parochial school in the region accounted for 20.3% of the total student body, and in 1914, the figure was 24.8%, i.e. there was an increase in the number of female students in this sector.

### Private education

Up to 1912, the region’s private educational institutions were counted among those in Kutaisi Governorate, which makes it difficult to tell what the figure was prior to that year (*Otchet, 1913: 466*).

In 1912, Sukhumi District had 1 lower and 4 primary private educational institutions (*Otchet, 1914: 486*). In 1913–1914, the sector was composed of primary educational institutions only (*Otchet, 1915: 784*).

Table 11 displays the numbers of private educational institutions and students in this sector in Sukhumi District in the period 1912–1914.

**Table 11.** Numbers of Private Educational Institutions and Students in This Sector in Sukhumi District in the Period 1912–1914 (*Otchet, 1914: 486-487; Otchet, 1915: 784-785*)

Year	Number of schools	Number of students		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1912	5	243	217	460
1913	6	217	204	421
1914	3	124	93	217

As evidenced in [Table 11](#), the region's private education sector was an unstable one, with the composition and number of its student body changing all the time, which was typical throughout the Caucasus ([Taran et al., 2021](#)).

By January 1, 1915, out of the 12,852 school-age children (ages 8 to 11), the region's schools across the main levels of its education system run by the Ministry of Public Education were attended by a combined 5,787 students ([RGIA. F. 733. Op. 207. D. 39. L. 1](#)). In addition, the region's parochial schools were attended by a combined 3,442 students. Thus, school in Sukhumi District was attended by 8,729 children, or 68 % of its school-age children.

## 5. Conclusion

By 1914, secondary education in the region was accessible to both boys and girls only in its capital, Sukhumi. Lower education was accessible to boys in Sukhumi and Ochamchire. It became accessible to both genders in 1913 in Gudauta. As far as primary education, Sukhumi District had 64 schools run by the Ministry of Public Education and 74 parochial schools run by the Holy Synod, which, combined, had an enrollment of around 6,500 students. Despite the substantial successes of the region's education system, just 68 % of its school-age children attended school in 1914, with these including 33 % of the total number of Abkhazian, 80 % of the total number of Georgian, and 22 % of the total number of Armenian children of school age in the region.

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