

Education in Finland



Mikko Hartikainen

Finnish National Board of Education, 16 May 2011



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

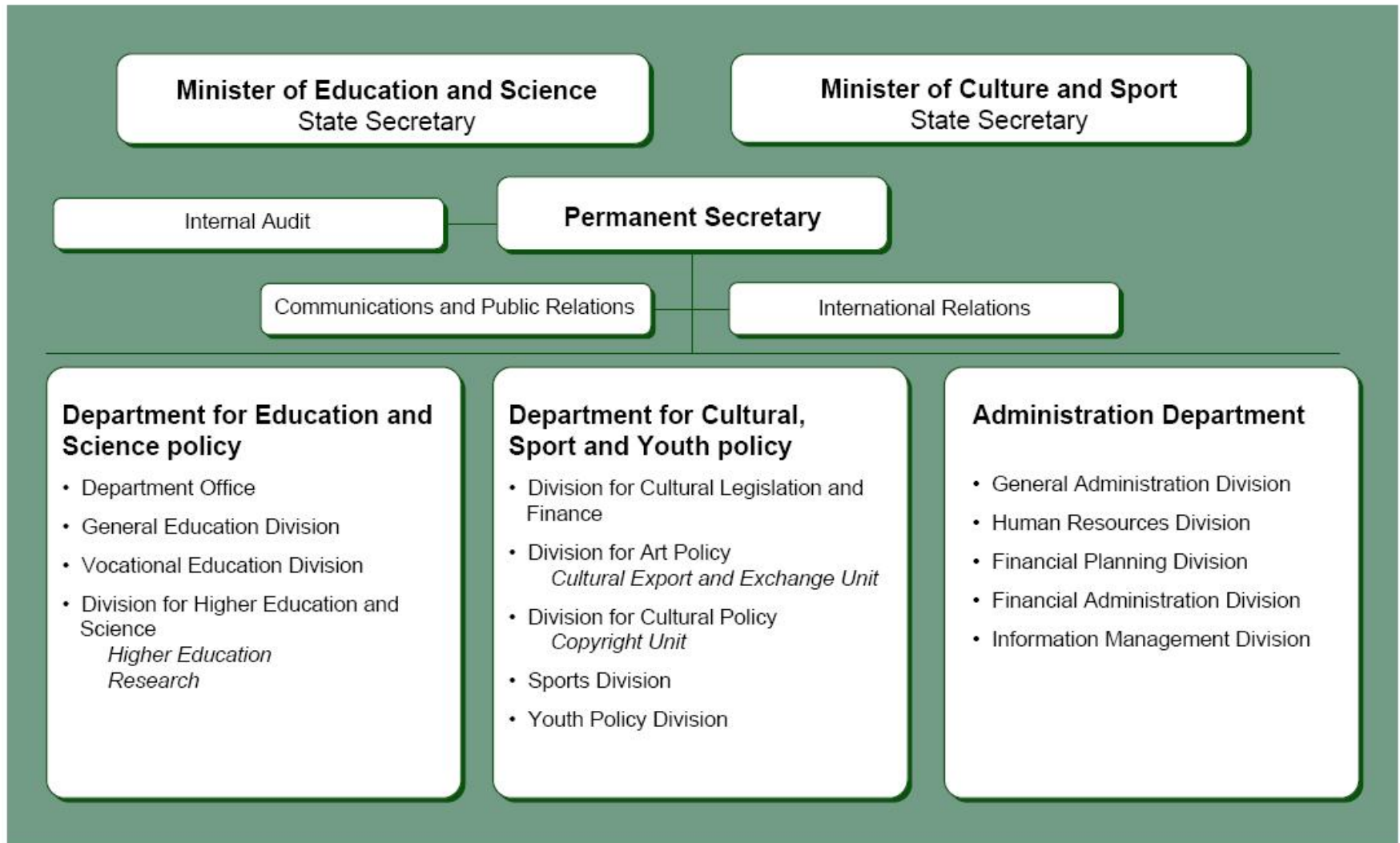
**FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM
SOME BASIC INFORMATION
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

