

COUNTRY SYSTEM MAPPING

Country Report: Poland

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



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INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Country System Mapping (CSM) activity is to identify, map and analyse the key features that impact the effective implementation of inclusive education policy in practice in all Agency member countries' education systems. In a departure from previous thematic activities undertaken by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency), CSM considers the **whole** education system from the perspective of implementing policy for inclusive education in practice. However, within this system-wide view, there is a focus on the specific priorities Representative Board members (RBs) have already identified in relation to monitoring and evaluation, cross-sector working and quality assurance.

The main output from the CSM work is a systematic mapping of information on each country's education system.

Information from the individual CSM Country Reports has been analysed in two ways:

- **Thematic Analysis** to highlight issues (challenges and opportunities) emerging from the reports to use as the starting point for the Agency's Thematic Country Cluster Activities (TCCA).

Challenges for inclusion are defined as things the country needs to work on to reach an inclusive education system. Strengths for inclusion are things that encourage and reinforce inclusive practice in the country and could potentially be shown as an example to other countries.

- **Mapping** to inform TCCA groupings, based on the system structures and processes countries have (or do not have) in common.

The agreed goal for the mapping element of the CSM analysis work was to highlight parameters, or comparative factors, that indicate which country systems are structured and/or working in different – or similar – ways.

The information from the CSM work will be used within the remainder of the [Multi-Annual Work Programme 2021–2027](#) (MAWP). As of autumn 2024, country cluster activities will be organised which are closely aligned to individual country approaches to key issues for inclusive education, as well as system structures and processes countries have in common.



Work within a shared vision for inclusive education systems

All Agency work is aligned with the [position on inclusive education systems](#). This agreed position states that the ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that:

All learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers ([European Agency, 2022, p. 1](#))¹.

Agency work focuses on supporting the development of inclusive education systems in member countries to ensure every learner's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. This aim is directed at all learners. However, all aspects of Agency work clearly recognise that some groups of learners face obstacles and barriers that mean they should be considered **learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education in mainstream schools in their local community, alongside their friends and peers**.

UNESCO identifies the possible obstacles and barriers to education learners may face as arising from:

... gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes ([UNESCO, 2020, p. 4](#))².

Many learners may face a combination of these factors and the intersectional (inter-connected) nature of learners' needs must be acknowledged. Every learner has their own unique experiences of discrimination and/or barriers to learning. Everything and anything that can marginalise learners and increase their chances of exclusion from mainstream inclusive education must be understood and recognised.

All Agency member countries are committed to working towards ensuring more inclusive education systems. They do so in different ways, depending on their past and current contexts and histories. Inclusive education systems are a vital component within the wider aspiration of more socially inclusive societies that all countries align themselves with, both ethically and politically. However, all Agency work clearly recognises that countries have differences in their ways of thinking about, identifying and making provision for different groups of learners who may be considered vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education.

All countries have undergone key conceptual changes in their thinking and policy priorities for developments as they move towards inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality education for all learners. Across countries, the first shift was made from the concept of special educational needs to special needs education. This shift represented a focus away from the learner (identified as having special educational needs) towards a focus on the provision they receive (special needs education for learners who experience difficulties at school). The term 'special needs education' has also widened the focus

¹ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022. *Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems*. Odense, Denmark

² UNESCO, 2020. *Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and education: all means all*. Paris: UNESCO



beyond learners with disabilities to include learners who appeared to be failing in school for a wide variety of reasons.

It is worth emphasising here that there have never been agreed definitions of the concepts of special educational needs or special needs education that can be consistently used across countries. The groups of learners considered as having special educational needs which require additional provision largely differ across countries.

The most recent shifts emphasise a move away from a concern with types of special needs or the categories a learner may or may not fall into, towards thinking of inclusion and inclusive education as an approach for all learners. They emphasise the barriers experienced by learners and focus overall on learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion from educational opportunities for different reasons.

Agency work focuses on supporting the development of inclusive education systems in its member countries to ensure every learner's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. This aim is directed at all learners, while recognising the need to specifically address learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education.

Overview of the Country System Mapping

The information collected in the CSM activity aims to provide evidence of and reflection on **where countries currently are** in their inclusive thinking, policy and provision for all learners, but in particular for those learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education.

CSM work focuses on the **whole** education system and how certain structures, mechanisms and processes may impact on the implementation of policy for inclusive education in practice. It aims to get insights into how the needs of all learners – including individuals or groups of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education – are being considered. Many questions refer to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education. Countries have opportunities to clarify what 'learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education' means for them and their systems.

However, it is acknowledged that it may not be possible for countries to provide information covering all learners and all learner groups.

The questions specifically focus on four priorities RBs have identified for wider future Agency work in relation to:

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Cross-sector working
- Quality assurance
- Effective policy implementation.

There are six main sections:

Section 1. Background to the inclusive education system

Section 2. Overview of the education system

Section 3. Legislative and policy framework



Section 4. System governance

Section 5. Quality assurance and accountability

Section 6. Stakeholder collaboration, co-operation and effective communication

Where countries have provided additional comments and reflections, these are included in a separate Section 7.

In each of these sections, relevant information was collected covering International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 02 (pre-primary education) to 3 (upper-secondary education).

All questions were rephrased into statements for the purpose of this report.

System description

Sections 1 to 6 include specific questions that aim to provide a factual description of key aspects of the legislation and policy framework for inclusive education in the country. The system information aims to accurately describe the relevant policy frameworks in countries.

Different types of questions are used to collect information that describes important system features – structures, mechanisms and processes – relating to governance, monitoring, quality assurance and collaboration. The descriptive information includes sources of original material and, where possible, is supported with quotes and citations from relevant policy documents and published work.

The descriptive information will be analysed to highlight parameters, or comparative factors, that indicate how countries are structured and/or working. This mapping will be used to inform country cluster groupings based on system structures and processes that countries have in common.

The descriptive information will also be used to prepare thematic cluster activities with Agency member countries. These activities will elaborate and collect even more detailed country information for the different priority areas from 2023 onwards.



SECTION 1. BACKGROUND TO THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

This section provides key background information in relation to inclusive education in the country.

1.1 Overview of the historical development of inclusive education

The first school in Poland (on Polish soil) for children with disabilities (the Institute for the Deaf-Mute in Warsaw) was opened in 1817. A teachers' seminar for candidates to teach non-hearing and non-speaking children, the first special school teachers' education institution in Poland, was launched at the Institute in 1872. In the 19th century, other institutions were established for visually impaired children, the hearing impaired and non-speaking children and, somewhat later, for children with mild intellectual disabilities as well as for 'morally neglected' children. Due to the efforts of the authorities, religious institutions and private individuals, by 1918 a total of more than 30 special institutions had been opened on Polish soil.

Characteristic features of special education in Poland during the time of the partitions were: segregated education of children with disabilities; organisation of special education facilities exclusively for learners with intellectual disabilities, hearing and visually impaired, and the socially maladjusted (morally neglected); lack of special preparation of teachers to work with children with disabilities; highly diversified special education across the partitions; and lack of universality of special education.

(Source: [Pelczar, R., 2018](#))³

After Poland regained its independence in 1918, the 'Decree on Compulsory Schooling' was introduced (in 1919), also covering children with intellectual disabilities (as long as there was a special education institution in the locality). The first seminar and academy for teachers of children with intellectual disabilities was also established, as well as a special education section of the Polish Teachers' Union.

Special pedagogy and the network of special schools, which were not numerous, were developing. In 1934, they covered about 12% of demand (according to estimates by the Polish Teachers' Union). After the Second World War, 14 of the 63 educational facilities that existed in 1939 remained. Their number increased rapidly in the period 1945–1955. A new development in the post-war period was the introduction of special kindergartens and 'schools of life' into the educational system, i.e. educational facilities for people with profound intellectual disabilities. In 1995, there were more than 100 'schools of life' and 31 special kindergartens (J. Wyczesany, 2002)⁴.

³ Pelczar, R., 2018. 'Szkolnictwo specjalne na ziemiach polskich w XIX i początkach XX w. (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zaboru austriackiego)' [Special education on Polish soil in the 19th and early 20th centuries (with particular reference to the Austrian partition)], *Kultura-Przemiany-Edukacja*, 6 (2018)

⁴ Wyczesany, J., 2002. *Pedagogika upośledzonych umysłowo [Pedagogy of the mentally disabled]*. Cracow: Impuls



Until 1996, the education of learners with disabilities only took place in separate special kindergartens and schools. An amendment to the Act on the Education System in 1996 made it possible to create mainstream inclusive schools and kindergartens or with inclusive classes, in which learners with disabilities could learn together with their unimpaired peers ([Dz.U. 1996 No. 67](#), item 329).

Over the years, parents of learners with decisions on the need for special education increasingly took advantage of new opportunities, especially when special facilities were quite far from the learner's place of residence. However, mainstream schools were not always developed for the education and rehabilitation of a learner with a particular type of disability. There were dilemmas concerning organisational and content-related issues.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES, formerly the Ministry of Education) has repeatedly discussed the place and conditions for educating learners with special educational needs. There have been consultations and public debates, and attempts have been made to develop a model for teaching persons in this group. These works were intensified due to Poland's ratification in 2012 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, drawn up in New York on 13 December 2006.

In 2017, the Minister of Education appointed a team to develop a model for the education of learners with special educational needs. The team included representatives of the scientific community and practitioners – directors, teachers and specialists working in different types of educational system units, as well as representatives of non-governmental organisations. In the course of its work, the team decided to significantly change its paradigm, which meant moving away from the model of education of learners with special educational needs to a model of education for all learners.

The result of the team's work was a document entitled 'Model of Education for All' (2019), outlining a target vision for an education system that takes into account the diversified development and educational needs of learners. The model also took into account the recommendations and priority activities elaborated within the framework of a project co-financed by the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Programme (PWWRS), initiated by the Ministry of Education since 2018 ([PWWRS recommendations](#)). The project was carried out in co-operation with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

The recommendations and model developed in 2019 were subjected to public consultation and formed the basis for further work on the assumptions of legislative changes and the implementation of the principles of quality inclusive education in the practice of Polish pre-schools and schools. These activities continue with the on-going work at the MoE on legislative and organisational solutions, which are to be included in the draft act on the support of learners and families, as well as exploring research, developing methodological resources and piloting the system solutions proposed by the team included in the 'Model of Education for All'.

In 2021/2022, an information and promotional campaign for inclusive education entitled [Education within reach](#) is also being implemented. The aforementioned activities constitute fulfilment of the recommendations, priority activities and assumptions of legislative changes developed in the PWWRS project.



1.2 Legislation and policy definitions linked to key concepts within inclusive education systems

Inclusive education

Under development.

Special needs education

Although the legislation does not define special educational needs (SEN), the term is understood very broadly, and its meaning is determined by the needs of a learner ([Eurydice](#)).

Psychological and pedagogical support (counselling and guidance) is provided to all learners who have been found to be in need of such support. All institutions in the school education system are required to provide psychological and pedagogical support.

Other provisions which indirectly define groups of learners with special needs: special education, rehabilitation and education classes.

A decision on the need for special education (*orzeczenie o potrzebie kształcenia specjalnego*) may be issued for learners with disability (mild, moderate or severe intellectual disability, deaf and hearing impairment, blind and with visual impairment, with a motor disability, including aphasia, with autism, including Asperger's syndrome, with multiple disabilities), social maladjustment or at risk of social maladjustment.

A decision on a need for 'rehabilitation and education' classes (*orzeczenie o potrzebie zajęć rewalidacyjno-wychowawczych*) may be issued only for learners with profound intellectual disability ([European Agency, EASIE](#)).

Learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

The educational regulations listed below do not directly define the types-groups of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education, but indicate them indirectly, such as by listing the groups of learners who may receive additional support and be subject to decisions or opinions issued by counselling and guidance centres.

The following groups of learners who need additional support are mentioned in the regulation quoted below:

- learners with disabilities (blind or with visual impairments, deaf or with hearing impairments, with motor disabilities, autism – including Asperger syndrome, mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities);
- learners with behavioural problems;
- learners at risk of behavioural problems;
- learners who need special organisation of education and methods of work.

Notification of the Minister of National Education of 9 July 2020 on the announcement of the consolidated text of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2015 on the conditions for organising education and care for learners with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment; Journal of Law 2020, item 1309



Regulation education children with SPE 2020 consolidated the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030 ([ISS 2030](#)).

ISS 2030 (p. 7) contains a definition of social exclusion: a situation in which an individual who is a member of society cannot normally participate in the activities of its citizens, and this limitation does not result from their internal convictions, but is beyond the control of the excluded individual. Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and in practice it means an inability to participate in economic, political and cultural life, as a result of lack of access to resources, goods and institutions, restriction of social rights, and deprivation of needs (Legislative Definitions Country Report – [Poland](#)).

Learners with special educational needs

No information.

Other(s)

Article 127, [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)

Special education is provided to the following groups of learners who require special organisation of the teaching and learning processes and special working methods:

- learners with **disabilities**:
 - with an intellectual disability:
 - a mild intellectual disability;
 - a moderate intellectual disability;
 - a severe intellectual disability;
 - deaf;
 - with hearing impairment;
 - blind;
 - with visual impairment;
 - with a motor disability, including aphasia;
 - with autism, including Asperger's syndrome;
 - with multiple disabilities;
- **socially maladjusted** learners;
- learners **at risk of social maladjustment**.

Special education is provided to learners on the basis of a certificate recommending special education (special education certificate), issued by a counselling and guidance centre. A certificate specifies recommended forms of special education, depending on the type of disability, including the level of intellectual disability.

The term 'multiple disabilities' refers to at least two combined types of disability:

- deafness;
- hearing impairment;



- blindness;
- visual impairment;
- a motor disability, including aphasia;
- a mild, moderate or severe intellectual disability;
- autism, including Asperger's syndrome.

(Article 4, section 32, [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#))

Supplementary information on special needs education and the legal basis

The act of 14 December 2016 – Education Law (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1082 as amended), in Article 127 (10–11) – specifies the documents on the basis of which the director of the pre-school/school/educational facility (in consultation with the leading authority) is obliged to organise, respectively, early support for the development of the child, and the education of learners for whom the need for special organisation of learning and working methods, specific learning difficulties or severe intellectual disabilities has been identified.

These are:

- opinions on the need for early support of child development;
- decisions on the need for special education or individual compulsory annual pre-primary preparation and individual teaching;
- decisions on the need for rehabilitation-education classes;
- decisions on the need for special education specifying the recommended forms of special education, including in the case of learners with disabilities – taking into account the type of disability, including the degree of intellectual disability;
- opinions on adjusting the educational requirements, which result from the programme of study, to the individual needs of a learner who has specific learning difficulties that make it impossible to meet these requirements.

The aforementioned documents are issued by counselling and guidance centres (including adjudicating teams operating in public counselling centres). Counselling centres indicate specific forms of support for learners who have been reported to the counselling centre by parents or school (with parental consent). The possession of one of the above-mentioned documents is a prerequisite for the school/pre-school to be granted additional funds in the educational part of the general subvention for ensuring adjusting education and providing support to the learner.

1.3 Individuals or groups of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education focused on in the report

- Learners with disabilities
- Learners at risk of social exclusion
- Learners with social maladjustment and at risk of social maladjustment



- Learners with specific learning difficulties and other types of neuro-developmental disorder
- Learners who, before coming to Poland from abroad, received education in a foreign educational system, not knowing the Polish language to a sufficient degree – including, in particular, refugees from Ukraine
- Learners from the Roma community
- Learners for whom job training units are organised in elementary school
- Learners in the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP).

Educational legislation and activities aimed at equalising opportunities within the framework of educational policy mainly refer to those learners who, due to the difficulties experienced, require early development support, psychological and pedagogical support, special education or rehabilitation-education classes. Educational legislation does not explicitly indicate groups at risk of educational exclusion.

In addition, with a view to supporting learners who are refugees from Ukraine, separate legislation was created and support activities were implemented in 2022.

1.4 Development of thinking around learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

Teachers' attitudes in terms of inclusive education are diverse, ranging from acceptance to opposition to educating learners with mild intellectual disabilities in a mainstream school (research in 2010 and 2011). Acceptance of inclusive education by the teaching team is often accompanied by concern about the modality in which the idea will be implemented in school practice. Teachers fear not so much new problems as a lack of support in solving them. While accepting the idea of inclusive education, they also point to significant barriers to its dissemination, which they already observe in school practice. They further signal the need for solutions to support their work and developing to meet new challenges. They consider their own competencies as the main barriers to inclusive education, examining them as insufficient to achieve success in working with learners with so-called 'special needs', including disabilities.

Related to the issue of competencies is in-service training for teachers, within which they could obtain additional qualifications necessary for work in, for example, a diversified group. The possession of additional qualifications, obtained by directional education, is declared in the research by fewer teachers from mainstream educational facilities (35.8%) than from inclusive schools (58%) and special schools (almost 80%) (2019). This data allows us to understand why almost half of teachers from mainstream schools cited working in a diversified group (47.2%), educational difficulties (48.6%) and awareness of high demands and social responsibility as important barriers to implementing inclusive education (2009, 2013, 2019).

In the opinion of people with disabilities, barriers that discourage the continuation of education in a mainstream school (e.g. after completing elementary school) include the lack of acceptance by parents of learners without disabilities and the learners themselves,



as well as the non-acceptance of the learner's disability in the family and the overprotectiveness of relatives (2015). In other surveys (2009, 2004, 2003), teachers indicate behaviours that show intolerance of learners with disabilities by their peers. Isolation and rejection in peer relationships at a mainstream school are most often experienced by learners with intellectual disabilities.

Less negative attitudes apply to learners with other disabilities, but they too often experience rejection and life on the margins of the peer group. Learners with disabilities tend to occupy a lower social position in the classroom than their peers without disabilities. Learners with disabilities are often viewed by their peers as unattractive playmates (2009). The level of acceptance of a disabled peer increases with age. The isolation rate in the primary grades of elementary school is about 38.1%, in the older grades it is 31.3%, and 77.1% of high school learners recognise that people with intellectual (mild) and physical disabilities should be educated in mainstream schools (2002).