Geographical & political challenges for education and training

- Independent since 1917
- Member of the European Union 1995
- land area 304,086 km²
- population 5.3 million (17 inhabitants / km²)
- two official languages: Finnish (91.5%), Swedish (5.5%)
- Saami official status in 3 municipalities
- fastest ageing population in Europe
- foreigners: 3.6% of population
- Main exports:
electronics, forest industry, metal and engineering

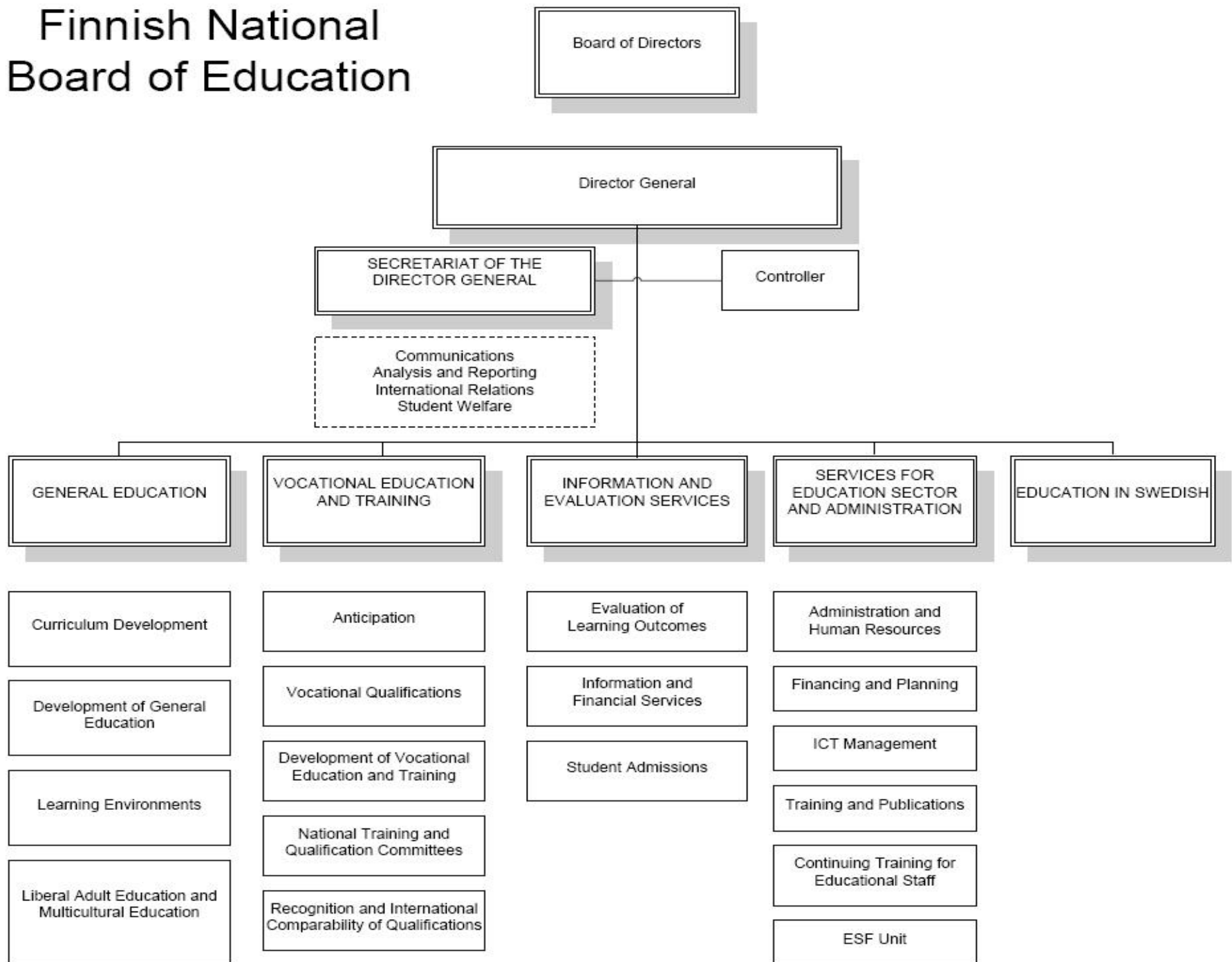


Ministry of Education and Culture



May 2010

Finnish National Board of Education





Possible reasons behind the success

- Equal opportunities to education irrespective of age, domicile, sex, economic situation or mother tongue
- Instruction free of charge
- Central steering - local autonomy, decisions & implementation
- Quality control based on self-evaluation
- Education system almost entirely publicly funded
- Good match between PISA tests and the Finnish national core curriculum
- National development programs in literacy, math and science
- National engagement in reading – public libraries as institutions
- Relative homogeneity of culture and population
- Funding is divided between the State and the local authorities
- Less than 3 % of pupils in compulsory education attend private schools



Finland in PISA: a successful combination of

Quality:

Top results

Equity:

Relatively small differences between schools and impact of socio-economic background

Efficiency:

Investment in education average in terms of funding, low in terms of time.

Nutrition – free school meals



Most likely the key factors?