The perception of persons with disabilities by peers without them is accompanied by stereotypes and views that have no logical rationale or support in data or facts (surveys in 2007, 2010, 2012). This is often due to a lack of knowledge about disability. Aggressive behaviour is also a serious problem in peer relations, which can also occur in the relationships of people with disabilities with the community of peers. Survey results on this issue show that isolated learners, who are usually learners with disabilities in a mainstream school, are more likely to experience aggression. Persons with intellectual disabilities appear to be particularly easy targets for attacks (2010). Persons with disabilities (e.g. intellectual) may also exhibit aggressive behaviour, resulting in peer rejection, more often by boys than girls (84.2% to 44%) (2009).

Parents of children with disabilities are positive about pre-primary inclusive education. Important issues for them are being with non-disabled peers as preparation for functioning in an open community, developing competencies and the opportunity to be developed in relationships with peers (2016 survey). They paid attention not to the formal competencies of teachers, but to the results of their work, i.e. the competencies of learners (2009). Their main reasons for choosing mainstream schools (2014) included proximity to home, the opportunity to be developed among non-disabled peers and the best match of a particular school to the learner's needs and interests, and, with regard to vocational schools, also the conviction that the learner will learn a trade.

Among the benefits of inclusive education, parents cite learning tolerance and acceptance (93.5%), developing empathy (81.7%), opening up to the world and appreciating diversity (77.4%), benefits for both groups (71%), and motivation to do a better job for the teacher (37.6%).

Nearly 80% of parents of learners without a disability say they approve of inclusive education, 63.4% have a positive and 33.3% have a rather positive attitude toward educating and raising their children together with their disabled peers. However, parents of learners without a disability are concerned that inclusive education may decrease the level of education. They assume that the teacher will focus their attention on a learner with a disability or developmental impairment or disorder, adapting the educational process to them. In addition, they believe that children with disabilities may feel inferior in a shared community (2017).



Another study (2011) found that with regard to joint education with persons with intellectual disabilities, negative attitudes were displayed by young people (average age 17.7). These individuals supported, to a greater extent than their parents, segregated education for learners with these disabilities.

Parents' acceptance of a particular form of education depends on what opportunities and prospects the school has created for the child. Thus, some parents consider an inclusive school, which enables their child to acquire social competencies and, consequently, to function independently, to be a good solution. For other parents, it is a waste of time to acquire unhelpful and therefore perishable competencies related to, for example, school subjects. They consider the training of primary skills for independent functioning to be crucial.

Some parents of children with disabilities are very negative about segregated forms of education. Other parents, on the other hand, consider special schools as a place for optimal development of their children's skills and personal qualities (2012).

Source: Chrzanowska, 2019⁵, chapters 1.3.1, 1.4.3 and 1.5

1.5 Future education system developments that may impact positively or negatively on inclusive education

The Ministry of Education and Science is working on a draft of a new act on support for learners and families, which aims to provide support in the development and learning process for every learner. The legislation will support raising the quality of inclusive education in Poland, understood as quality education available to every learner as close to home as possible. The main changes planned to be included in the bill are:

Creation of a nationwide, inter-ministerial and intersectoral system of support for learners and families. This system will integrate activities carried out in various sectors (education, social policy, health, culture) to support learners and their families at the central level, local (district, municipality, care or educational facility) and individual (families and the learner) levels. Local institutions and organisations operating in the district will co-operate within the network in the development and fulfilment of individual support plans developed for learners and their families. Co-ordination of activities related to the establishment and fulfilment of these plans will be the responsibility of counselling and guidance centres.

Implementation of a new model, based on a biopsychosocial approach, for assessing the needs of learners and planning supportive activities on this basis (functional assessment). The goal is to identify any barriers to a learner's development and learning, and to plan such activities that will make it possible to eliminate these barriers using the resources available in the learner's community, as well as to more accurately address additional

⁵ Chrzanowska, I., 2019. 'Postawy wobec edukacji włączającej – jakie skutki?' [Attitudes towards inclusive education – what effects?], 'Relacje rówieśnicze – jakie zagrożenia?' [Peer relations – what risks] and 'Edukacja włączająca w badaniach naukowych – perspektywa rodzica' [Inclusive education in research – a parent's perspective]. In I. Chrzanowska, G. Szumski (eds.) *Edukacja włączająca w przedszkolu i szkole* [Inclusive education in kindergarten and school]. Warsaw: FRSE



resources for pre-schools and schools and monitor the effectiveness of their use to improve the learner's functioning. In conducting functional assessments, it is planned to use the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as a framework for collecting information about the learner's functioning, including activity and participation, and the impact of environmental factors on this functioning.

Ordering and supplementing support instruments in the process of education, upbringing and care based on the principle of universal design and the provision of reasonable accommodation.

Use of special education resources to improve the quality of education in mainstream and inclusive educational facilities. In addition to continuing education and upbringing activities, special education facilities will be able to play the additional role of Specialist Support Centres for Inclusive Education (SCWEW). As before, the Polish educational system will include mainstream, inclusive and special pre-schools and schools, as well as mainstream pre-schools and schools with inclusive or special units, and the choice of type of pre-school/school will be determined by the parents of learners.

Early development support for children aged from birth to school entry and supporting families in a new formula, i.e. within local support networks, which include units, using public funds and performing tasks for learners and families located in the district. This will make it possible to cover children and families with multi-specialist and inter-sectoral support appropriate to their needs near their place of residence.

Support in the transition process, including entry into the labour market provided to learners with disabilities in the process of transition both between educational stages, educational facilities within the same educational stage, as well as transition to the labour market or to higher education. Transition to the labour market would be a co-ordinated, cross-sectoral process, which would involve the education sector, employment services, social support, labour market institutions and employers.

Introducing supervision as one of the methods of supporting teachers and specialists. The purpose of supervision is to develop resources relevant to strengthening personal and professional competencies. The scope of supervision support is to strengthen the mental health of the supervised and counteract professional burnout. An important role of supervision is for the supervised to maintain a high level of work provided, to strengthen professional competencies, to search for sources of difficulties in work and opportunities to overcome them. It is planned that supervision will be obligatorily extended to specialists employed in public counselling and guidance centres. For teachers of public educational facilities for pre-school education, schools or institutions, supervision is to be an optional option, to be organised by the director of the school/school facility in consultation with the director of the specialised centre (Wprowadzenie superwizji jako jednej z metod wsparcia nauczycieli i specjalistów).



SECTION 2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

This section provides information on the structures and features of the whole education system that influence the development and implementation of inclusive education in the country.

2.1 Overview of the education system

In accordance with the [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#), since 1 September 2017, full-time compulsory education has been again provided by the eight-year primary school (*szkoła podstawowa*). Young people can participate in part-time compulsory education in, for example, public and non-public post-primary schools or in the form of vocational training at an employer's organisation. The reform of the school system is being implemented in accordance with the Act of 14 December 2016, The Provisions introducing the Law on School Education (*ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2017 r. – Przepisy wprowadzające ustawę – Prawo oświatowe*). Lower secondary schools were phased out by 31 August 2019.

Compulsory education

Compulsory education is divided into:

- one-year compulsory pre-primary preparation;
- full-time compulsory education (requirement to attend school) which starts at the beginning of the school year in the calendar year when the child reaches the age of 7 and lasts until the completion of education in the primary school (ISCED 1), but not beyond the age of 18;
- part-time compulsory education for young people who have finished the primary school and continue compulsory education until the age of 18, in particular, in a post-primary school or as part of vocational training at an employer's organisation.

Learners can also participate in compulsory education in pre-schools or schools abroad and at foreign diplomatic missions in Poland. A learner who has completed education in a post-primary school before reaching the age of 18 can also pursue part-time compulsory education by learning in out-of-school forms or with an employer or by taking courses at a higher education institution (HEI) ([Eurydice](#)).

See also [Eurydice](#) – Structure of the national education system.

In accordance with the Act of 14 December 2016 ([Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)) the school education system includes, in particular, the following pre-primary institutions and schools:

- pre-schools (*przedszkole*) and other pre-primary education settings (pre-primary education centres (*punkt przedszkolny*) and pre-primary education units (*zespół wychowania przedszkolnego*);
- primary schools (*szkoła podstawowa*);



- post-primary schools;
- art schools.

Higher education institutions form a separate higher education system. However, the school education system also comprises colleges of social work (currently, four colleges in total) classified at the ISCED 5B level for international comparisons.

In addition to the above-mentioned schools, the school education system includes (data from the Educational Information System as of 30 September 2022):

- 508 education and care institutions (for example, youth culture centres, inter-school sports centres) where learners can develop their interests and talents and participate in various leisure and free time activities;
- 3,286 continuing education centres and 595 vocational training centres where learners can acquire and broaden vocational knowledge and skills and acquire or upgrade qualifications;
- 169 art institutions: art centres which develop artistic interests and talents;
- 1,284 counselling and guidance centres (referred to as psychological and educational support centres), including specialist services, which provide counselling (pedagogical and psychological support) to children, young people, parents and teachers, and guidance to children in the choice of the area of study or occupation;
- 90 youth education centres, 83 youth social-therapy centres, 323 special schooling and education centres and 31 special educational centres for learners requiring special organisation of education, methods of work and education;
- 190 rehabilitation and education centres providing education, care and rehabilitation to learners with severe intellectual disabilities and intellectual disabilities combined with multiple disabilities;
- 1,228 institutions providing care and education to learners participating in education away from their home (for example, boarding houses, children's holiday homes);
- 384 in-service teacher training institutions;
- 236 educational resources centres (referred to as pedagogical or education libraries).

Pre-primary education is offered to children at the age of 3 and above. As of the school year 2004/2005, all 6-year old children were required to attend a pre-school (*przedszkole*) or a pre-primary class (*oddział przedszkolny*) in a primary school as the School Education Act ([Ustawa o systemie oświaty](#)) introduced a one-year compulsory pre-primary preparation. This requirement applied to 5-year-old children as of September 2011 and has applied again to 6-year-olds since 2015.

The structure of the Polish school education system comprises the following types of schools:

- eight-year primary school: compulsory for all learners (ISCED 1);



- Post-primary schools, including:
 - four-year general secondary schools (leading to the maturity exam) (ISCED 2 and 3);
 - five-year technical secondary schools (leading to the maturity exam and a vocational exam);
 - three-year stage 1 sectoral vocational schools (leading to a vocational exam);
 - two-year stage 2 sectoral vocational schools (where learners finishing a three-year stage 1 sectoral vocational school can continue education and take the maturity exam and a vocational exam);
 - post-secondary schools with programmes of up to two and a half years for learners who have completed secondary or sectoral vocational secondary education (leading to a vocational exam);
 - three-year special schools preparing for employment (general training, not preparing for a specific profession).

Three types of external exams are conducted in the school system: the eighth-grader exam, the maturity exam and vocational exams.

Home schooling

The [Law on School Education 2021](#) of 14 December 2016 (Article 37) states that children can participate in one-year compulsory pre-primary preparation, full-time and part-time compulsory education outside of an educational institution, that is, at home where they are taught by their parents. Home-based education as a form of full- or part-time compulsory education can be provided based on a permit from the head of the relevant educational institution (pre-primary, primary or post-primary school). A permit is issued at the parents' request.

Parents should submit an application for a permit together with the following documents:

- a statement from the parents confirming that they will provide conditions for the child to follow the national core curriculum for a given education stage;
- a statement where the parents undertake that the child will take so-called annual qualifying exams in each school year. Qualifying exams are conducted by the school whose head gave the permission for the child to participate in full- or part-time compulsory education outside of school. The legislation does not specify any qualifications that parents or other individuals involved in home-based education should hold.

Learners participating in full- or part-time compulsory education outside of school receive end-of-year marks based on results of end-of-year qualifying exams which cover a relevant part of the core curriculum, as agreed with the school head for a given school year. Learners do not receive a mark for conduct. Schools offer support to learners participating in home-based full- or part-time compulsory education and their parents; they can participate in:

- after-class activities;



- classes/activities developing abilities and interests;
- rehabilitation classes/activities;
- career guidance activities.

They also have access to textbooks, educational resources, exercise materials and teaching and learning aids available in a given school (where this is agreed with its head), and can seek advice from school staff to prepare for end-of-year qualifying exams. The home-based education arrangement for full- or part-time compulsory education can be terminated at the parents' request, in the case of the learner's unexcused absence from end-of-year qualifying exams or failure to pass them, or in case a permit for home-based education was issued in contravention of the law ([Eurydice](#)).

Special needs education provision

The school education system should provide conditions for all citizens to exercise their right to education, and for learners to exercise their right to education and care as suitable for their age and stage of development. Learners may have the contents, methods and organisation of education adapted to their psychological and physical abilities, and have access to counselling and guidance – referred to as psychological and pedagogical support – and to special forms of learning and teaching when needed. Learners with disabilities, maladjusted learners and those at risk of social maladjustment may receive education in all types of schools, in line with their individual developmental and educational needs and predispositions.

Learners with disabilities may take an individualised learning path, follow individualised curricula and participate in remedial or rehabilitation classes.

Particularly gifted learners may follow individualised curricula and complete education in all types of schools within a shorter period of time.

The school education system also provides support and care to learners in a difficult financial situation or in difficult life circumstances.

The areas of study and curricular contents are adapted to labour market requirements, and schools prepare learners for the choice of a career and area of study and for active participation in economic life through the development of entrepreneurial attitudes.

Support is also available for the teaching of, and in, the Polish language to the Polish diaspora, Poles living abroad and children of migrant workers.

([Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#); Act of 14 December 2016, The Law on School Education; Journal of Law 2021, item 1082 as amended)

The school education system provides support to children from birth. Before entering a pre-primary education setting, children have access to psychological and pedagogical support (counselling and guidance) in counselling and guidance centres. Early development support is available to the child from the time when a disability is diagnosed until the time when they start school.

Education for learners with special educational needs (SEN) is provided at each education level, in pre-schools and alternative pre-primary education settings, in each type of school and in other institutions attended by learners ([Eurydice](#)).



Special education (SE) is provided in:

- 13,353 mainstream pre-schools. This could be within mainstream groups, special units for learners with disabilities and an SE certificate (except children with a mild intellectual disability), or in inclusion units for learners with an SE certificate and their non-disabled peers;
- 1,431 other pre-primary education settings;
- 326 special pre-schools for disabled children with an SE certificate (except children with a mild intellectual disability);
- 14,123 mainstream schools at all levels, where learners may attend mainstream units, special units for learners with a disability and an SE certificate, or inclusion units for learners with a disability and an SE certificate and their non-disabled peers;
- 1,961 special schools: primary schools, including primary schools for learners with mild, moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, three-year (secondary) schools preparing for employment (for learners with moderate or severe intellectual disability or multiple disabilities), general and vocational secondary schools and post-secondary schools.

(European Agency, [Country information](#): data for the 2022/2023 school year from the Educational Information System, as of 30 September 2022)

2.2 Specific features that are present within the education system

Early tracking of learners into a particular educational pathway (i.e. streaming learners by abilities into different types of provision or school; this includes placing children into separate schools)

Not present.

The staff of counselling and guidance centres, pre-schools and schools give psychological and educational support to children, learners and their parents. They indicate educational paths which, in their opinion, would be optimal for the learner: mainstream, special or inclusion. The decision is made by the parents or – in case of 18-year-old learners or older, by the learner themselves. Tracking into a particular educational pathway begins after completing primary school, due to eighth-grader exams.

The recruitment system for secondary schools (which does not apply to special schools) is based on the results of the eighth-grader exam, and therefore results in a competitive application process. However, the regulations specify bonuses for learners with disabilities and health problems that limit school choice, who have an opinion from counselling and guidance centres. In the first stage of the recruitment procedure, learners with disabilities receive additional points. In the case of equal results obtained at the first stage, at the second stage of the recruitment procedure, priority is given to candidates with health problems that limit school choice, confirmed by the opinion from counselling and guidance centres ([Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. – Prawo oświatowe](#); Act of 14 December 2016, The Law on School Education; Journal of Law 2021, item 1082 as amended).



In the 2020/21 school year, the possibility of employing non-teachers in public counselling and guidance centres was introduced (with the approval of the head of the Education Authority). The purpose of the solution, which continues in the school year 2022/23, is to improve the process of identification of special educational needs of children and adolescents who are refugees (citizens of Ukraine), as well as providing them with psychological and pedagogical support (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science dated 21 March 2022 on the organisation of education, upbringing and care of children and youth who are citizens of Ukraine, Journal of Laws 2022, item 645, as amended).

‘Double-shift’ patterns to the school day (i.e. learners attend for either a morning or afternoon session)

In some secondary schools, classes are held in two shifts – older learners finish lessons in the late afternoon/evening.

The reason for this is the accumulation of learners born in 2006–2007, related to the lowering of the compulsory school age (in 2014, 7-year-olds and half of the 6-year-olds started elementary school) and the change in the structure of the educational system, including the elimination of lower secondary schools (the first accumulation took place in 2019). In addition, many new learners – refugees from Ukraine – were admitted to the school.

As a result, some secondary schools have a shortage of rooms and teachers, so the affected schools are organising double-shift classes.

An example is described in a [Strefa Edukacji article on double-shift classes](#).

The problem of two-shift work in schools has not been addressed in parliamentary interpellations, speeches by the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Children and other interventions/complaints to the Ministry of Education. The provisions of the Act on the Law on School Education do not contain regulations directly specifying the hours of beginning and ending of educational classes at school. Article 110 (4) of this Act obliges the head of the school to take into account the principles of health protection and occupational hygiene when determining the weekly schedule of classes. Compliance with these rules by school heads is enforced by sanitary–epidemiological service personnel inspecting schools and by the head of the Regional Education Authority with jurisdiction over the location of the school (Law on School Education 2021 consolidated).

Grade retention (i.e. holding learners back to repeat school years, instead of providing flexible support that enables learners to progress with their peers)

In primary school, promotion to the next grade is automatic in grades 1 to 3. Learners may repeat a year only in exceptional cases where this is justified by the level of their development, achievements or health condition. For promotion in grades 4 to 8 and in upper-secondary schools, learners should receive an end-of-year mark higher than ‘unsatisfactory’ for each compulsory subject. Those who have received (an) ‘unsatisfactory’ mark(s) can take a resit exam. If they fail the exam, they are not promoted to the higher grade. The teaching council may promote conditionally a learner who has received the ‘unsatisfactory’ mark in one subject only ([GEM report](#)).