Equity as a guiding principle

Local level autonomy

Individual support

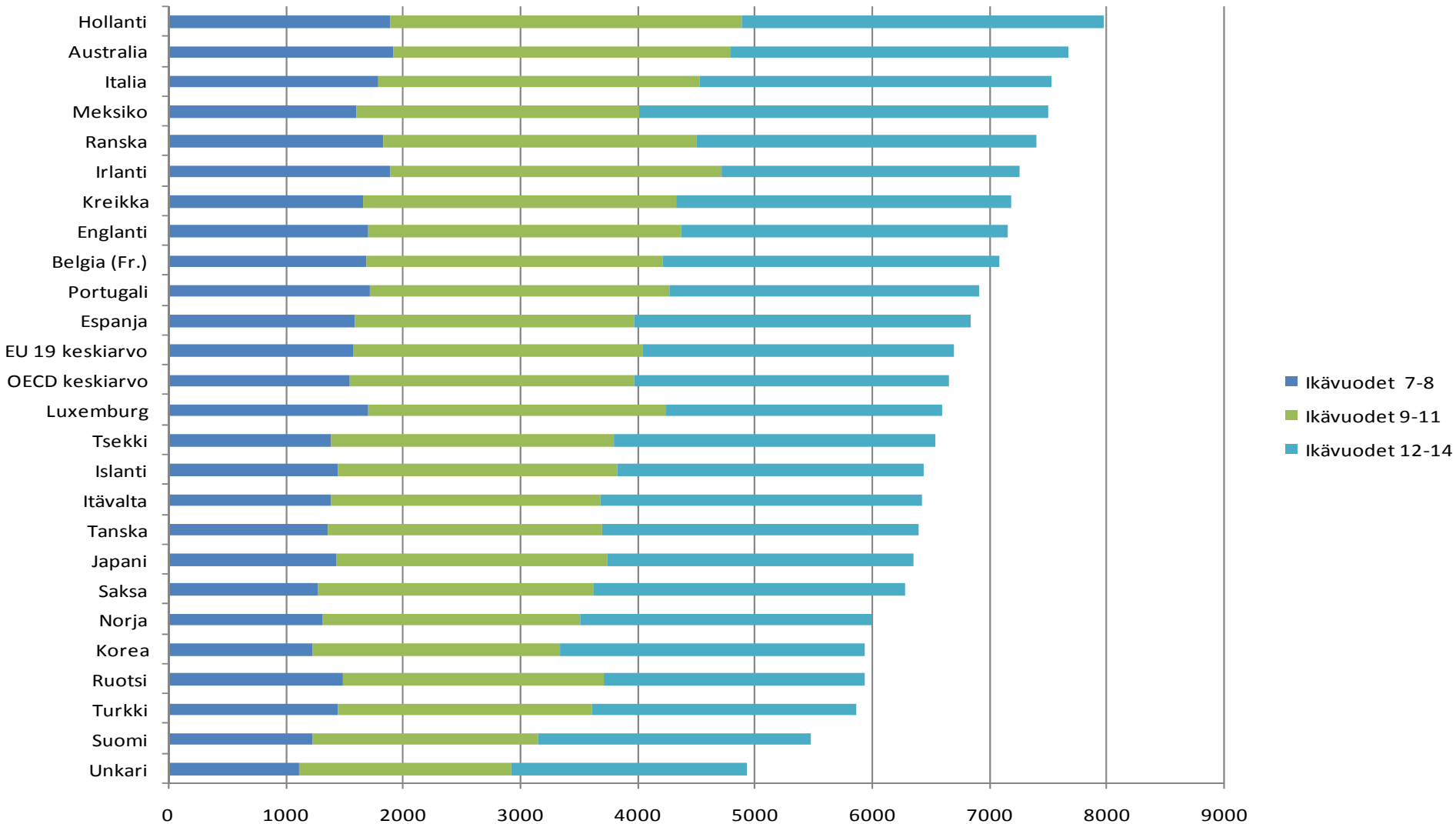
Teachers

Example: **“systematic individual support”**

- Basic Education Act: *“Education shall be provided according to the student’s age and capabilities and so as to promote all students’ healthy growth and development”*
- Student welfare group in every school
- School is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the support activities
- Student guidance and counselling from grade one onwards



The minimum amount of lessons for compulsory education for 7-14 in OECD -countries in 2007





International trend

Finland

Standardisation

Flexibility

Standards for schools, teachers and students to improve the quality of outcomes

School-based curriculum development, networking through steering by information and support

Emphasis on literacy and numeracy

Emphasis on broad knowledge

Basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science

Focus on broad learning objectives, equal value to all aspects of an individual's growth in personality, moral, creativity, knowledge and skills

Consequential accountability

Trust through professionalism

The school performance closely tied to "inspection" and ultimately rewarding or punishing of schools and teachers

Culture of trust, i.e. valuing teachers and principals' professionalism in judging what is best for students and in reporting on progress of their learning

(Sahlberg 2004 with modifications, cited in Hautamäki & al. 2008)



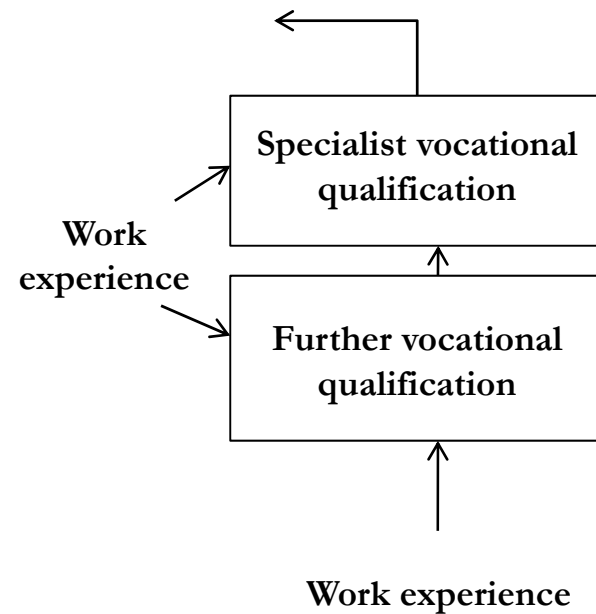
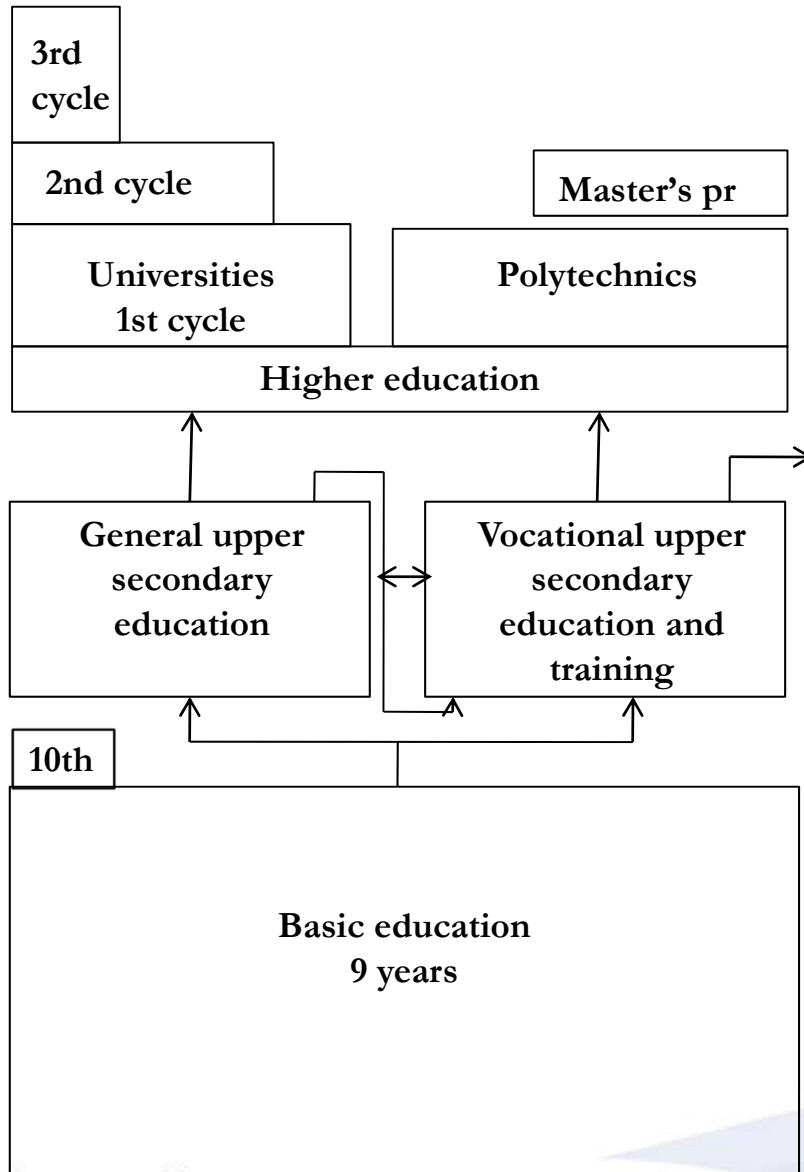
Class sizes – students/teachers

Class sizes (2008)	Finland	OECD	EU (19)
Primary schools	19,8	21,5	20,2
Secondary schools	17,3	24,0	22,7
Students/teachers (2006)	Finland	OECD	EU (19)
Primary schools	15,0	16,2	14,5
Secondary schools	9,7	13,5	11,7

Students/teachers 1998: Primary schools 17,7, Secondary schools 11,0



Structure of education system



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a quick look back

- Until 70s, a socially divided parallel education system with consequent achievement gap
- A long and heated debate preceded the 1968 Act on Basic Education Reform
- Implementation of comprehensive school gradually from North to South 1972-1976
- 1970 first national curriculum, strongly centralized
- Ability grouping until 1985 curricular reform
- Gradual decentralization of education since 1980s
- Inspection system until early 1990s
- Teacher education to universities in mid-1970s