In 2020–2022, there was an increase in grade retention from 0.8% (for 2020/2021) to 1.6% (for the 2022/23 school year), mainly among learners in grades 7 and 8 of primary school and grade 1 of primary school. The reason for the increase may have been the presence of learners – refugees from Ukraine – in the Polish educational system. Ukrainian learners, who studied in the preparatory ward, were not subject to grade retention. However, learners attending regular classes were classified and subject to promotion or non-promotion to a next grade on the same basis as Polish learners. Decisions on the repetition of the year by learners of grades 1–3 of primary school are made by boards of education in exceptional cases, justified by the level of development and achievements of the learner in a given school year or by the state of health of the learner. The request in this case is made by the class teacher after consultation with the learner’s parents or the learner’s parents after consultation with the class teacher.

Another factor which may have played a role in the increase in grade retention during this period was the (significantly larger) population of learners in grades 7 and 8 of primary school, related to the reduction of the school age from 7 to 6 years. In 2014, children born in 2007, that is, 7-year-olds, and part of the population of 6-year-olds – born from January to June 2008 – went to school. In addition, a period of remote school work caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to the increased grade retention.

Multiple languages of instruction

Teachers may be supported by an assistant speaking the language of the learner’s country of origin. A school may also establish a preparatory class for learners in compulsory education who have no or insufficient knowledge of the Polish language to follow a mainstream education programme, have language communication problems or have adaptation difficulties due to cultural differences or a change of the learning environment ([GEM report](#)).

With a view to the increased number of refugee learners from Ukraine who could take the eighth-grader or matura exam in the 2021/2022 school year, the possibility has been introduced of appointing persons who are not examiners (entered in the register of examiners) and who know the Ukrainian language to the examination team to check the examination papers of Ukrainian citizens. These persons will be required to undergo training for examiners. The solution continues in the 2022/23 school year (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of March 21, 2022 on the organisation of education, upbringing and care of children and youth who are citizens of Ukraine – Journal of Laws of 2022, [item 645](#), as amended).

Specific policies on access to compulsory education in local schools (i.e. school selection policies)

The Constitution of Poland states that every individual has the right to education. According to educational law, public primary schools are required to take all children living in their catchment area. Learners with disabilities and those with behavioural problems have the right to learn at all types of schools. The main principle is to create didactic situations to reinforce the inclusion of all learners, including those with ‘special educational needs’ (SEN), provide their contact with peers and participation in the school community life ([CPRA Section 1](#)).



2.3 Public and private authorities responsible for different types of provision

Non-public education in the school education system:

The period between the strengthening of the new regime after 1945 and the political breakthrough in 1989 did not provide favourable conditions for the development of non-public (non-state) education. As a rule, it was the state that established, governed and financed schools and other educational institutions. Schools, other educational institutions, care-and-education institutions and other training institutions could be established and administered by professional organisations, youth organisations, civic organisations and other organisations and institutions, including religious ones, but only upon a permit from the minister responsible for education who set rules for administering them and supervised them. Thus, in 1989 only 63 of all 26,358 pre-schools were non-public, including 33 administered by religious congregations. There were also 12 non-public primary schools (18,283 primary schools in total) and 20 non-public upper-secondary schools (939 in total) (Central Statistical Office, Education 1990/91 / GUS, *Szkolnictwo 1990/91*). Most of the few entities administering non-public establishments at that time were religious organisations and institutions.

The first 'civic' schools emerged at the end of the 1980s. They were called 'civic' to distinguish them from public schools and, at the same time, to emphasise that they were not private. Administering a school did not bring profit to their 'owners': teachers and parents who set up the Civic Society for Education. Both civic and private (including church-administered) schools developed rapidly between 1990 and 2000. The School Education Act of 7 September 1991 ([Ustawa o systemie oświaty z 7 września 1991 r.](#)) created a legislative framework for the expansion of non-public education in Poland.

Currently, schools and other educational institutions may be **public** or **non-public**:

- **Public schools** are institutions established and administered by a central government body (the competent minister), a local government unit (*gmina*, *powiat* or *województwo*) or – upon a special permission – by another legal entity or natural person. A public school implements school curricula and complies with the rules for learner assessment as established by the minister responsible for school education. It provides tuition-free education insofar as classes are included in an outline timetable established by the minister. Learner admissions are governed by the rules laid down in national legislation.
- **Non-public schools** are institutions established and administered by legal or natural persons upon entry into the register of non-public schools and other educational institutions kept by the relevant local government unit. A non-public school implements the national core curriculum for general education and conducts compulsory classes in accordance with the same rules as public schools. It also applies the rules for the assessment and promotion of learners and employs teachers who hold required qualifications as laid down by the minister responsible for school education.

The right to establish and operate non-public schools is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland ([Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej](#) – Article 70, section 3). Both



public and non-public schools are supervised by the state with regard to the quality of education and the compliance of their activities with national legislation, although supervision is more extensive in the case of public schools than non-public schools. The main differences between public and non-public schools are that the former provide tuition-free education and ensure open access, in particular, to primary schools. The state guarantees that the outcomes of the education process are recognised across the country and learners can automatically move on to other public schools or non-public schools with a similar status ([Eurydice](#)).

In the school year 2022/23, 6,565 of all 15,110 pre-schools were non-public. There were also 1,562 non-public primary schools (14,123 primary schools in total) and 1,120 non-public secondary schools (6,157 secondary schools: general, technical, stage 1 and 2 sectoral vocational in total).

2.4 Levels of autonomy open to educational institutions – schools, local authorities, school maintainers, etc. – within the system

The responsibility for co-ordination of educational policy rests with the minister in charge of school education. Some ministers can administer public schools and other educational institutions.

As a result of the state administration reform and the education reform, only the national educational policy is developed and implemented centrally, whereas the management of education and the administration of schools, pre-schools and other educational institutions is decentralised. The responsibility for the administration of pre-schools (*przedszkole*) and primary schools (*szkoła podstawowa*) has been delegated to the communes (*gmina*). The administration of post-primary schools (above the lower-secondary level until 31 August 2017), art schools and special schools has been delegated to districts (*powiat*) as their statutory responsibility. The self-governing provinces (*województwo*) administer only schools operating at regional and supra-regional levels. The responsibility for pedagogical supervision rests with the heads.

2.5 General mechanisms for funding schools

Education is funded primarily from public sources. Public funds represent around 91% of funding in school education and around 79% in higher education. The main sources of public funding include:

- general and targeted state budget subsidies and grants;
- local government unit resources;
- other public funds (for example, the Labour Fund and budgets of central government agencies allocated for the training of specific occupational groups);
- European Union (EU) funds.



Public funding is provided to public and non-public institutions which fulfil the requirements set out in the national legislation (Kolanowska, 2021)⁶.

The general subsidy amount for all local governments is defined annually in the Budgetary Act. The minister for education then establishes the algorithm for the distribution of these funds among relevant local governments.

The algorithm assumes increased funding for learners with disabilities, socially disadvantaged learners or those at risk of social disadvantage who have an official decision of special educational needs. The amount of funds is different for different types of special needs. There is no difference in the amount of funds per learner given to mainstream and special schools. Inclusion classes and inclusion schools, where the support of an additional teacher is obligatory, receive slightly higher funds. There is no financial mechanism to directly promote inclusive education.

According to the Act on Revenues of Local Governments, local government authorities decide on the use of funds received as part of the general subsidy. Local governments can therefore decide on the total expenditure on education and on its allocation, taking into consideration their total revenues. However, they must only spend funds received from the central budget for the education of learners with special educational needs on this purpose (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

Schools are considered to have **full or substantial autonomy** if they are fully responsible for their decisions within the limits or general framework set by the legislation on education.

Schools have **partial autonomy** if they can choose from a number of pre-determined options or their decisions should be approved by education authorities.

School autonomy can be considered with regard to three basic dimensions:

- use of public funds;
- acquisition and use of private funds;
- staff policy.

([Eurydice](#))

Pre-schools and crèches are subsidised with state targeted grants. The school authorities are responsible for the preparation of income and expenditure (financial) plans for all supervised educational institutions. Local governments also establish regulations for teacher remuneration and for the provision of financial support for learners. They are responsible for educational investments. Funds defined in the financial plan, which is presented to the school authorities for consultation, are disbursed by the school head teacher, who is responsible for their proper use.

Primary schools should provide the textbooks and practice materials for learners, tailored to their needs. They receive a specific subsidy from the state budget for this purpose, which is higher for learners with disabilities.

⁶ Kolanowska, E., 2021. [The System of Education in Poland 2020](#), Warsaw: Foundation for the Development of the Education System



The community must provide transport to pre-schools and schools free of charge (in cases specified in the Education Act). This is not financed by the state budget.

Parents pay for meals. If the family is in a difficult financial situation, it is possible to provide meals paid for by social care (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

2.6 Specific mechanisms for funding the inclusion of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

Currently, the educational system provides for support of a learner at risk of educational exclusion through fulfilment of material aid benefits of a social or motivational nature (Art. 90 d and e of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the educational system – Journal of Laws of 2022, item 2230).

According to Chapter 8a ‘Material aid for learners’ of the Act on the Education System, a learner is entitled to material aid from funds allocated for this purpose in the state budget or the budget of the relevant local government unit.

Material aid is provided to learners in order to reduce disparities in access to education, to enable overcoming barriers to access to education resulting from a learner’s difficult material situation, as well as to support the education of gifted learners. Support benefits of a social nature are school scholarship and school allowance.

A learner may be granted both social and motivational support at the same time.

A school scholarship may be awarded to a learner in a difficult material situation, resulting from low per-capita income in the family, in particular when the family has: unemployment, disability, severe or prolonged illness, large number of children, inability to fulfil the functions of caring and raising children, alcoholism or drug addiction, as well as when the family is incomplete or an unforeseen event has occurred.

A school scholarship may be granted to learners in the form of:

- full or partial coverage of the cost of participation in educational classes,
- support in kind of an educational nature, including in particular the purchase of school textbooks.

The amount of the school scholarship paid to the learner ranges from PLN 99.20 to PLN 248 per month.

School allowance

This benefit is available to learners who are temporarily in a difficult material situation due to an unforeseen event, e.g. whose material situation has deteriorated due to illness or death of a parent. The school allowance may be granted in the form of a cash benefit to cover expenses related to the educational process or in the form of educational support in kind. The school allowance may be granted once or several times during the year, regardless of the school scholarship received, but may not exceed at any one time five times the amount of the family allowance due for a child aged 5–18, as defined in the act of 28 November 2003 on family benefits (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 615, as amended).



Municipalities receive targeted subsidies from the state budget for scholarships and school allowances. The amount of the subsidy is determined on the basis of data, as indicated in the regulation of the Minister of National Education dated 21 March 2019 on the timing of the transfer of targeted subsidies to municipalities for financing material aid benefits of a social nature and the modality of determining the amount of this subsidy (Journal of Laws, item 554). The data includes, among other things, the number of persons aged 6 to 18 registered for permanent residence in the municipality, the percentage of learners, participants in rehabilitation-education classes and learners of social service colleges, which were awarded a school grant among those registered for permanent residence in the municipality, as well as the rate of tax income per capita in the municipality.

One of the components of the formula is the amount of funds which were guaranteed in the budget act for the payment of school scholarships and allowances for a given year, within the purpose reserve item 26. These are funds for equalising educational opportunities for learners, ensuring that learners subject to compulsory schooling have access to free textbooks, educational materials and practice materials, etc.

Other state-funded programmes

The following programmes are being implemented with an impact on the inclusion of learners at risk of exclusion from inclusive education:

- government programme to support learners in the form of a random allowance for educational purposes;
- support for learners in the form of therapeutic-educational trips;
- support for learners in the form of care and therapeutic-educational classes in 2022–2024, which is intended for learners from families affected by negative weather events. In 2022, PLN 198,400 was mobilised for 199 learners for the fulfilment of the programme.

Families of learners may benefit from various types of support offered as part of the family support system (family allowances and supplementary allowances), the tax system (a so-called family tax benefit), the healthcare system (free healthcare), as well as by schools themselves (for example, free transport). A child-raising allowance, amounting to PLN 500 (EUR 109.9) has also been granted since 2016. Furthermore, support is available as part of special government programmes: ‘Government programme supporting learners with disabilities: grants for the purchase of textbooks, learning resources and school exercise materials, 2020–2022’ (*Rządowy program pomocy uczniom niepełnosprawnym w formie dofinansowania zakupu podręczników, materiałów edukacyjnych i materiałów ćwiczeniowych w latach 2020–2022*).

All learners, regardless of the financial situation of their parents, are targeted by the government programme entitled ‘Good Start’ (*Dobry start*). Within this programme, which has been implemented since 2018, parents receive PLN 300 once a year for a child learning at school until the child turns 20. For a disabled child learning at school, the benefit is granted until the child turns 24 years old.

Within the ‘Meals at school and at home’ (*Posiłek w szkole i w domu*) programme, free school meals are available to learners from low-income families and in cases defined by



the act on social support (Art.7), including unemployment, disability, long-term illness, the need to protect motherhood or multiple children.

The government programme for financial support of municipalities in the field of nutrition 'State aid in the field of nutrition' has been implemented since 2014. Its goal is to reduce malnutrition among learners from low-income or disadvantaged families, with a particular focus on learners from high-unemployment areas and rural communities, as well as adults, especially single, elderly, sick or disabled people. The co-ordinator of the Programme at the level of government administration is the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The co-ordinator of the Programme at the voivodeship level (administrative districts or provinces) is the voivode, while at the municipal level it is the mayor (mayor, city president). The programme at the municipal level is implemented by local government social support units with the participation of other municipal organisational units. Within the programme, support is provided to:

- children until they start primary school;
- children until they complete secondary school;
- individuals and families in situations listed in Article 7 of the Act on Social Welfare, in particular to lonely, elderly, ill or disabled persons.

The programme provides for support in the form of a meal, a cash benefit in the form of an intentional allowance for the purchase of a meal or food, or an in-kind benefit in the form of food products. Assistance in the form of a meal may also be granted without the need to determine the situation of the family through a family environmental interview and the issuance of an administrative decision by the social welfare centre. It is sufficient for the child to report the need to be provided with a meal to the director of the school.

A system of benefits for large families (the so-called Large Family Card) has been in place since 2014. Families of disabled children are entitled to receive various additional types of support ([Eurydice](#)).

In 2017, the Pro-Life programme was launched, within which additional early life support instruments were introduced for children with, and at risk of, disabilities. Within the programme, a new solution was introduced into the educational system from 2017 to 2021, consisting of inter-departmental and multi-specialist work with a child from birth to the start of school. This task is carried out by the so-called leading co-ordination-rehabilitation-care centres (WOKRO), which were established on the basis of special schools, special residential schools and counselling and guidance centres. WOKROs in the fulfilment of the programme provided:

- support for children aged 0–3, which has not been common so far in educational practice;
- access to support for children, with opinions and decisions issued from counselling and guidance centres, as well as medical certificates;
- inclusion in support of children at risk of disability;
- support for children and families by specialists such as physiotherapists, doctors and midwives, which has not been possible in education so far.



In the last three years of fulfilment of the programme, about 18,000 children and their families benefitted from its support each year, while the number of hours of direct work with the child reached more than 750,000 annually. In 2022–2026, the initiative will be continued by about 340 (out of 380) district governments. As at 12 October 2022, MoES has signed agreements for fulfilment of the initiative with 322 district governments ([Pro-life programme](#)).



SECTION 3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

This section provides information on the overall framework of legislation and policy governing the whole of the education system in the country.

3.1 Is there a single legislation and policy framework covering all learners in all educational settings?

Yes.

3.1a Description of the single legislation and policy framework

In 2017, the Ministry of National Education started work to improve the quality of inclusive education in daily practice by developing assumptions for new legislation and programming inclusive activities. The Agency supports the Polish Ministry in this process within the [Structural Reform Support Programme](#) action, Supporting the improvement of Quality in Inclusive Education in Poland, financed by the European Union. The project aims to support the development of new legislation to improve the quality of education for all learners (European Agency, [Country information](#)), in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. An important goal of the project is to improve the quality of everyday school practices into more inclusive and effective ones. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to move from a medical to a bio-psycho-social understanding of development and educational needs, including those resulting from disabilities.

The second stage of the project was implemented in 2019–2021. Its goal was to develop draft acts on inclusive education, as well as to develop assumptions for legislation implementing the planned changes. The assumption proposals for legislative changes were developed on the basis of the recommendations developed in the first stage of the project and on the basis of the analysis of the results of the work of the expert team, appointed in 2017 by the Minister of Education. Within the second stage of the project, three meetings were held – consultations of the proposed areas of legislative changes and in 2019 a conference entitled ‘Inclusive education – from assumptions to practice’.

The Agency included the conclusions of the meetings and conferences in a new version of the proposed areas of legislative changes, which were then subjected to consultations during 12 regional meetings (three in-person meetings and, due to epidemic constraints, nine online meetings). In 2021, a workshop was carried out on the assumptions of the projects for implementing the changes in Polish schools, with the participation of representatives of the MoES, ORE, IBE, schools and educational facilities, and representatives of countries which have successfully implemented such solutions at home: United Kingdom, Iceland and Sweden. The project ended in the first quarter of 2021.

Education as an element of the Polish Deal (Polski Ład)

Until 2020, the primary strategic document of the Polish government was the Strategy for Responsible Development. At present, the role of the main strategic programme has been



taken over by the Polish Deal, the outline of which was announced in June 2021. The Polish Deal includes a separate chapter on education entitled. 'Friendly school and culture for the new century'.

The strategy announces the establishment of a Child and Family Centre as an institution to support the development of children, learners and families expecting or raising children. Additionally, it announces a new model of psychological support and a psychological-pedagogical office in every school. The Polish Deal also announces a new post-pandemic COVID-19 equity programme.

With regard to the development of learners' skills, the Polish Deal draws attention to the further development of learners' digital competences and promises to increase the role of history in the curriculum.

Within the framework of the 'Green School' programme, the new strategy also announces thermal modernisation of schools, improving energy efficiency, equipping buildings with ecological heating systems, energy-efficient lighting and better ventilation systems.

The following strategic projects related to education have been identified in the Polish Deal:

- Child and Family Centre
- Psychological Support Programme
- National Educational Equity Programme after COVID-19
- Digital Core Curriculum
- Green School
- Day Care Centre Fund
- Youth Community Councils Fund
- Friendly and Accessible Schools for All
- Educational Workshop of the Future
- Learner Loan
- Modern Skills Fund.

([Polish Deal Programme](#); [Eurydice](#))

3.1b Overview of the general education legislation and policy framework guiding the whole system

Not applicable.

3.1c Overview of the specific education legislation and policy framework impacting on the inclusion of learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

A government programme to support learners with disabilities in 2020–2022 creates the possibility of subsidising the purchase of textbooks and educational and practice materials for learners with a decision on the need for special education who attend secondary schools. In 2022, PLN 16.2 million was released for the fulfilment of the programme for 43,491 learners.



A government programme to support learners in the form of a random allowance for educational purposes, therapeutic-educational trips, and care and therapeutic-educational classes in 2022–2024 is intended for learners from families affected by negative weather events. In 2022, PLN 198,400 was mobilised for 199 learners for the fulfilment of the programme.

As part of the implementation of the [National Oncology Strategy for 2020–2030](#) programme, the Ministry of Health announced a tender procedure: ‘Preparation of materials for learners and teachers and implementing a pilot as part of educational activities for cancer prevention and the formation of pro-health attitudes in the field of school health education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the implementation of the Educational Programme for Health in Schools’ ([Eurydice](#)).

In order to strengthen the school community within the tasks of the National Health Programme 2016–2020, the mental health promotion programme ‘I Think Positively’ was developed. Two guidebooks on the role of teachers and parents in promoting mental health and preventing self-destructive behavior in adolescents were developed and published. A project on building positive relationships and climate in the pre-school and school community was implemented. Its goal was to spread the principles of non-violent communication. School mediation and peer mediation – as a method of resolving disputes and conflicts – were implemented among primary school learners. Training programmes for teachers and parents were developed ([I Think Positively programme 2020](#)).

The Minister of Education and Science, in co-operation with NGOs, is implementing the projects titled ‘Positive School Climate’ and ‘Positive School’, which strengthen universal prevention and support mental health promotion. These include the following activities:

- Online counselling centre. The aim of the initiative is to increase the availability of specialist support for learners and teachers within the activities of counselling and guidance centres. The task is to create, with the participation of public and non-public counselling and guidance centres, a network of support for learners and teachers resulting in particular from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and returning to school after remote learning, using the portal of the Counselling Centre online ‘There is always a way out’.
- Diagnosis platform. The purpose of the initiative is to develop content-related recommendations resulting from the diagnosis of protective factors and risk factors, on the basis of which directors of schools and educational facilities will undertake adequate educational-preventive activities aimed at learners, parents and teachers.
- Promotion and prevention of mental health. The purpose of the initiative is to strengthen the mental health potential of learners by preparing teachers to offer, in schools or educational facilities, good quality programmes in the field of mental health promotion, universal, selective or indicative prevention including intervention activities, and effective fulfilment of these programmes at schools and educational facilities.
- Standards of activities in the field of health promotion and prevention. The goal of the initiative is to increase the competency of learners and their parents and teachers in active health-promoting lifestyles.



- Protecting the mental health of learners with diverse needs in a multicultural pre-school and school community. The goal of the initiative is to improve the competencies of teachers, including teacher specialists and classroom teachers in the identification of early symptoms of mental health disorders of learners and the appropriate adjustment of individual and group support to the identified needs, including the integration of a multicultural environment.
- Working standards. Improving the quality of work with the learner and family in the field of individual, group and family psychotherapy and psychological and pedagogical support in public and non-public counselling and guidance centres, including specialist ones, as well as in pre-schools, schools and educational facilities. The aim of the initiative is to protect and strengthen the mental health potential of learners, teachers and parents, to prevent mental disorders in learners and family dysfunctions, and to provide adjusted support to the needs of the recipients.

([Competition MEiN Positive school climate 2021](#); [Competition MEiN Positive school 2022](#))

3.2 Is there a single curriculum framework covering all learners in all educational settings?

No.

3.2a Description of the single curriculum framework

Not applicable.

3.2b Overview of the general curriculum framework

In line with the core curriculum for general education in the primary school (Annex 2 to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017), general education in the primary school aims to:

- introduce learners to the world of values, including generosity, collaboration, solidarity, altruism, patriotism and respect for traditions, and identify models of behaviour and build social relationships which support learners' development in safe conditions (family, friends);
- strengthen learners' sense of individual, cultural, national, regional and ethnic identity;
- develop learners' sense of personal dignity and respect for other people's dignity;
- develop competences such as creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurship;
- develop critical and logical thinking, reasoning, argumentation and deduction skills;
- demonstrate the value of knowledge as the basis for the development of skills;
- generate cognitive inquisitiveness among learners and their motivation to learn;
- provide learners with a body of knowledge and skills which enable them to understand the world in a more mature and structured way;



- support learners in identifying their own aptitudes and further education paths;
- ensure comprehensive personal development of learners by enhancing their knowledge and satisfying and stimulating their natural cognitive inquisitiveness;
- develop open-minded attitudes towards the world and other people, activity in social life and a sense of responsibility for a community;
- encourage learners to undertake structured and purposeful self-education based on the ability to develop one's own working methods;
- guide learners towards values.

Key skills developed as part of general education in the primary school include:

- proficiency in the Polish language and modern foreign languages;
- efficient use of mathematical tools in everyday life, and development of mathematical thinking;
- searching, sorting out, critical analysis and use of information from various sources;
- creative solving of problems in various areas, with purposeful use of ICT-based methods and tools, including programming;
- solving problems, also with the use of mediation techniques;
- teamwork and societal engagement;
- active participation in the cultural life of the school, local community and country.

Core curricula for general education in general secondary school, technical secondary school and stage 2 sectoral vocational school are set out in the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education of 30 January 2018 r (Journal of Law 2018, item 467 as amended).

3.2c Overview of specific curriculum framework(s) for different groups of learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

The core curricula are set out in the annexes to the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum for pre-primary education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for learners with a moderate and severe intellectual disability, and for general education in stage 1 sectoral vocational schools, general education in special schools preparing for employment, and general education in post-secondary schools (Journal of Law, item 356, as amended; [Regulation on core curricula 2017](#)).

Learners with disabilities follow the same core curriculum for pre-primary education as learners without disability See annex No. 1 to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum for preschool education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, and for general education in stage 1 sectoral vocational schools, general education in special schools preparing for employment, and general education in post-secondary schools ([Annex 1 to Regulation core curriculum 2017](#) .Journal of Law, item 356, as amended).



Learners with disabilities whose intellectual development corresponds to their age or learners with a mild intellectual disability follow the same core curricula as their peers without a disability: the core curriculum for general education in primary schools and post-primary schools of a given type, and the core curriculum for vocational education in vocational schools. See annexes 2, 4 and 6 to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum for pre-primary education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, and for general education in stage I sectoral vocational schools, general education in special schools preparing for employment, and general education in post-secondary schools; Journal of Law, item 356, as amended.

[Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 31 March 2017](#) on the core curriculum for vocational education; Journal of Law, item 860, as amended.

[Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 May 2019](#) on the core curricula for vocational sector-based education and additional vocational skills for selected occupations; Journal of Law, item 991 as amended.

Learners with a moderate or severe intellectual disability follow a separate core curriculum for general education in primary schools and special schools preparing for employment. See annexes 3 and 5 of the [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017](#) on the core curriculum for pre-primary education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, and for general education in stage 1 sectoral vocational schools, general education in special schools preparing for employment for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities and with multiple disabilities (Journal of Law, item 356 as amended).

Education for learners with a moderate or severe intellectual disability aims to:

- build their identity;
- develop their autonomy and a sense of dignity;
- prepare them to function in society and understand and respect social norms;
- provide them with the skills and knowledge which will enable them to enjoy freedom and human rights within their individual capacities and perceive themselves as independent individuals.

It is important to ensure that learners:

- are able to communicate, verbally or non-verbally, with their environment to the fullest possible extent, using well-known communication methods (including alternative augmentative communication (ACC) methods);
- achieve maximum independence in fulfilling their basic existential needs;
- are as resourceful in daily life as possible given the level of their fitness and abilities, and have a sense of dignity and self-determination;
- can participate in various forms of social life on an equal footing together with other members of a community, while being aware of, and respecting, generally accepted norms of co-existence, and keeping their individuality;



- understand, insofar as possible, social and natural phenomena in their environment;
- can acquire skills and learn to do activities which will be useful in their future adult life;
- have an accurate self-assessment, based on a sense of positive self-esteem and the ability to see their strengths and weaknesses ([Eurydice](#)).

3.3 Is there a single legislation and policy framework for all teacher education and professional development?

No.

3.3a Description of the single legislation and policy framework for teacher education and professional development

Not applicable.

3.3b Overview of the general legislation and policy framework for teacher education and professional development

The national standards for initial teacher training programmes that are currently in place were laid down in 2019 in a Regulation by the minister responsible for higher education and science in consultation with the minister responsible for school education. The standards aim to ensure high quality of education and guide the selection of appropriate learning outcomes and, thus, to properly prepare learners for the teaching profession, while taking into consideration its specificity. Where initial teacher training is provided as part of a non-degree postgraduate programme, the standards should also take into account the duration of training and the selection of appropriate learning outcomes for the teaching profession.

The higher education sector provides several types of programmes for the initial training of prospective teachers:

- **degree programmes**, including:
 - first-cycle programmes (leading to a Bachelor's degree – *licencjat* or *inżynier* – depending on the field of study, or an equivalent degree);
 - second-cycle programmes (leading to a Master's degree – *magister* – or an equivalent degree);
 - long-cycle programmes (like second-cycle programmes, leading to a Master's degree – *magister* – or an equivalent degree);
- **non-degree postgraduate programmes** (leading to a certificate of completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme).

Degree and non-degree postgraduate programmes are offered by both university-type and non-university higher education institutions (HEIs). Both types of HEIs operate in both the public and non-public higher education sectors.



Initial teacher training can be provided only by HEIs which have been awarded at least the research grade/category B (as an outcome of an external evaluation of research activities) in the discipline to which a given field of study is assigned.

However, where an HEI is not authorised to award a doctoral degree in the discipline to which the field of study concerned is assigned, it can be granted a permit to establish an initial teacher training programme if it has concluded a co-operation agreement for the provision of the programme with an HEI that is authorised to award a doctoral degree in the discipline to which the field of study is assigned. An HEI authorised to award a doctoral degree may conclude such an agreement in a given discipline with only one HEI.

Initial training is available for:

- subject teachers;
- theoretical subject (vocational education) teachers;
- practical vocational training teachers;
- teachers conducting specific types of classes;
- psychologists.

This is provided as part of first-cycle, second-cycle or long-cycle programmes in the field of study where the curriculum defines learning outcomes that cover knowledge and skills corresponding to all requirements set out in the national core curriculum for the subject to be taught, or the national core curriculum for vocational education for a specific occupation, or the contents of classes to be conducted, respectively.

Initial training for prospective teacher–psychologists is provided as a programme in the field of Psychology.

Starting on 1 October 2019 (academic year 2019/2020), the only initial training option for prospective teachers of pre-schools and grades 1 to 3 of the primary school is a long-cycle programme in the field of Early Childhood and Early School Education.

Starting on 1 October 2019, initial training programmes for prospective special education teachers, teacher–speech therapists and teachers conducting early childhood development classes in the following areas:

- education and rehabilitation of people with a hearing disability;
- education and rehabilitation of people with a vision disability;
- education and rehabilitation of people with an intellectual disability;
- treatment and therapy education;
- education and therapy for people with autism spectrum disorders;
- inclusive education.

These are provided as long-cycle programmes in the field of Special Education.

However, initial training programmes for prospective special education teachers, teacher–speech therapists and teachers conducting early childhood development classes in the following areas:

- education for re-socialisation;



- speech therapy;
- remedial education (educational therapy);
- early childhood development support.

These can be provided as long-cycle programmes in the field of Special Education or first- and second-cycle programmes in a field other than Special Education.

HEIs can continue to offer non-degree postgraduate programmes in the field of Special Education and enrol learners wishing to obtain the related qualifications. However, non-degree programmes in the field of Special Education for prospective teachers can only be offered to applicants who either:

- hold a qualification for teaching a subject or conducting classes, but have not completed a training programme in the field of Special Education;
- have completed a training programme in the field of Special Education and wish to complete a training programme in an additional area of Special Education.

Currently, teachers who hold a higher education qualification (a Bachelor's or Master's degree) represent 98% of all school education teachers ([Eurydice](#)).

3.3c Overview of specific legislation and policy framework for teacher education and professional development and what and who this specific framework focuses on

The implementation of the [first stage of standardising the employment of specialist teachers in mainstream pre-schools and schools](#) began on 1 September 2022. Standards for their employment in non-special pre-schools and schools (public and non-public) have been introduced by law as a systemic solution, providing funds for this purpose in the educational part of the general subsidy. The number of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) for teacher specialists employed in non-special schools or pre-schools depends on the number of learners in a given pre-school or school (Article 42d paragraph 11 of the Act of 26 January 1982, Teachers' Charter – Journal of Laws 2021, item 1762, as amended). Transitional provisions for the first stage were introduced in Art. 29 of the Act of 12 May 2022, amending the Act on the educational system and certain other acts (Journal of Laws, item 1116).

The tasks of the special pedagogue – a new position – are specified in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on the principles of organisation and provision of psychological and pedagogical support in public pre-schools, schools and facilities ([Journal of Laws of 2020](#), item 1280 as amended).

The tasks of specialist teachers and organisational matters related to the provision of psychological and pedagogical support are specified in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 22 July 2022 on the list of classes conducted directly with learners or wards or on their behalf by teachers of psychological and pedagogical counselling centres and teachers: pedagogues, special pedagogues, psychologists, speech therapists, pedagogical therapists and vocational counsellors, ([Journal of Laws of 2022](#), item 160).

In connection with these changes, the qualification requirements for this group of teachers have been specified in the amended Regulation of the Minister of National



Education of 1 August 2017 on detailed qualifications required of teachers ([Journal of Laws of 2020](#), item 1289).

According to the introduced changes, the position of special education teacher in mainstream and inclusive pre-schools and schools became open to teachers with either:

- a uniform master's degree in special education;
- a uniform master's degree or first- or second-cycle studies in special pedagogy;
- a uniform master's degree or first- or second-cycle studies in pedagogy and a completed qualification course or postgraduate studies in special pedagogy or in inclusive education.

Until 31 August 2026, the position of special education teacher will also be open to a person who:

- is qualified to occupy the position of a teacher in pre-school and grades 1–3 of primary school and, in addition, has completed postgraduate studies in the field of early support of child development – this applies to mainstream and inclusive pre-schools;
- is qualified to work in pre-schools, mainstream and inclusive schools as specified by regulations, and has completed a qualification course or post-graduate studies in special pedagogy.

The amended regulation also changes the qualification requirements for teachers of pre-schools, schools and special branches organised in therapeutic institutions (e.g. hospitals). This group of teachers will not be required to have qualifications in therapeutic or medical pedagogy ([Eurydice](#)).

3.4 Is there a single legislation and policy framework to ensure support for all learners throughout their school careers?

Yes.

3.4a Description of the single legislation and policy framework that ensures support for all throughout their school careers

Act of 14 December 2016, The Law on School Education (Journal of Law 2021, item 1082 as amended: Law on School Education 2021 consolidated).

The school education system should provide conditions for all citizens to exercise their right to education, and for learners to exercise their right to education and care as suitable for their age and stage of development.

Learners may have the contents, methods and organisation of education adapted to their psychological and physical abilities, and have access to counselling and guidance – referred to as psychological and pedagogical support – and to special forms of learning and teaching.



Learners with disabilities, maladjusted learners, and those at risk of social maladjustment may receive education in all types of schools, in line with their individual developmental and educational needs and predispositions.

Learners with disabilities may take an individualised learning path, follow individualised curricula and participate in remedial or rehabilitation classes.

Particularly gifted learners may follow individualised curricula and complete education in all types of schools within a shorter period of time.

The school education system also provides support and care to learners in a difficult financial situation or in difficult life circumstances.

The areas of study and curricular contents are adapted to labour market requirements, and schools prepare learners for the choice of a career and area of study and for active participation in economic life through the development of entrepreneurial attitudes.

Support is also available for the teaching of, and in, the Polish language to the Polish diaspora, Poles living abroad and children of migrant workers ([Eurydice](#)).

Raising the quality of inclusive education was one of the priorities of the state's educational policy set out in the document 'Basic Directions of Educational Policy' in the 2017/2018 school year. In the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 school years, the priorities concerned activities to address the diversified needs of learners and psychological and pedagogical support.

As one of the educational policy directions for the 2022/2023 school year, the Minister of Education and Science indicated 'Improving the quality of education and the availability and quality of support provided to learners in mainstream and inclusive pre-schools and schools' ([MoES education priorities 2022/23](#)).

3.4b Overview of the general legislation and policy framework that ensures support for the majority of learners throughout their school careers

Not applicable.

3.4c Overview of the specific legislation and policy framework that ensures support for learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education throughout their school careers

Early childhood Education

Learners take rehabilitation-and-education classes on the basis of a certificate recommending such individualised or group activities, issued by a counselling and guidance centre.

If, due to their health condition, children or young people are unable to attend a pre-school, an alternative pre-primary education setting or a school, they follow *individualised one-year pre-primary preparatory classes* or an *individualised learning programme*, based on a certificate recommending such type of provision.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on individualised compulsory one-year pre-primary preparatory education for children and individualised



learning programmes for learners; Journal of Law [item 1616](#), and Journal of Law 2020, item 1537).