TEACHING AND LEARNING

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

MUNICIPAL CURRICULUM

Municipal

strategies

Teacher education

Study material

National Core Curriculum

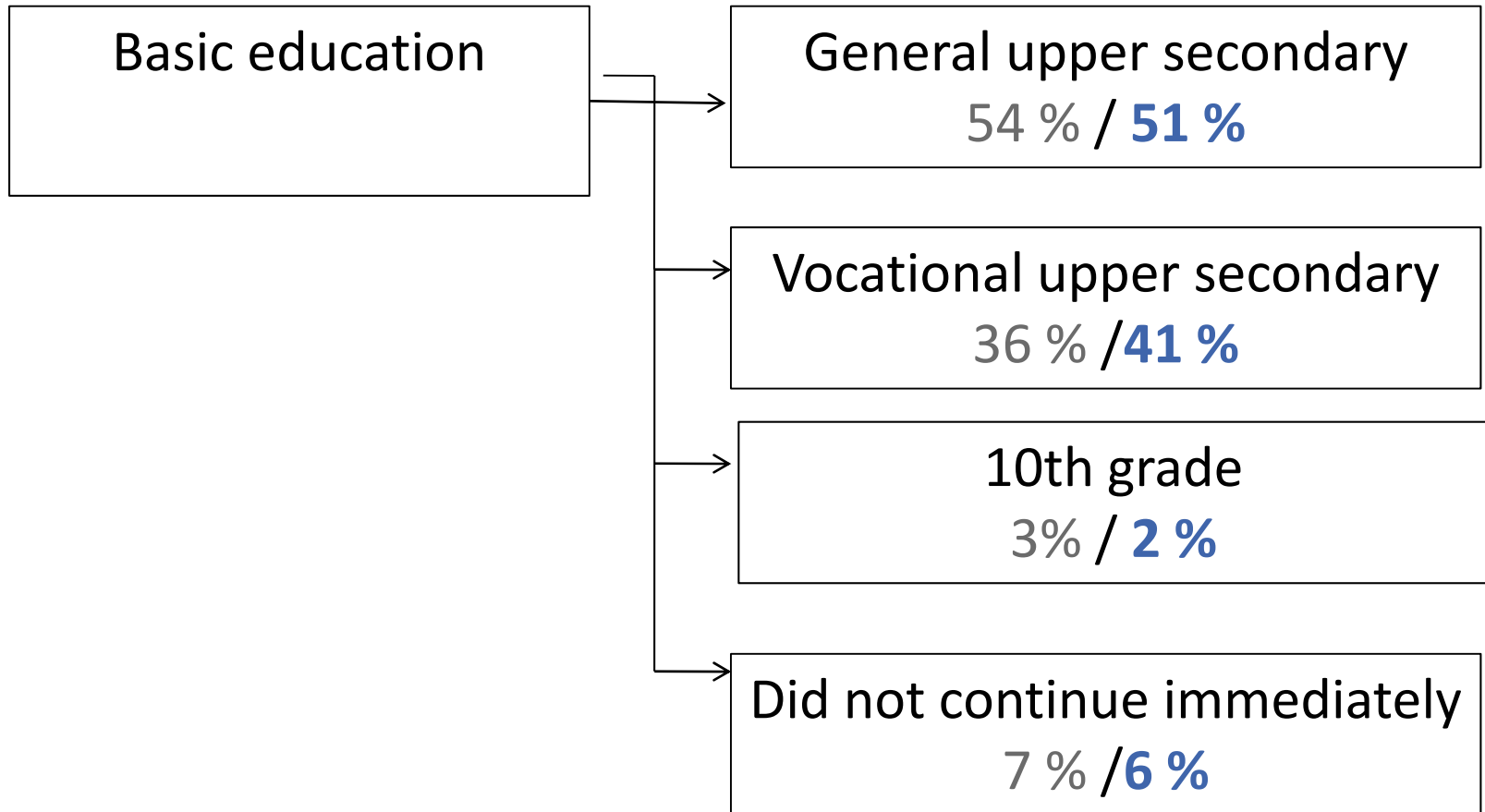
Government's Decree on the General National Objectives and Distribution of lesson hours

Education Act and Decree

Finnish Curriculum System 2011



Choices after compulsory education 2001/2007





Administration in education

State:

- ✓ time allocation
- ✓ core curricula
- ✓ funding (42 %)
- ✓ national evaluation(samples)
- ✓ universities

Regions:

- ✓ monitoring
- ✓ regional cooperation

Education providers/Municipalities:

- ✓ basic, upper secondary & polytechnic ed.
- ✓ allocation of funding
- ✓ local/school level curricula
- ✓ evaluation