The school education system provides early development support from the time when the learner's disability is diagnosed until the time when the learner starts school. It is based on a statement/opinion recommending early childhood development support.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 August 2017 on early development support – [Journal of Law item 1635](#); [Eurydice](#)).

Supporting classes for learners –complete regulations launched in 2021

Local authorities will receive funds from the educational [subsidy reserve](#) for the implementation of supporting classes for willing learners. Those institutions that do not decide to provide additional lessons before the summer break will be able to do so from September.

The supporting classes are designed to consolidate knowledge and skills from selected compulsory educational classes in general education. They are intended for learners in grades 4–8 of primary and secondary schools and will be conducted exclusively on school premises. Classes are open to all learners who wish to participate.

The school head, in consultation with the teachers, determines which subjects are to be taught. Classes may be conducted in public and non-public primary and secondary schools, including special schools and art schools providing general education.

Classes will be organised:

- exclusively within the scope of compulsory general education activities included in the framework teaching plans for a given type of school;
- for groups of not less than ten learners (in the case of small primary schools – not less than five learners).

As many as approximately 3.4 million learners may benefit from the classes. Detailed regulations on the organisation of classes, deadlines for the transfer and settlement of subsidies, application templates and settlement forms are laid down in the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Science ([Eurydice](#)). This regulation was created to provide additional support to learners necessary due to schools working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

The Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University – commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science, in co-operation with the Foundation of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Lublin and non-governmental organisations –implemented a programme called 'Psychological and pedagogical support for learners and teachers' in 2021/2022. The aim of the programme was to provide psychological and pedagogical support adequate to the needs of learners and teachers after the COVID-19 epidemic, as well as in the situation of war in Ukraine and the admission of refugees from Ukraine.

The scope of activities included identification of learners' problems and recognition of groups of learners with different severity of problems (high, moderate and low) and on-going support for learners in rebuilding peer relationships. Specialists provide learners with on-going psychological support online. Consultations with parents are carried out, as



well as training, and training for teachers and school specialists, i.e. psychologists and educators.

A Model of Psychological and Pedagogical Support was developed, including a scientific monograph. Its goal was to develop a model strategy for the proceedings of schools and facilities, and at the same time Polish families, allowing them to respond as quickly and effectively as possible and protect themselves from the negative effects of difficult situations caused by pandemic and crisis.

Diagnostic surveys of learners, parents and teachers were carried out on the well-being of young people and the perceptions of their problems by parents, teachers and specialists. It examined the functioning of learners from grades 1–3 and 4–8 (elementary and secondary schools) after returning to school after prolonged isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and also that of teachers and parents. The survey covered 1,200 schools nationwide (120,000 respondents). Research and reports performed by the Polish Academy of Sciences in Lublin were compiled and published. In addition, four monographs were published presenting the results of the research with conclusions and recommendations, including by Kuracki and Tempczyk-Nagórka (2022)⁷. The editorial process of the fifth monograph (20 articles) devoted to the problems of education in the face of war and post-war is in progress. Further publications are planned on the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic among learners, addressing such issues as suicide, self-harm, mental disorders, digital media addiction, alienation and the breakdown of peer bonds.

An online specialised-counselling platform was developed, which enabled the implementation of quantitative and qualitative research, the provision of psychological and pedagogical support by specialists, and the implementation of training for parents, teachers, learners, directors and specialists. The platform has been adapted to WCAG 2.1 standards and is digitally accessible to people with disabilities. The platform includes educational materials for all supported groups (videos, conference recordings, articles, monographs, class scenarios, exercises, etc.). Some of the information was also developed in Ukrainian.

For more than a year, thanks to the platform learners, parents, teacher specialists and directors could participate in free trainings and workshops on coping with stress, improving communication, building motivation, prevention of mental disorders, working with learners with special educational needs, strengthening family relationships, and building resilience. The platform made it possible to use psychological and pedagogical consultations free of charge, including in Ukrainian or with a Ukrainian- and English-speaking translator), as well as trainings in Ukrainian for people struggling with stress caused by the war in Ukraine.

Due to this platform, 1,083 hours of training were given to parents, learners, wards of MOS (Youth social therapy centres) and MOW (Centre for socially maladjusted youth), teachers and specialists from counselling and guidance centres. Online psychological counselling for parents, learners and teachers, and specialists from counselling and

⁷ Kuracki, K. and Tempczyk-Nagórka, Ż., 2022. *Wsparcie psychologiczno-pedagogiczne w polskiej szkole w sytuacji pandemii i postpandemii [Psychological and pedagogical support in Polish school during and post-pandemic]*. Warsaw: Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego University



guidance centres was organised, along with qualitative research: 1,534 hours of on-call specialist individual consultations in the area of psychological and pedagogical support were carried out and 18,300 hours of psychological and pedagogical support were given. A tool for collecting empirical data for qualitative research and a methodology for qualitative research were developed.

[Scientific research results – reports](#)

[Online specialist and advisory platform](#)

Legislative activities in favour of learners – refugees from Ukraine

Inter-school preparatory wards were created, and it was specified that in such preparatory ward, in addition to learning the Polish language, classes may be organised to support the adaptation and development of learners for further education. The support of local government units enabled the fulfilment of additional educational tasks related to the education, upbringing and care of refugee learners who are Ukrainian citizens, including tasks so far not financed from the educational subsidy: pre-primary education of children aged 2.5–5 years and transportation of learners (Act of 12 March 2022 on aid for Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of the country; Journal of Laws, item 583, as amended; [Act on aid for Ukraine citizens 2022](#)).

To facilitate the admission of learners with disabilities from Ukrainian refugee families to pre-schools and schools, changes have been made to allow, inter alia, increasing the number of classes in mainstream, inclusive and special pre-schools and schools, as well as in educational groups. Admittance to special pre-schools, special schools, special school and residential schools or special education centres was allowed for learners in this group without a decision on the need for special education, on the basis of a statement by the parents or temporary carer that an application for such a decision has been submitted to psychological and pedagogical counselling and guidance centres. The employment of non-teachers in public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres was made possible in order to improve the process of the identification of special educational needs of children and youth who are Ukrainian citizens, as well as providing them with psychological and pedagogical support.

In addition, with Ukrainian refugee learners in mind, the possibility of increasing the number of additional free Polish language classes and remedial classes in schools was introduced by abolishing the current weekly limits on hours. It has also been made possible to appoint to the examination teams checking the examination papers (eighth-grader or matriculation exams) of Ukrainian learners, people who are not examiners entered in the register of examiners, and who know the Ukrainian language (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 21 March 2022 on the organisation of education, upbringing and care of children and youth who are citizens of Ukraine; Journal of Laws of 2022, item 645, as amended; [Regulation education Ukrainian citizens 2022](#)).

Non-legislative activities for the benefit of learners who are refugees from Ukraine

The Minister of Education and Science expanded the scope of the state educational policy directions set for the 2021/2022 school year to include, among others, ‘Improving the competencies of teachers in working with learners with migrant experience, including in teaching Polish as a foreign language’. For the school year 2022/23, the Minister of



Education and Science has set as one of the directions of the state's educational policy, 'Improving the competencies of teachers to work with learners arriving from abroad, especially from Ukraine, adequate to the needs that arise'. The introduction of the new direction of the state's educational policy obliged public in-service teacher training centres to organise and conduct in-service training in the above scope in the 2021/2022 school year. Public in-service teacher training centres carry out tasks resulting from the directions of the state's educational policy in accordance with the regulations of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 May 2019 on in-service teacher training centres (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1045, as amended; [Regulation on in-service teacher training centres 2019](#); [MoES priorities education policy 2022/23](#)).

On 8 June 2022. MoES and UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding on countering the educational exclusion of Ukrainian children and youth. Among other things, within the framework of co-operation, it is planned to train teacher specialists, exchange educational materials, provide access to the UNICEF Learning Passport platform, and organise a summer vacation for Ukrainian children including educational classes ([Memorandum MoES–UNICEF aid for Ukrainian refugees 2022](#)).

MoES has developed recommendations for teachers and school pedagogues entitled 'How to talk to learners about the situation in Ukraine', which have been forwarded to all schools and educational facilities and Education Authorities ([MoES recommendation talking about Ukraine 2022](#)).

In addition, an online training organised by the Children's Ombudsman entitled 'How to talk to children about war' was disseminated ([Training How to talk about war 2022](#)).

Information was developed on support for children with special educational needs for parents or those with day-to-day custody of children from Ukraine and directors of educational facilities.

A communication was developed and sent to counselling and guidance centres and Regional Education Authorities on providing support to children from Ukraine and their parents, or those with day-to-day custody of the children, and conducting the process of diagnosing the children's needs.

A communication was developed and sent to counselling and guidance centres and Regional Education Authorities regarding the provision of support to children from Ukraine and their parents, or those who have day-to-day custody of the children, and to carry out the process of diagnosing the needs of children. An application to public counselling and guidance centres for a decision on the learner need for special education or rehabilitation-education classes was translated into Ukrainian and Russian.

A page has been set up on the Inclusive Educational Platform called 'School for You', including a tab 'preparatory wards' ([Preparatory wards on Education Platform](#)), which includes materials and links to free textbooks and educational materials designed to teach Polish as a foreign language to learners, as well as information about free Polish and English classes for people from Ukraine. The resources are being supplemented and expanded on an on-going basis. Operated by the Minister of Education and Science, the [Inclusive Educational Platform](#) provides everyone with open and free access to numerous and diverse educational materials.



3.5 Is there a single legislation and policy framework to ensure support for all learners at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life?

Yes.

3.5a Description of the single legislation and policy framework that ensures support for all learners at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life

Primary schools may establish classes where learners are prepared/trained for employment. They are intended for learners who:

- have reached the age of 15;
- are not considered capable of finishing primary school under the normal procedure;
- have been promoted to grade 7 of primary school or have not been promoted to grade 8 of primary school.

The head of a primary school admits a learner to a class preparing for employment, with their parents' consent, while taking into consideration:

- an opinion/ statement issued by a medical doctor;
- an opinion/statement issued by a counselling and guidance centre, including a specialised centre, which recommends that the learner should attend a class preparing for employment.

A class preparing for employment follows:

- a general education curriculum based on the core curriculum for general education which is adapted to the needs and abilities of learners;
- a programme preparing for employment, developed by the teacher conducting classes, which enables learners to achieve selected learning outcomes as defined in the core curriculum for the training for a given occupation.

The training which prepares for employment may be provided:

- in a primary school;
- outside of the school, based on an agreement between the head of the primary school and, in particular, a vocational school, a continuing education centre, a practical training centre, a further and in-service training centre or an employer ([Eurydice](#)).

Pre-schools and schools (with the exception of art schools) carry out planned and systematic activities in the field of career counselling, in order to support learners in the process of identification of interests and professional predispositions, and making purposeful educational and professional decisions, including preparation for the selection of the next stage of education and profession.

In pre-primary and primary schools, occupational pre-orientation is carried out, which aims to initially familiarise learners with selected professions and to stimulate and develop



their interests and talents. In addition, vocational orientation is carried out in grades I1–6 of primary schools, which aims to familiarise learners with selected professions, form positive attitudes toward work and education, and stimulate, identify and develop their interests and talents. In grades 7 and 8 of primary schools, as well as in secondary schools, career counselling is carried out, including in compulsory educational classes in general or vocational education, classes in career counselling, classes related to the choice of education and profession conducted within the framework of psychological and pedagogical support, also in classes with a class teacher ([Law on School Education 2021](#) consolidated, as amended).

The curriculum content of career counselling for pre-schools and schools is set out in the regulation of the Ministry of Education ([Regulation career counselling curriculum 2019](#)).

3.5b Overview of the general legislation and policy framework that ensures support for the majority of learners at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life

Not applicable.

3.5c Overview of the specific legislation and policy framework that ensures support for learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life

Starting in 2022, within the framework of the government's 'For Life' programme, work began on the activity 'Transition to the Labour Market'. The purpose of this activity is to improve the effectiveness of the processes of education and upbringing of children and youth (including those with disabilities) in order to develop them for active participation in the labour market, in co-operation with external entities. Activities specified in the plan include:

- providing young people with disabilities with a real opportunity to obtain a profession which they could pursue in the future, gaining professional independence in the labour market, financial independence and fuller acceptance by the society of which they are full members;
- increasing the participation of graduates in a decision on the need for special education in the labour market,
- developing career counselling specialists to work with and for persons with disabilities.

These goals are achieved by:

1. carrying out a diagnosis of the current state of functioning of vocational education for learners with disabilities;
2. developing, in co-operation with employers and other social partners, recommendations for programme changes in vocational education for learners with disabilities (the Educational Research Institute will develop a report in early 2023);
3. creation of a list of professions possible for learners with different types of disabilities due to predispositions and abilities;



4. identification of potential market qualifications for persons with disabilities who are learners or graduates of schools;
5. in-service training of teachers working with learners with disabilities, including in career counselling.

The use of a new model for assessing learners' needs, which is under development, will be helpful in planning effective support for the transition process. Within their framework, functional assessment standards are being developed (by the Catholic University of Lublin), as well as modern diagnostic tools for assessing learner development and materials for post-diagnostic work – the tools will be made available free of charge in the new school year on a platform provided by the MoES. In addition, training of employees of counselling and guidance centres in terms of functional assessment is planned.

Support for learners, including in the transition process, will be provided by New Solutions, the pilot of which is currently underway, i.e. the introduction of a new non-educational position – an assistant for learners with special educational needs and specialist centres to support inclusive education. The plan is to hire 640 assistants and establish 300 centres (there are currently 23) using EU funds.

Bearing in mind the learners are Polish citizens and foreigners who studied in a foreign educational system, provisions were introduced to allow them to start the next stage of their education in Poland in a secondary school outside the standard recruitment procedure. The basis for admission of learners from this group to the first grade of a secondary school (general, technical, stage 1 sectoral vocational) is their certificates obtained abroad and the total number of years of study in Poland and abroad.

If a learner arriving from abroad cannot submit documents, admission to the school is based on an interview, which is conducted by the director of the school, with the participation, if necessary, of teachers. The interview is conducted in the foreign language the learner speaks, if the learner does not speak Polish.

Learners arriving from abroad are entitled to additional free Polish language lessons and remedial classes at school, and – in the case of foreign learners – also the right to support from the so-called teacher's aid for a period of 12 months. In addition, the authority in charge of the school may organise a so-called preparatory ward for learners who require additional adjustment of the educational process to their needs and educational possibilities, as well as adjusting the organisational form to support the effectiveness of their education.

The legal provisions outlined above were used, among other things, for the admission of refugee learners from Ukraine to schools. Due to their mass influx, in the 2021/2022 school year, the aforementioned provisions were amended to increase (to 25) the maximum number of learners in the preparatory ward and to increase the number of hours allocated for teaching the Polish language (minimum six hours per week). A rule has also been introduced that, when admitting a learner to school, declarations about the learner's total years of education in Ukraine can be made not only by parents and carers, but also by other persons taking care of the learner. These changes also apply for the 2022/2023 school year (Article 165 of the act of 14 December 2016 – Education Law, Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1082, as amended; [Law on School Education 2021](#) consolidated, as amended; Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of August



23, 2017 on the education of persons who are not Polish citizens and persons who are Polish citizens who have received education in schools operating in the educational systems of other countries – Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1655, as amended; [Regulation learners from abroad 2017](#); Regulation learners from abroad [amendment 2022](#)).



SECTION 4. SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

This section provides information on aspects of governance across and between different system levels, bodies and stakeholders in the country.

4.1 Shared responsibilities across and between central and local government

The responsibility for the administration of the school education system rests with the minister in charge of school education (Minister of Education and Science) and their deputy ministers. The Director General is responsible for efficient functioning of the ministry as the institution supporting the minister.

The structure of the Ministry of Education and Science comprises the Minister's Political Cabinet and the Minister's Office, the Office of the Director General, an independent position of Internal Auditor, and 15 other units: departments, each with divisions, which are responsible for specific aspects of the national education policy. Currently, the organisational units of the Ministry include:

- Budget and Finance Department
- Department for Structural Funds
- Innovation and Development Department
- Inspection and Audit Department
- Science Department
- Department for School Education Legislation
- Department for Higher Education and Science Legislation
- Department for General Education, Curricula and Textbooks
- Department for Research and Investment Programmes
- Department for Policy, Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training
- Higher Education Department
- International Co-operation Department
- Department for Co-operation with Local Government Units
- Upbringing and Inclusive Education Department

Responsibilities and powers of the minister in charge of school education

The minister co-ordinates and implements the national education policy, and co-operates in this respect with regional authorities/province governors (*wojewoda*) and other organisational units responsible for the school education system.



The minister lays down arrangements, by regulation, in particular in the following areas.

Contents of the general and vocational education and textbooks

- core curricula for pre-primary education, general education and vocational education, and outline timetables;
- classification of occupations for vocational education;
- arrangements for schools and educational institutions to undertake activities maintaining national, ethnic, language and religious identity of learners;
- arrangements for teaching religion in schools;
- rules for approving textbooks for use in schools;
- procedures for providing local authorities with information required to determine the level of subsidy for the purchase of textbooks by heads of primary schools.

Learner assessment

- detailed rules for assessing and promoting learners in public schools;
- detailed arrangements for conducting the eighth-grader examination, the maturity examination and vocational exams;
- arrangements for conducting extra-mural examinations;
- arrangements for issuing certificates, diplomas and other school documents and templates for them;
- establishment of regional examination boards and specification of their territorial jurisdiction.

Admission to public schools and other educational institutions

- composition and tasks of an admissions board, rules and dates of the admission process;
- rules for converting criteria into points for admission to public schools if the number of candidates exceeds the number of places available in such schools;
- procedure of transferring learners from one type of public school to another.

Governance and organisation of institutions within the school education system

- requirements for measures taken by schools and other educational institutions to create optimal conditions for education and care activities and other statutory activities, provide conditions for the development of each learner, and improve quality of the school's or institution's activities and its organisational development;
- arrangements for the competition for the position of the Head of the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*);
- requirements for persons holding the position of school head and other management positions, and arrangements for the competition for the position of school head;



- types of schools and institutions where the teachers' council, the parents' council and/or the learners' self-government are not established;
- organisational arrangements for practical vocational training;
- framework statutes for public schools and other public educational institutions;
- methods for keeping records relating to the teaching process and educational activities;
- rules and conditions for innovation and experimental activities;
- organisational arrangements for the school year;
- organisational arrangements and procedures for contests and competitions in specific school subjects;
- general safety and hygiene regulations for schools and institutions.

Pedagogical supervision

- arrangements for exercising pedagogical supervision, including its forms;
- a list of positions and qualifications required to exercise pedagogical supervision.

Pre-primary education

- alternative pre-primary education settings;
- procedures for granting subsidies for pre-primary education and related grant-accounting methods.

Continuing education

- types of public continuing education institutions and their tasks;
- arrangements for adult education and training;
- arrangements for providing vocational qualification courses;
- methods for the validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-school settings;
- conditions for granting and withdrawing accreditation for institutions providing adult education and training in non-school settings.

Initial and in-service teacher training

- conditions and procedures for granting and withdrawing accreditation for non-public in-service teacher training institutions;
- conditions and procedures for the establishment, restructuring and liquidation of in-service teacher training institutions, and organisational and operational arrangements for such institutions.

Additional activities, care, counselling and guidance for learners with special educational needs, and measures to address such needs

- organisational arrangements for public education and care centres for learners with disabilities and maladjusted youth;



- arrangements for counselling and guidance in schools and other educational institutions, and organisational arrangements for public counselling and guidance centres;
- detailed arrangements for learners to follow individualised schooling and individualised study programmes and related organisational arrangements;
- detailed arrangements for the education and care for learners with special educational needs;
- arrangements for providing early support for child development;
- timeframes for transferring to the communes grants for financial support for learners, and methods for calculating their level;
- conditions for the organisation of leisure activities for learners;
- rules and conditions for the organisation of tourist and sightseeing activities undertaken by schools and other educational institutions;
- detailed arrangements for sport classes and schools, and sports championship schools.

Matters related to education abroad and education for non-nationals

- conditions and procedures for the admission of non-nationals and Polish nationals who completed previous education stages in other education systems to public pre-schools, schools, teacher training institutions and to vocational qualification courses;
- arrangements for additional Polish language classes, remedial classes in subjects covered by the curriculum, and classes in the language and culture of the country of origin;
- levels of grants for beneficiaries who are not Polish nationals;
- rules for the provision of education to Polish nationals' children temporarily staying abroad;
- arrangements supporting the teaching of Polish history, geography, culture and the Polish language and other school subjects with Polish as a language of instruction to the Polish diaspora in schools abroad and in other forms of education provided by civic organisations abroad;
- arrangements for the recognition (*nostrification*) of school and maturity certificates awarded abroad;
- conditions for sending learners abroad for educational purposes and teachers for in-service training purposes.

The **minister responsible for school education** (currently, the Minister of Education and Science) establishes and administers schools, clusters of schools and school consultation centres at Polish diplomatic missions, consulates and military missions in order to provide education for children of Polish nationals temporarily based abroad, as well as public in-service teacher training institutions operating at national level. The minister can also



establish and administer public experimental schools and educational institutions and public continuing education institutions operating at national level ([Eurydice](#)).

Education administration at regional level

The regional level in Poland is the level of province or voivodeship (*województwo*). There are currently 16 provinces/voivodeships.

Heads of the regional education authorities: pedagogical supervision

The Head of the Regional Education Authorities (REA) (*kurator oświaty*) exercises pedagogical supervision over school education institutions at regional level. The Head of the REA is appointed and dismissed by the minister responsible for school education at the request of the province governor (*wojewoda*) and, thus, is part of the central government structure. The Head of the REA is not directly subordinated to the minister. However, the minister has influence on the outcome of a competition for the position of Head of the REA by appointing three members of the competition board, and may also dismiss the Head of the REA on their own initiative. Moreover, the minister supervises Heads of the REAs and co-ordinates their work in various ways (for example, by organising meetings, training courses and conferences, and administering the online pedagogical supervision platform).

Pursuant to the art. 51 of the Act of 14 December 2016 – Education Law (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1082 as amended; Law on School Education 2021 consolidated), the Head of the REA, acting on behalf of the province governor, performs tasks and exercises powers within a given province, as laid down in the Act and separate regulations. In particular, the Head of the REA:

- exercises pedagogical supervision over public and non-public schools and educational institutions;
- implements the national educational policy, and co-operates with local government bodies in the development and implementation of local and regional educational policies consistent with the national policy;
- gives opinions on so-called organisational sheets of public schools and educational institutions, except those administered by ministers, with regard to their compliance with legislation, which are submitted by the bodies administering schools and institutions before their approval;
- gives opinions on work plans of public in-service teacher training institutions, except those administered by the ministers responsible for school education, culture and protection of national heritage, agriculture, and health;
- gives opinions on networks of public schools administered by local government units (communes and districts) with regard to their compliance with the statutory requirements;
- gives opinions on the liquidation of public schools;
- prepares programmes for the use of funds for in-service teacher training from the regional (province governor's) budget;



- organises contests and competitions for learners and other forms of competition for learners and presentation of their achievements, in a given region;
- analyses teachers' needs with regard to in-service training, and initiates and co-ordinates teacher training activities;
- supports activities related to the conduct of tests and exams in schools;
- co-operates with local government bodies in the development of facilities at schools and educational institutions;
- co-operates with the relevant bodies, various organisations and institutions in matters related to the development of learners;
- co-ordinates, supports and supervises the organisation of leisure activities for learners during summer and winter holidays in a given region.

At the request of the Head of the REA, the province governor can establish REA branches for individual areas of the region. The powers of the head of a branch are defined by the Head of the REA.

Local government bodies at regional level

General powers and responsibilities of local government units (LGUs), including those at regional level (as there are both local government and central government bodies at this level in Poland), are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. It should be emphasised, however, that given the fairly extensive organisational autonomy of schools and other educational institutions, the powers of LGUs (communes and districts) as so-called school/institution administering bodies include supervision over organisational units of the school education system with regard to **financial and administrative** aspects (proper school management). They also monitor the use of public funds by non-public schools.

LGUs at regional (province) level do not perform typical school-education tasks. However, they are responsible for administering some educational institutions that have a supporting role:

- in-service teacher training institutions;
- educational resources centres;
- schools and educational institutions operating at regional and supra-regional levels ([Eurydice](#)).

General administration at local level

Administration at district level

The district (*powiat*) (established by the Act of 24 July 1998 on the Establishment of the Basic Three-tier Administrative Division of the Country ([Ustawa z 24 lipca 1998 r. o wprowadzeniu zasadniczego trójstopniowego podziału terytorialnego państwa](#))) is the level between the province (*województwo*) and the commune (*gmina*). Initially, there were 373 districts. On 1 January 2021, there were 380 districts, including 66 cities with the district status.



District authorities are responsible for establishing and administering the following types of schools: public special primary schools (*szkoła podstawowa*) and post-primary schools (including schools with inclusion classes, sports schools, sport championship schools and other educational institutions), except for those operating at regional and supra-regional levels. As explained above, the responsibilities of the district authorities do not include pedagogical supervision, which is exercised by the Head of the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*). However, the relevant bodies at the district level (in particular, the board and head of a district) have various powers related to appointments to management positions in schools, the organisation of related competitions, and the adoption of local regulations on matters concerning schools and teachers.

As part of their responsibilities, districts may establish and administer public initial and in-service teacher training institutions and educational resources centres, thus extending the network of such institutions which is currently too limited at regional level.

Administration at commune level

The commune (*gmina*) is the lowest level of administrative division in Poland. On 1 January 2021, there were 2,477 communes, including 1,523 rural, 652 rural-urban and 302 urban communes.

The commune is responsible for establishing and administering public pre-schools (*przedszkole*), including those with inclusion classes, and special pre-schools; primary schools (*szkoła podstawowa*), including those with inclusion classes (except for special schools, art schools, and schools at prisons, youth detention centres and hostels for underage young people). Pedagogical supervision of these types of institutions is the responsibility of the Head of the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*). Like districts, communes may establish and administer public initial and in-service teacher training institutions and educational resources centres.

Administration and governance at institutional level (educational institutions)

The responsibility for administering a school or another educational institution in the Polish school education system rests with the **head of a school (or a pre-school or another educational institution)** as a single-person authority. However, heads are supported in their management tasks by other individuals and bodies. The **teaching council** or teachers' council is a collegial body of the school with extensive decision-making and advisory powers. Public schools also have so-called social participation bodies, composed only or partly of education stakeholders (parents and learners): the school council, the parents' council and the learner self-government.

A candidate for a school head is selected through an open competition. The head is appointed by the school administering body for five school years. Where this is justified, in agreement with the Head of the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*), the head may be appointed for a shorter period, but the minimum duration of the term is one school year.

Where the school has established the positions of deputy head or other management positions in accordance with the national legislation, management staff are appointed and dismissed by the school head after consultation with the school council, the teaching council and the school administering body.



In particular, the school head:

- manages the school and represents it externally;
- exercises pedagogical supervision;
- takes care of learners and creates conditions for their harmonious psychological and physical development through various health-promoting activities;
- implements resolutions of the school council and the teaching council;
- is in charge of funding and takes responsibility for its use;
- ensures learners' and teachers' safety during school hours;
- is responsible for the proper organisation and conduct of tests and exams.

As the head of the institution for teaching and non-teaching staff, the school head:

- employs and dismisses teaching and non-teaching staff;
- gives awards and administers disciplinary penalties;
- presents proposals for commendations, awards and other distinctions.

The school head is partially relieved from teaching duties. The weekly teaching load for the head depends on the size of the school.

A school (or a pre-school or another educational institution) which employs at least three teachers should establish the teaching council. The teaching council is a collective body whose remit covers the school's statutory tasks related to education and care. Where fewer than three teachers are employed, teachers are members of the teaching council of the school that supervises the school campus in which they work. The teaching council is chaired by the school head and composed of all teachers employed in the school. Meetings of the teaching council can also be attended, in an advisory capacity, by individuals invited by the chair of the council and with the council's consent or at its request. They can be representatives of associations and other organisations, in particular scouting organisations which aim to provide education or extend the range of education and care activities in a school or institution.

The school head is required to present, at least twice in every school year, general conclusions from the pedagogical supervision exercised and information on the activities of the school.

The decision-making powers of the teaching council include in particular:

- approving school activity plans;
- adopting resolutions on the results of learner assessment and promotion and on teaching innovations and experiments;
- adopting organisational arrangements for in-service training of teachers in the school;
- adopting resolutions to strike learners from the register;



- determining how findings from pedagogical supervision, including supervision exercised by the pedagogical supervision body, will be used to improve the performance of the school.

The teaching council gives opinions on the following matters:

- the organisation of work in the school;
- draft financial plans of the school;
- the head's proposals concerning distinctions and awards for teachers;
- the head's proposals for regular tasks and classes to be assigned to teachers as part of their basic salary and activities for which they receive additional payment.

The teaching council drafts the statutes of a school and amendments to the statutes and presents them to the school council. The council can also submit a request to the school administering body to dismiss a teacher from the post of school head or any other management position in the school. In such a case, the body authorised to dismiss the head is required to conduct an enquiry and inform the teaching council about its findings within 14 days of the receipt of the request.

Resolutions of the teaching council are adopted by a simple majority of votes, with at least 50% of its members present.

Public schools (and pre-schools and other public institutions) may establish the school council. The council should include at least six members representing, in equal proportion: teachers (elected by teachers); learners' parents (elected by parents); and learners (elected by learners, except in nursery and primary schools, and special schools for learners with intellectual disabilities and some other institutions referred to in relevant regulations).

The council actively participates in solving internal problems. Moreover, the council:

- adopts the school statutes;
- gives its opinion on the draft school financial plan;
- can make proposals to the body responsible for pedagogical supervision over the school to evaluate the activities of the school, the school head and teachers;
- gives opinion on the school activity plan, proposals for educational innovations and experiments, and other matters relevant to the school;
- may, on its own initiative, evaluate the activities of, or conditions in, the school and make proposals concerning, in particular, extra-curricular activities and optional school subjects to the school head, the school's teaching council, the school administering body or the regional school education council.

In order to support statutory activities of the school, the council can collect funds from voluntary donations and other sources.

Public schools (and pre-schools and other public institutions) also establish the parents' council which represents parents of all learners in a given school. The parents' council can make proposals concerning all school matters to the school head and other school bodies, the school administering body, or the body responsible for pedagogical supervision.



The powers of the parents' council include:

- adopting a school education and care programme and a problem prevention programme in consultation with the school's teaching council;
- giving its opinion on a programme and schedule of activities designed to improve school performance;
- giving its opinion on a draft financial plan submitted by the school head.

The parents' council may raise funds to support the statutory activities of the school. Funds can come from voluntary contributions made by parents and other sources.

Another body operating within schools (and other educational institutions) is the learner self-government established by all learners in a given school. Its operational arrangements and the rules for electing its members are laid down in the regulations adopted by all learners in an equal, secret and popular vote. The self-government bodies are the only bodies representing all learners. Self-government regulations may not be contradictory to the statutes of the school. The self-government body can make proposals and give opinions on all school matters to the school council, the teaching council and the school head. In particular, these may concern the basic rights of learners such as the right to:

- have access to the curriculum, its contents and aims, and the requirements set for learners;
- have progress in their learning and conduct assessed in a transparent and justified way;
- organise school life in a way that ensures an appropriate balance between learning effort and opportunities for developing and pursuing learners' own interests;
- edit and publish a school newspaper;
- organise cultural, educational, sports and entertainment activities in line with learners' needs and organisational capacities, in co-operation with the school head;
- choose the teacher responsible for the learner self-government ([Eurydice](#)).

4.2 Specific areas for shared responsibilities across and between central and local government

Policy development, implementation and co-ordination

This is a priority in the new model of Education for All where all relevant Ministries are involved in consultation (e.g. Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy Ministry of Health, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and Ministry of Justice) ([GEM report](#), p. 27).

Identification of needs / referral for services

This is under development in the new model, which proposes a move from requiring a certificate/diagnosis from a specialist centre to a more flexible model of support for all



(with tier 2 and 3 for smaller numbers of learners with additional support needs) – support from other Ministries ([GEM report](#), p. 27).

Data collection and sharing

Work is underway to integrate the databases of the education system, including the system for handling external examinations. In the first half of 2023, it is planned to launch the E-Access to Education Data project, which aims to develop modern IT tools to support the digitisation of educational processes. As a result of the project, there will be easier access to online educational data reports.

Local data is transferred to the central system of the SIO (Educational Information System), for which the MoES is responsible.

Monitoring and evaluation

The obligation to conduct external and internal evaluations and to monitor the work of schools within the framework of pedagogical supervision was abolished in 2021 through an amendment to the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 25 August 2017 on pedagogical supervision ([Regulation pedagogical supervision 2020 consolidated](#); [Regulation on pedagogical supervision amendment 2021](#)).

A system for monitoring the careers of secondary school graduates from public and non-public schools was introduced in 2021 ([Law on School Education 2021 consolidated](#), as amended; [Law on School Education amendment 2021](#)).

The results of the annual external examinations and their analyses are published by the Central Examination Commission and the District Examination Commissions.

Quality assurance and accountability

The quality assurance system is based on:

- obligation to implement the core curriculum of general education and education for a profession;
- definition in the programme basis of educational outcomes, including knowledge, skills and attitudes that a learner should master in the first stage of education; educational outcomes described in this way are also examination requirements (examination standards);
- external examinations: eighth-grader exam, matriculation exam, examinations confirming the acquisition of partial qualifications in a profession or professional qualifications;
- standards of employment of teachers and teacher specialists;
- qualification requirements for teachers, teacher specialists, heads of the Education Authority, heads of Regional Educational Authorities, inspectors;
- the obligation of continuous in-service training of teachers.



Accountability at the regional and local levels:

- pedagogical supervision (heads of the Education Authority), ensuring control of the compliance of the work of schools with legal regulations, including those defining the core curriculum;
- supervision of the bodies that run schools (local government units).

Responsibility in the disposition of public funds at all levels of government and local self-government is regulated by the Act on Public Finance (Journal of Laws 2021, item 305 t.j.). Non-compliance with fiscal discipline including, for example, spending public funds contrary to their intended use, is subject to punishment, according to the Act on Responsibility for Violation of Public Finance Discipline (Journal of Laws 2021, item 289 t.j.).

Funding

Currently, conceptual work on new system solutions for financing inclusive education is underway at the Ministry of Education, including a pilot study on financing of functional assessments.

4.3 Formal and informal collaboration across ministries

Formal co-operation takes place within the framework of acts defining the tasks of ministries, which obligate all bodies to co-operate within the government.

An example is co-operation within the framework of work on assumptions and drafts of legislation and amendments to existing laws: before a draft is referred to the Council of Ministers, the leading ministry is required to agree on the proposal with other ministries.

Co-operation takes place within the framework of formal bodies appointed by the Prime Minister, individual ministers or government plenipotentiaries. Examples of such bodies, whose tasks include inclusive education, are the Polish Sign Language Council, the Accessibility Council, the National Consultative Council for Persons with Disabilities (for more information, see section 5.4).

4.4 Specific mechanisms for formal and informal collaboration that impact on inclusive education

Development of a shared vision for inclusive education

Before including the name of the draft act in the list of government legislative work, the Council of Ministers adopts the guiding principles for the document. The process of developing the draft act includes consultations, which involve, among others, all ministries, representatives of local governments in the Social Dialogue Council, educational trade unions, non-governmental organisations performing educational tasks, and entities subordinate to or supervised by ministries. There are no established informal mechanisms.



Co-operation with other ministries and that may affect inclusive education takes place within formal contacts (written and oral consultations, correspondence, meetings, conferences). Developing preparations for the adoption of formal solutions is accompanied by less formal contacts, such as telephone or face-to-face consultations.