Educational expenditure

6.0 % of GDP cf. OECD average 5.8% (Source: OECD EAG 2008)

Current expenditure per student

- basic education 6 200 € (variation 4 600 to 14 000 €)*
- general upper secondary 5 600 €
(≤ 100 : 8,100 € and ≥ 400 : 5,300 €)
- vocational upper secondary 8 900 €
(6,600-13,400 €)
- polytechnics 5 800 €
- universities (incl. research) 9 500 €

Source: Statistics Finland 2007



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School network: proportion of students/school size 2008

School size (no of students)	Basic education	General upper secondary
-50	5 %	0.5 %
50-99	7 %	5 %
100-299	35 %	25 %
300-499	37 %	26 %
500-	17 %	44 %



Curriculum for basic education 2004

National core curriculum

- Learning outcomes
- Guideline for assessment: level "good" outcomes described

Local curriculum

- Description of how learning outcomes are achieved
- Specificities of the municipality, region or school
- Involvement of stakeholders



Example of compulsory elements in local curriculum

(basic education = compulsory education)

- values and underlying principle
- general educational and teaching objectives
- language programme
- lesson-hour distribution to be observed locally
- depictions of operational culture, learning environment, and working approach
- possible instructional emphases, language immersion, or foreign-language instruction
- possible integration of instruction
- implementation of cross-curricular themes
- educational objectives and content in different subjects by year group, or, in instruction of mixed groups, by study module
- instruction in optional subjects
- objectives for pupil behaviour
- cooperation with pre-primary education and other basic education
- cooperation between home and school
- cooperation with other parties
- pupil welfare plan and organization of related cooperation
- principles of curriculum formulation
- guidance and counselling activities as a support for studies, and arrangements for an introduction to working life
- organization of club activities
- provision of remedial education
- instruction of pupils requiring special support
- instruction of pupils belonging to different language and cultural groups
- pupil assessment based on descriptions of good performance and criteria for final assessment
- principles of academic progress
- certificates and reports
- information strategy
- evaluation of activity and ongoing development.



Distribution of lesson hours in basic education

The minimum number of lessons in annual weekly lessons

The instruction of subjects in basic education is grouped into sections as indicated by the vertical lines.

In each section the minimum amount of instruction is marked numerically in terms of weekly lessons per year.

(a weekly lesson per year indicates 38 lessons)

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total	
Mother tongue and literature	14		14			14				42	
A-language	-----				8		8				16
B-language	-----								6	6	
Mathematics	6		12			14				32	
Environmental Studies	Environmental and natural studies										
Biology and geography	9				3		7				31
Physics and chemistry						2		7			
Health education									3		
Religion or ethics	6					5				11	
History and social studies	-----					3		7			10
Music	Arts, crafts and			4-		3-				56	
Visual arts	physical education			4-		4-					
Crafts	26		4-		30		7-				
Physical education				8-		10-					
Home economics	-----							3		3	
Educational and vocational guidance	-----								2	2	
Optional subjects									(13)	13	
The pupil's minimum amount of lessons	19	19	23	23	24	24	30	30	30	222	
Voluntary A-language	-----					(6)		(6)		(12)	

— The subject is not taught at this stage unless the curriculum states otherwise

() The subject is taught as an optional subject



Education priorities 2007-2012

- Equal opportunities to high-quality education free of charge
- Quality improvement of basic education and HE: strengthening remedial & SN measures, smaller groups,
- Ensuring availability of skilled labour; shortening graduation times & completion rates, matching skills needs, immigrant education
- Development of HE; administrative reform, fostering excellence
- Teachers as a resource; pre-service and in-service training



Pupils with special needs

- 8 % of basic education pupils in full-time SNE
- 68 % boys
- Most common reasons are delayed development, aphasia, other brain or physical handicap
- Ca. 50 % partly or fully integrated into mainstream education
- SNE in VET in special institutions
- Ca. 10 % of VET students



Teacher education and training

Kindergarten teachers 180 ECTS (3 years)

Class teachers 300 ECTS (5 years)

Subject teachers 300 ECTS (5-6 years)

Teachers of vocational studies: Master's/Bachelor's
+ work experience + pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS)

Principals:

teacher education

+ certificate in educational administration



Teacher and principal salaries

(average salaries 2007)

class teacher, primary	2,989 €
subject teacher, lower secondary	3,265 €
subject teacher, general upper secondary	3,725 €
VET teacher	3,542 €
principal, basic education	4,324 €
principal, general upper secondary	5,076 €
principal, vocational upper secondary	4,552 €
Average salary 2007: 2,734 (men 3,035 women 2,433)	



Challenges and debates

- Ageing society and regional development (rural vs. urban)
- Economic recession and plans for economic revival
- Duration and completion of studies, drop-outs
- Pupil welfare and security in schools
- Migration and multiculturalism
- Group sizes
- Usage of digital learning resources in schools



Getting basic education better (POP)

Perusopetus paremmaksi (POP) 2008-2011

A large-scale national program to improve basic education.

The Government has offered municipalities special state subsidies (funding to be applied for separately) to improve the quality of basic education with the help of e.g. in-service training of teachers, school club activities, enhanced special support or reduction of group-size and consolidate special needs education.



Professional development of teachers and trainers

In 2009 a working group finalized a national programme for ensuring professional competence in education and among teaching staff.

OSAAVA programme for years 2010–2016, will legally bind education providers to systematically and continually train their teaching staff according to the professional competences needed.

Continuing education shall also be taken into account in employers' staff strategies with respect to the supply, participation in, and quality assurance of in-service training.



As a global citizen in Finland

Finnish National Board of Education, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

National general education project targeted to

1. clarify understanding on growth into global citizenship
2. suggest competencies of global citizens for the national curriculum reform
3. gather and develop pedagogical examples on global citizenship education.

Becoming a Global Citizen

An International Symposium on Competencies of Global Citizens

The Symposium will be organized in Espoo, Finland from 5 to 7 October 2011 by FNBE.

This symposium will aim at further developing ideas, insights and visions, concerning 3 key issues:

What is Global Education?

What are key competencies of global citizens in general education?

How can priorities of global education be nationally identified?

[Link: Program \(pdf\)](#)



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Taítái

TAIDE- JA TAITOKASVATUS

The project's main goal is to promote innovative and diverse ways to organize the teaching of arts, cultural and physical education subjects in different school forms.

KonstFärd

KONST- OCH FÄRDIGHETSFOSTRAN



Taitei

TAIDE- JA TAITOKASVATUS

- pre-primary and basic education
- basic education in the arts
- general upper secondary education
- vocational upper secondary education and training
- vocational adult education and training
- general/liberal adult education

KonstFärd

KONST- OCH FÄRDIGHETSFOSTRAN



TaiTai

TAIDE- JA TAITOKASVATUS

1) **Monitoring**

In the first stage the aim was to find out how much teaching time schools allocate to arts, physical education and home economics.

2) **TaiTai -web portal**

A website will be developed to provide teachers with online pedagogical resources and to promote networking, cooperation, information sharing and interactive development work.

3) **TaiTai -report**

A report that looks into the teaching of arts from various angles will be published.

4) **Seminars**

Annual seminars will be organized to gather different stakeholders to discuss current topics and development needs in the field of arts education.

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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT IN FINLAND

A case study report for the OECD activity Improving school leadership

by: Andrew Hargreaves, Rapporteur Gábor Halász, Beatriz Pont, December 2007

<http://www.bestlibrary.org/files/school-leadership-for-systematic-improvement-in-finland.pdf>

STRONG PERFORMERS AND SUCCESSFUL REFORMERS IN EDUCATION

A video series profiling policies and practices of education systems that demonstrate high or improving performance in the PISA tests: Finland, Ontario Canada, Poland, Shanghai China

<http://www.pearsonfoundation.org/oecd/finland.html>

The report description:

http://www.oecd.org/document/13/0,3343,en_2649_35845621_46538637_1_1_1_1,00.html

PDF:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/50/46623978.pdf>



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