Policy development, implementation and co-ordination

Most education policy is developed centrally, but management of education and administration of schools is mostly at local level: communes are responsible for nursery and primary schools, districts are responsible for upper secondary and special schools, guidance and counselling centres, etc. Local government bodies at province level administer a small number of public schools and other educational institutions operating at regional or supra-regional level. Regional education authorities implement national school education policy and are responsible for pedagogical supervision over pre-schools, schools and other educational institutions. Art schools, which take artistically gifted learners, form a separate education sector or strand supervised by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. They include primary schools (ISCED 1 and 2) and general secondary schools (ISCED 3) which combine general and art education, and schools at various levels which provide art education only. Sports schools and sports championship schools, supervised by the Minister of National Education, take learners excelling in sports. They include primary schools (ISCED 1 and 2) and general secondary schools (ISCED 3) which provide general education combined with an extended training programme in one or more sports ([GEM report](#), p. 28).

Identification of needs / referral for services

Policy is set centrally but implemented on local/school level ([GEM report](#), p. 28).

Data collection and sharing

In 2004, an Educational Information System (SIO) was launched to collect data on individual school years. The SIO database is maintained by the Minister of National Education. Entities obliged to provide data shall use the interface of the ICT system made available free of charge by the Minister of Education. In the computer application, the data from their activities are transferred by schools and educational institutions and other units performing tasks in the field of education. These are, inter alia, local government units, ministers in charge of schools and educational institutions, examination boards, school superintendents, units servicing educational system units, and chambers of craftsmen. The database collects and processes data concerning: units of the educational system and other units performing educational tasks; learners; staff. The transfer of data is a statutory obligation. On the basis of the data collected, statements are drawn up (as of 30 September, and in the case of social service colleges as of 10 October), which are made available in the SIO database to local government units. The territorial self-government units confirm the correctness of data contained in the statements within 30 days. On the basis of data collected in the database, reports may be prepared. The reports shall be made available in electronic form ([GEM report](#), p. 28).



Monitoring and evaluation

Pedagogical supervision is the responsibility of head teachers but is overseen at regional level ([GEM report](#), p. 28).

Quality assurance and accountability

Uniform quality assurance arrangements are in place for the entire school education system. The pedagogical supervision system covers both public and non-public institutions, including pre-schools and other pre-primary settings, schools and other educational institutions. The system consists of two elements: legal compliance auditing and support. External pedagogical supervision is the responsibility of the Minister of National Education and other competent ministers, and of the Regional Education Authority. Internal pedagogical supervision is exercised by the head of the institution (pre-school, school or another institution) in co-operation with other management staff, and with teachers. Headteachers are responsible at school level but may be supported by teaching council/parent council (school level). Local government units (LGU) oversee administration of the school/educational institution as an authority. As the subsidising body, LGUs are entitled to carry out controls in non-public units of the education system to which they give grants ([GEM report](#), p. 29; [Regulation on pedagogical supervision amendment 2021](#)).

Funding

Education is funded primarily from public sources. The main sources of public funding include general and targeted state-budget subsidies and grants, local government units' own resources, other public funds (for example, the Labour Fund and budgets of central government agencies allocated for the training of specific occupational groups), and European Union (EU) funds. Public funding is provided not only to public institutions but also to non-public institutions which fulfil the requirements set out in the national legislation ([GEM report](#), p. 29).



SECTION 5. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This section provides information on the general and specific quality assurance and accountability frameworks and mechanisms informing the country's education system.

5.1 School inspection processes and structures for all forms of educational provision

The course of the processes of education and upbringing, as well as the effects of teaching, upbringing and caring activities and other statutory activities of schools and educational facilities are observed, analysed and assessed within pedagogical supervisors. The assessment of school work is conducted by an inspector, or a panel of inspectors appointed by the Head of the REA from among those working in the REA (however, in the case of schools and institutions supervised by more than one body, such as art or agricultural schools, a joint evaluation panel can be set up).

Inspectors conducting assessment are required to have qualifications specified in the legislation. This position can be taken only by:

- appointed or chartered teachers (the third or fourth professional promotion grade, which are the two highest grades for school education teachers) who hold a master's degree and have either:
 - completed in-service training courses in administration or management;
 - have at least two years' work experience in a management position in a school (a pre-school or another educational institution);
 - have at least two years' work experience in a pedagogical supervision body or a body administering a school (a pre-school or another educational institution) in a position related to the organisation of work at a school (pre-school or another education institution);
- academic teachers who have at least five years' work experience in a higher education institution and have completed in-service training courses in administration or management.

Visitors assess the state and conditions of the activities of schools and educational facilities, provide support in the performance of teaching, educational and caring tasks, as well as inspire teachers to improve existing practice or implement new solutions in the education process, using innovative curricular, organisational or methodological activities aimed at developing the competency of teachers. In particular, pedagogical supervisors are subject to the following:

- possession by teachers of the required qualifications, fulfilment of the core curriculum and framework teaching plans, observance of the rules of grading, classifying and promoting learners and conducting examinations;



- observance of the regulations on full-time and part-time obligatory education, observance of the statute of the school or educational facility, observance of the rights of the child and the rights of the learner and the dissemination of knowledge about these rights;
- the provision of safe and hygienic conditions of education, upbringing and care for learners.

The inspection/control procedure includes an analysis of documentation provided by the school to be examined in terms of its compliance with the law, a site visit and the preparation of a report by an inspector or team of inspectors. At the end of the visit, the inspector or team of inspectors presents findings to the teaching council of the school (a collective body composed of the school head as its chair and all teachers). The control report is forwarded by the Head of the REA to the head of the school and its administering body. The school head may raise objections to the report which are considered by the Head of the REA. If the objections are found justified, the report is revised accordingly.

In addition, the Heads of the REAs obligatorily prepare annual reports for the Minister, which contain findings from pedagogical supervision, in their voivodeships. Findings are used by the Heads of the REAs to devise a pedagogical supervision plan for the coming school year. Findings also feed into the education policy and the pedagogical supervision plan for the next year at national level.

As of 1 September 2022, within the framework of pedagogical supervision, external evaluation (by the Education Authority) and internal evaluation (by the head of the Education Authority) are no longer carried out; the monitoring of the work of the school/school facility within the framework of supervision has also been abandoned ([Act Teacher Charter consolidated 2021 item 1762](#); [Act Teacher Charter amendment 2022](#); [Eurydice](#)).

5.2 Other quality assurance processes for all forms of educational provision

Representatives of external bodies (the body administering a given school and/or the body responsible for pedagogical supervision/Head of the REA) are involved in the professional promotion process for teachers' promotion grades.

Quality improvement is also one of the aims of the external examination system which comprises: the eighth-grader exam at the end of primary school, the final secondary education exam (maturity exam), and vocational exams for, among others, learners from vocational secondary schools and post-secondary schools. External examination results are taken into account in external evaluation. For details about the external examination system, see Eurydice Chapters [5.3](#) and [6.3](#).

Internal quality assurance is part of the pedagogical supervision system which includes evaluation as the main mechanism. The related legislation on internal supervision applies to the public sector only. Internal supervision is exercised by the school head in collaboration with other management staff, and with teachers also involved in their work appraisal. Annual evaluations cover issues which are considered relevant to the activities



of a given school; thus, their scope may vary between years. Outcomes of internal evaluation are taken into consideration in external evaluation. The national legislation or guidelines have not introduced any changes in internal pedagogical supervision during the COVID-19 pandemic. From the school year 2022/2023, teacher appraisal is an integral part of professional promotion. The novice teacher is assessed in the second and fourth year of their preparation for the teaching profession. If the evaluation is positive, then they receive the rank of appointed teacher. To apply for the next level of promotion, that is, to become a chartered teacher, the teacher must receive a positive performance evaluation in the last year of work, covering a period of three years.

Performance appraisal focuses on the performance of duties defined for teachers in the legislation ([Act Teacher Charter consolidated 2021 item 1762](#); [Act Teacher Charter amendment 2022](#); [Eurydice](#)).

The pilot implementation of the [Specialist Support Centres for Inclusive Education \(SCWEW\)](#) model was launched on 3 December 2021.

The role of the new centres will be to work more closely with mainstream institutions to better organise activities for inclusive education. As part of the programme, a Co-ordinating Centre is to be established to oversee the proper operation of the SCWEW network.

The tasks of the centres implemented during the pilot programme are:

- consultations and other forms of support for teaching and non-teaching staff of pre-schools and schools in the field of recognising developmental and educational needs and methods of working with a diverse class, including the use of universal design principles;
- close co-operation with parents;
- supporting management staff in developing an appropriate model of functioning as an inclusive organisation in order to ensure high quality of education and support;
- improving the accessibility of the pre-school and school;
- co-leading educational activities in a class/group by SCWEW teachers and specialists in co-operation with a teacher/specialist from a mainstream school, respectively;
- conducting model specialist classes and open lessons in a mainstream school or in SCWEW;
- organising specialist training, co-operation and self-education networks in co-operation with other entities;
- maintaining a database of information on institutions and entities providing support in the community;
- lending of textbooks, specialist equipment and teaching aids tailored to the needs of learners.

Every learner is to be guaranteed assistance, including psychological and pedagogical support that is tailored to their needs. For several years, the Ministry of Education and



Science has been working with specialists to develop the best model of inter-institutional support. The SCWEW centres are to be the guarantee that learners receive such assistance ([Eurydice](#)).

Commissioned by the MoES, the University of Silesia is implementing a scientific project from April 2022 to 31 December 2023 which will result in the development of models for the effective management of local support from a cross-sectoral perspective, the creation of specific tools for the implementation of the aforementioned goals, and the preparation of staff in this regard. The developed models will be tested in selected districts within the pilot. The effectiveness of the developed models and their implementation will also be examined. The entire research process will be subject to evaluation. The main goal of the project is to increase the quality and effectiveness of co-ordinated, cross-sectoral support provided to learners and their families and the community in which they function at the local (district) level ([Cross-sectoral support model website](#)).

Beginning with the 2022/2023 school year, the educational information system will collect data on the extent of support provided by a pre-school, school or educational facility to learners who have received an opinion on the need for early childhood development support, a decision on the need for special education, a decision on the need for individual annual pre-school preparation/individual teaching or an opinion from counselling and guidance centres ([Act on education information system consolidated 2022](#); [Act on School Education System amendment 2022](#)).

5.3 Evaluation mechanisms used to monitor outcomes at different system levels

General outcomes (academic, social, well-being, etc.) for all learners

The Ministry of Education and Science

Established in January 2021, the Ministry of Education and Science exercises direct pedagogical supervision over specific types of schools and institutions (so-called Polish schools: schools at Polish diplomatic and military missions and consulates abroad; national public continuing education institutions; in-service teacher training institutions; and experimental schools and institutions). The Ministry also oversees and co-ordinates pedagogical supervision activities across the country and, in particular, those undertaken by the Heads of the REAs. The Minister:

- sets the main lines of the national education policy to be implemented by the Heads of the REAs, and in particular those related to their pedagogical supervision tasks;
- monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of pedagogical supervision exercised by the Heads of the REAs and compliance with the legislation in this respect, and may give the Heads of the REAs written guidelines and instructions, except in individual cases which are subject to administrative decisions;
- may instruct the Heads of the REAs to provide information, documentation, periodic reports and reports on specific issues;



- may organise training courses, seminars and conferences for the Heads of the REAs;
- may publish in the official ministerial journal recommended standards for school equipment and facilities to be used in the teaching of general subjects.

Government Representative for General Education and Pedagogical Supervision

The Government Representative holds the position of secretary of state in the Ministry of Education and Science. As part of their responsibilities in the area of pedagogical supervision, the Representative analyses the legislation in force and the approaches in place, identifies issues to be addressed and develops proposals for the key lines of the national education policy to be implemented by the Heads of the Regional Education Authorities (REAs). The Representative may commission studies and expert opinions and appoint expert and advisory teams. In consultation with the Minister of Education and Science, the Representative presents opinions and conclusions and may also draft government documents, based on findings from their activities.

The Representative performs their tasks in collaboration with the government administration bodies and may also collaborate with institutions within the school education system, parents' councils, local government units and non-governmental organisations ([Eurydice](#)).

Specific outcomes (academic, social, well-being, etc.) for learners vulnerable to exclusion

A learner (including an adult learner or a graduate) with a decision on the need for special education issued due to a disability may take the eighth-grader and matriculation examinations in terms and form adjusted to the type of disability, on the basis of this decision.

A learner with a decision on the need for special education issued due to social maladjustment, or the risk of social maladjustment, may take the eighth-grader and matriculation examinations in terms adjusted to their educational needs and psycho-physical capabilities, resulting respectively from social maladjustment or the risk of social maladjustment, on the basis of this decision.

A learner with a decision on the need for individual teaching or a graduate who had a decision on the need for individual teaching in the school year in which they take the matriculation examination, may take the eighth-grader and matriculation examination under conditions adjusted to their educational needs and psycho-physical capabilities due to their health condition, on the basis of this decision.

A learner who is ill or temporarily impaired may take the eighth-grader and matriculation examinations under conditions appropriate to their state of health, on the basis of a health certificate issued by a doctor.

A learner with an opinion from counselling and guidance centres, including specialist counselling centres, about specific learning difficulties may take the eighth-grader exam and the matriculation exam under conditions adjusted to their educational needs and psycho-physical possibilities resulting from the nature of these difficulties, on the basis of this opinion.



A learner who, in the school year in which they take the eighth-grader exam or the matriculation exam, was covered by psychological and pedagogical support at school due to adaptation difficulties related to previous education abroad, language communication disorders or a crisis or traumatic situation, may take the eighth-grader and matriculation examinations under conditions adjusted to their educational needs and psycho-physical capabilities resulting respectively from the nature of such difficulties, disorders or crisis or traumatic situation, on the basis of a positive opinion of the pedagogical council.

A learner who is not a Polish citizen, whose limited knowledge of the Polish language makes it difficult to understand the text being read, may take examinations under conditions adjusted to their educational needs and psycho-physical capabilities resulting from this limitation, on the basis of a positive opinion of the pedagogical council.

Adaptation of the form of the external examination consists in developing separate examination sheets adjusted to the type of disability of a disabled learner or to the needs of a learner whose limited knowledge of the Polish language makes it difficult to understand the text.

Adjusting the conditions for conducting the external examination consists of:

- minimising the limitations resulting from the disability, social maladjustment or risk of social maladjustment of the learner;
- providing the learner with a place of work appropriate to their educational needs and psycho-physical capabilities;
- use of appropriate specialist equipment and didactic measures;
- appropriate extension of the time provided for carrying out the eighth-grader and matriculation exams;
- establishing rules for evaluating the solutions of tasks used to conduct the eighth-grader exam and the matriculation exam, taking into account the educational needs and psycho-physical capabilities of the learner;
- ensuring the presence and support during the eighth-grader and matriculation examinations of a teacher assisting a learner in reading or writing, or a teacher specialist in the field of a given type of disability, social maladjustment or risk of social maladjustment, respectively, if this is necessary to achieve proper contact with the learner or to assist in handling specialist equipment and didactic measures.

Every year, the Central Examination Commission issues a communication on detailed modalities of adjusting the conditions and forms of conducting each external exam to the needs of learners passing with special educational needs, including those with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment, and learners who are not Polish citizens ([Act on the education system consolidated 2022](#), Art. 9a, 44 z.zr, 44 z.z.zf, 44 z.z.zh).

Information on adjusting the conditions and forms of the exam for the 2022/23 school year also applies to refugee learners from Ukraine (Announcement by the director of the Central Examination Commission on 19 August 2022 on detailed modalities of adjusting the conditions and forms of the eighth-grader exam in the school year 2022/2023: [CKE announcement 8-grader exam 2022/23](#)).



Outcomes for schools (professional development, staff and personal well-being, etc.)

Assessment of professional achievements forms an integral part of the professional promotion procedure and is conducted by the school head after the teacher has completed the induction/probation period for a higher professional grade (a period of work preceding the promotion process). The duration of an induction/probation period is three years and nine months for the credit for preparing for the teaching profession, then four years for the promotion to the grade of appointed teacher and five years and nine months to the grade of chartered teachers.

The assessment covers the extent to which the teacher has implemented a professional development plan, agreed between the teacher and the school head before the initiation of an induction/probation period. It may end with a positive or negative outcome. A positive outcome is one of the preconditions for promotion. Teachers may appeal against the outcome to the pedagogical supervision body (the Head of the Regional Education Authorities in most cases). The grade given by the body is final. ([Eurydice](#); [Teachers Charter consolidated 2022](#); [Regulation teachers career path 2022](#)).

Outcomes for parents and families (support, participation, family well-being, etc.)

No information.

5.4 Evaluation mechanisms used to monitor the effectiveness of processes at different system levels

Effectiveness of teaching and learning processes

Heads of the Regional Education Authorities

The Head of the REA draws up an annual pedagogical supervision plan for a given province and submits a report on findings from supervision in a given school year to the Minister.

The Head of the REA collects supervision results from among inspectors working in the REA and considers objections to their reports which may be raised by heads of the schools concerned ([Eurydice](#)).

School level

The school head and other management staff use REA supervision results to improve the school's performance and check teachers' compliance with the legislation. They also support teachers in the performance of their tasks; for example, they analyse the performance of the school, design development measures, including those encouraging teachers to undertake continuing professional development activities, and implement such measures (for example, training activities and staff meetings). School heads put in place mechanisms for identifying and eliminating risks to proper performance of tasks ([Eurydice](#)).

Effectiveness of school management processes

Where it is established that a school is underperforming in terms of educational effectiveness, the Head of the REA instructs the school head to develop a programme and



schedule for improving performance/effectiveness of education within a specified timeframe. If the school head fails to eliminate shortcomings in the timeframe set, to develop or implement a performance improvement programme, or take into consideration the comments and conclusions presented, the Head of the REA takes steps which lead to dismissal of the head of the public school or may result in closing down the non-public school concerned ([Eurydice](#)).

Effectiveness of teacher professional development processes

From the school year 2022/2023 teachers' appraisal is an integral part of professional promotion. The novice teacher is assessed in the second and fourth year of preparation for the teaching profession. A nominated teacher may apply for a higher degree of professional promotion if in the last year they received a very good grade covering the last three years of work in the profession. Performance appraisal focuses on the performance of duties defined for teachers in the legislation. Representatives of external bodies (the body administering a given school and/or the body responsible for pedagogical supervision/Head of the REA) are involved in the professional promotion process for teachers' promotion grades.

It is the responsibility of the director of an educational facility, within the framework of pedagogical supervisors, to assess the performance of teachers. The director may do this on their own initiative, at the request of the teacher (when applying for a grade of promotion), at the request of the leading authority or pedagogical supervisors, the school council or the parents' council. When evaluating a teacher's work, the degree of fulfilment of duties in all areas of school activity is considered. The teacher's duties are set forth in the act 'Teacher's Charter'; among them is the duty of in-service training, according to the needs of the school ([Teachers Charter consolidated 2021](#); [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)).

Efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms

The distribution of the educational part of the general subvention among local government units is carried out on the basis of an algorithm. It constitutes an appendix to the regulation of the MoES issued annually on the modality of distribution of the educational part of the general subvention for local government units in a given budget year, based on the data shown in the educational information system. This is referred to in the act of 15 April 2011 on the educational information system (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 584 and 619; [Act on Education Information System consolidated 2022](#)).

Currently, the modality of financing educational tasks is linked to the freedom of local governments to shape educational policy in their areas. Local governments are guided by their own criteria for the distribution of budget funds to individual schools and educational facilities; in particular, they can take into account local conditions and the specifics of individual schools (e.g. number of learners, grades of promotion of teachers). Local governments, when running (subsidising) schools and educational facilities, act on their own behalf and on their own responsibility, including financially. In each local government, the actual effects of fulfilment of educational legislation are the result of independent application of the legislation.



The formula for algorithmic distribution of educational subsidy takes into account a number of factors and parameters that illustrate the specificity of shaping the components of the subsidy with regard to both school and out-of-school tasks, and is reviewed annually by local governments, the Council for Social Dialogue, trade unions and social partners. When constructing this formula, the Ministry of Education and Science performs a series of analyses of economic indicators depicting the average cost of education and activities of schools and educational facilities. However, the algorithm is only a statistical method of distributing subsidies and cannot take into account all the local problems found in local government units and in individual schools and educational facilities, as it would lose its universal character.

As of 2018, the distribution of educational subsidy takes into account the weighting of the so-called 'Subsidy per effect', i.e. 'per exam passed' which is dedicated to learners of secondary schools for adults, post-secondary schools, qualifying vocational courses. The value of the weight was initially at 0.165, which gave approximately PLN 890 per learner. Currently, the value of the weighting is 0.4, which gives an amount of approximately PLN 2,472.

Effectiveness of (vertical) co-operation between stakeholders at different system levels

Funds for fulfilment of tasks requiring the use of special organisation of learning and working methods are calculated for local government units within the educational part of the general subvention. The rules for calculating educational subvention for learners with disabilities are regulated by the regulation of the Minister of Education and Science on the modality of distribution of the educational part of the general subvention for local government units in a given budget year.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of the Act of 27 October 2017 on the financing of educational tasks (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1930), local government units are required to allocate funds in a given budget year for the fulfilment of tasks requiring the use of special organisation of learning and working methods for learners with special educational needs in an amount not less than the amount resulting from the distribution (and for this purpose) of the educational part of the general subvention for local government units in a given calendar year.

Effectiveness of (horizontal) co-operation between ministries and ministerial departments

The effective functioning of the Ministry, including co-operation between departments, is among the issues checked by internal audit. There is an independent and separate internal audit unit in the Control and Audit Department called the Self-Standing Internal Audit Position (SSAW). Persons employed in this unit are qualified as auditors. They perform tasks in the field of internal audit, including carrying out audits, preparing audit reports and recommendations for the MoES organisational units covered by the audit. Their tasks also include monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations and formulating proposals for the leadership of the Ministry to improve its functioning. In addition, they co-ordinate the management control self-assessment process and put together aggregate information on significant management control risks and weaknesses, proposing improvements in this regard (Rules of procedure of the Department of Control and Audit - internal document of MEiN).



Inter-ministerial co-operation in the area of inclusive education is monitored and supported by various councils and teams established by acts or ministerial orders, which are supposed to support such co-operation – e.g., Polish Sign Language Council, Accessibility Council, National Consultative Council for Persons with Disabilities.

The Polish Sign Language Council's tasks include, among others, drawing up opinions on functioning of the act's provisions, giving opinions on draft government documents and indicating proposals for solutions affecting the functioning of people who use sign communication.

The Council on Accessibility is mainly concerned with recommending the best solutions to improve accessibility and developing a system of certification and accreditation of entities working for accessibility.

The National Consultative Council for Persons with Disabilities is a consultative and advisory body of the Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities. It is a forum for co-operation between representatives of government administration bodies, local governments and non-governmental organisations for the benefit of people with disabilities. The Council's tasks include, among others:

- presenting to the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons' Affairs proposals for projects aimed at integrating people with disabilities and for solutions to meet the needs of people with disabilities;
- opinions on documents, including drafts of legal acts;
- government programmes of activities for people with disabilities and information on their fulfilment
- signaling to the relevant authorities the need to issue or amend legislation relating to the situation of persons with disabilities.

Other(s)

Non-public school education

The arrangements for evaluation are in place in both early childhood education and school education, but apply only to public schools, pre-schools and other public institutions (hereafter jointly referred to as schools, wherever possible). All types of institutions in the non-public sector may develop different approaches. The arrangements for teacher assessment apply to both the public and non-public sectors ([Eurydice](#)).

5.5 Specific monitoring mechanisms relating to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

The statutes of a school lay down detailed arrangements for internal learner assessment.

When giving end-of-term or end-of-year marks for behaviour to a learner with diagnosed developmental disorders or disfunctions, teachers should take into account the impact of such disorders or disfunctions on the learner's behaviour, based on either:

- a certificate recommending special education;



- a certificate recommending individualised learning;
- a statement/opinion from a counselling and guidance centre, including a specialist centre.

If the mid-year or end-of-year assessment (or end-of-semester assessment in a post-secondary school) demonstrates that due to the level of their learning achievements, the learner will be unable or will find it difficult to continue education in a higher grade (or a higher semester in a post-secondary school), the school is required to provide conditions for the learner to bridge any gaps in learning.

Teachers are required to adapt educational requirements to learners' individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities, in the same way as in mainstream and inclusion schools.

The progress made by learners in special education is subject to periodic assessment, based on the same rules as in mainstream and inclusion pre-schools and schools, and alternative pre-primary education settings.

Pre-schools and schools at all education stages use descriptive assessment for learners with a moderate or severe intellectual disability. Due to the specificity of education provided to such learners and the individual pace and scope of their learning, achievements in each sphere of pedagogical and rehabilitation interventions are planned on an individual basis. A multi-faceted specialist assessment, conducted periodically by teachers and specialists, makes it possible to modify the individual educational-and-therapeutic programme for each learner and to adjust the level of expected achievements to the learner's abilities.

The rules for promotion and assessment of disabled learners with normal intellectual abilities and learners with a mild intellectual disability are the same as for learners without a disability.

Learners are promoted to a higher grade if they have received, in accordance with specific criteria, positive marks for all compulsory subjects and classes, except subjects and classes from which they have been exempted. The decision to promote a learner to a higher grade is taken by the school's teaching council. A learner who has not been promoted to a higher grade (or to a higher semester in a post-secondary school) must repeat a given year (or semester).

Learners in primary schools, including schools within young offender institutions or youth detention centres, may also be promoted to a higher grade during the school year if they:

- hold a special education certificate;
- follow curricula with at least a one-year delay;
- obtain marks classified as positive under the school assessment system for all compulsory classes and classes in an ethnic/national minority language or the regional language;
- are considered capable of learning curricular contents covering two years within one school year.



A learner with a moderate or severe intellectual disability who holds a special education certificate is promoted to a higher grade and finishes the school based on a decision of the school's teaching council. In its decision, the council takes into account recommendations made in the learner's individual educational and therapeutic programme ([Eurydice](#)).

5.6 Specific evaluation mechanisms relating to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

Teachers, class teachers and teacher specialists providing psychological and pedagogical support to a learner assess the effectiveness of the assistance provided and formulate conclusions on further activities to improve the learner's functioning. If the learner was covered by psychological and pedagogical support in a pre-school, school or educational facility, respectively, the class teacher or director of the pre-school or educational facility takes into account the conclusions on further activities aimed at improving the learner's functioning when planning to provide psychological and pedagogical support to the learner. If the conclusions show that, despite the psychological and pedagogical support provided to the learner, there is no improvement in their functioning, the director requests the public counselling centre to carry out a diagnosis and indicate a modality for solving the learner's problem with the consent of the learner's parents or an adult learner ([Regulation on psychological and pedagogical support 2020 consolidated](#)).

The Individual educational and therapeutic programme (IPET) is developed by a team which is formed by teachers and specialists who conduct classes with a learner, including class teachers. The team develops the programme after conducting a multi-specialist assessment of the level of functioning of the learner, taking into account the diagnosis and conclusions formulated on its basis and recommendations contained in the decision on the need for special education, in co-operation, as appropriate, with counselling and guidance centres, including specialist counselling. At least twice a school year, the team performs a periodic multi-specialist evaluation of the level of functioning of the learner, taking into account the assessment of the effectiveness of the IPET and, if necessary, modifies it. Parents of the learner or an adult learner have the right to participate in the team's meetings, as well as in the development and modification of the IPET and making multi-specialist assessments ([Regulation on the Education of Learners with Disabilities, 2020](#)).

The early childhood development support team can be formed in a pre-school, primary school, including a special school, another form of pre-primary education, special rehabilitation-education centres, special educational centres, rehabilitation-education centres and psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, including specialist counselling centres. The goal is to stimulate the psychomotor and social development of the learner, from the time the disability is detected until the start of schooling, conducted directly with the learner and their family. The team includes people prepared to work with young children with impaired psychomotor development, including a pedagogue qualified according to the type of disability of the learner, a psychologist and a speech therapist. The team's tasks include, in particular, assessing the progress and difficulties in the learner's functioning, including the identification and elimination of barriers and limitations in the community that impede the learner's activity and participation in social



life. Another important task of the team is to analyse the effectiveness of the support provided to the learner and their family, to make changes to the curricula, according to the needs of the learner and their family, and to plan further activities in the field of early support ([Regulation on Early Child Support 2017](#)).

For each participant in rehabilitation-education classes, an individual curriculum is developed, including, in particular, the objectives of the classes, methods and forms of work with the learner and the scope of co-operation with their parents (legal carers). The individual curriculum of classes is developed by the teachers in charge of the classes in co-operation with a psychologist and, depending on the needs, with other specialists working with learners, on the basis of the diagnosis and recommendations contained in the decision on the need for rehabilitation-education classes and observation of the learner's functioning. At least twice a school year, teachers conducting classes periodically assess the functioning of the learner and, if necessary, modify their individual curriculum ([Regulation on rehabilitation and education classes 2013](#)).

5.7 Specific accountability mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

Providing conditions for children aged 6 to fulfil their obligation of annual pre-school preparation and for children aged 3–5 to fulfil their right to pre-primary education is the municipality's own task. It is the responsibility of the municipality to provide children with disabilities aged 5–6 and children with a decision on the need for special education up to the age of 9 with free transportation and care during transportation to the nearest pre-school, pre-primary ward in a primary school, other form of pre-primary education or rehabilitation-education centre. Controlling the fulfilment of the obligation of annual pre-primary preparation by children aged 6 is the responsibility of the director of the primary school in whose district the child lives.

Full-time obligatory education applies to learners aged 7–18, and can be carried out in pre-schools and primary schools. Part-time obligatory education for young people up to the age of 18 can be carried out in a secondary school, college or qualifying vocational course. Compulsory education and schooling for learners with profound intellectual disabilities may be implemented by their participation in rehabilitation-education classes.

Directors of public primary schools control and keep records of compliance with full-time obligatory education for learners residing in the catchment areas of these schools, and the municipality controls and keeps records of compliance with part-time obligatory education for learners residing in the municipality. Directors and the municipality co-operate with parents to provide conditions for the learner to prepare for classes.

The municipality is obliged to provide learners with disabilities with free transportation and care during transportation to the nearest primary school, and learners with motor disabilities, including aphasia, with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities; also to the nearest secondary school, until the end of the school year in the calendar year in which the learner turns 21. In addition, the municipality is obliged to provide learners with profound intellectual disabilities, as well as learners with multiple disabilities, one of which is an intellectual disability, with free transportation and care during transportation



to a rehabilitation-education centre, until the end of the school year in the calendar year in which they turn 24 – in the case of learners with multiple disabilities, one of which is an intellectual disability – and 25 in the case of participants in rehabilitation-education classes.

In the case of learners with a decision on the need for special education, the director of the public primary school in whose catchment area the learner resides may, at the request of the parents, postpone the start of full-time obligatory education no longer than until the end of the school year in the calendar year in which the learner turns 9 years old.

The head of the municipality (mayor, city president) is obliged to provide directors of public primary schools in the municipality area with information on the current status and changes in the records of learners aged 3–18. Failure to comply with full-time or part-time obligatory education is subject to penalties in accordance with the provisions on enforcement proceedings in administration.

The accountability system in place allows prevention and early intervention in cases of risk of early school leaving or drop-outs by those of full-time or part-time obligatory education age.

Each unit of the educational system to which a learner will be admitted is obliged to provide adequate conditions for their development and learning. The head of the Education Authority, within the framework of pedagogical supervisors, is the authority authorised to control in this regard (Art. 56, [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated](#), as amended).

As of the 2022/2023 school year, the educational information system collects data on the extent of support provided by a pre-school, school or educational facility to learners who have received an opinion on the need for early childhood development support, a decision on the need for special education, a decision on the need for individual annual pre-primary preparation/individual teaching, or an opinion from counselling and guidance centres.

As of 2017/18, all Regional Education Authorities have appointed Special Education Needs (SEN) inspectors to support directors of the pre-schools and schools and parents of learners with SEN, including providing information, consultation and advice on the application of the law, in addition to disseminating good practices, activating local resources and supporting inter-institutional co-operation within the voivodeship. SEN visiting officers co-operate with the MoES and ORE (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji – Centre for Education Development) in the development of new SEN solutions. A list of visiting officers with their contact details and information about their tasks is available on the websites of the MoES, ORE and Education Authorities ([Regional SEN Supervisors 2017](#)).

A training supply has been developed for SEN inspectors, as well as an opportunity to exchange experiences during periodic information and consultation meetings organised by ORE, to which experts and representatives of the MoES are invited who introduce the possibilities arising from the law.

In accordance with the Act on Financing Educational Tasks, a principle has been introduced (Art. 35(4)) that the subsidy provided for learners with a decision on the need for special education, participants in rehabilitation-education classes and learners in



inclusion school divisions can only be used to cover expenses for fulfilment of tasks related to the organisation of special education and the organisation of rehabilitation-education classes. In the case of pre-schools, expenses related to fulfilment of the recommendations of decisions and other expenses incurred in connection with their education and upbringing can be accounted for from the subsidy charged for learners with disabilities. In the case of pre-schools, expenses related to fulfilment of the recommendations of decisions and other expenses incurred in connection with their education and upbringing can be accounted for from the subsidy calculated for learners with disabilities.

Individual schools and pre-schools account for special education subsidies in total for a given school or pre-school, and not for individual learners. Special education expenses include, among others, expenses related to adjusting the building of the educational facility, school or institution to the needs of learners with disabilities, as well as for further and in-service teacher training centres related to the fulfilment of tasks resulting from recommendations contained in decisions. A settlement of the subsidy is submitted annually, and in the event of irregularities or failure to settle on time, the subsidy is withheld and the provisions on public finance discipline are applied ([Act on financing education tasks consolidated 2022](#)).



SECTION 6. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION, CO-OPERATION AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

This section provides information on the structures, mechanisms and opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and co-operation in the country.

6.1 Does the legislation and policy framework specify learner voices are used to inform the development of learning and teaching environments?

Yes.

6.1a Description of the legislation and policy framework around the use of learner voice

The legislative process assumes public consultation on both the assumptions of the planned changes, as well as draft acts and regulations. In accordance with the general regulations in effect regarding the opinion and agreement of draft legal acts, the right to give an opinion on the assumptions and draft legal acts is vested in representative employers' organisations and trade union organisations, within the scope of their remit. This does not apply to the assumptions and the draft state budget, which are reviewed under a different procedure. The Ministry may therefore refer assumptions or draft legislation for consultation with other organisations, including social partner organisations, which may include, among others, learners and their parents ([Consultations rules](#)).

The Minister of Education and Science established the Children and Youth Council (Order of the Minister of Education and Science dated 11 January 2022). The Council's tasks include taking positions and expressing opinions, including making proposals on issues affecting children and youth in matters covered by the government administration department of education and upbringing, in particular, presenting opinions on planned changes, including proposals for solutions ([Regulation Children and Youth council 2022](#)).

Poland has youth councils operating in communes, districts and voivodeship assemblies, the Polish Council of Youth Organisations, as well as the Youth Council to the President of the Republic of Poland ([Youth council to the President 2022](#)).

The on-going work at the MoES on the draft act on the support of learners and families took into account the opinions of learners reported during the consultations conducted in 2019–2021 within the framework of the project carried out in co-operation with the Agency, entitled 'Supporting the improvement of the quality of inclusive education in Poland' under the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Programme. The theme of the consultation was to identify areas in which legislative changes are needed. Participants in the public consultation in several regions of Poland included learners from various school communities and school leavers, including those with and without disabilities, from special, inclusive and mainstream schools, as well as their parents, teachers and directors.



Controls alone, serving mainly to detect irregularities in compliance with the law, are not a sufficient mechanism for quality assurance, since – by assumption – they take place sporadically and are strictly formal in nature.

Another body operating within schools (and other educational institutions) is the learner self-government established by all learners in a given school. Its operational arrangements and the rules for electing its members are laid down in the regulations adopted by all learners in an equal, secret and popular vote. The self-government bodies are the only bodies representing all learners. Self-government regulations may not be contradictory to the statutes of the school. The self-government body can make proposals and give opinions on all school matters to the school council, the teaching council and the school head. In particular, these may concern the basic rights of learners such as the right to:

- have access to the curriculum, its contents and aims, and the requirements set for learners;
- have progress in their learning and conduct assessed in a transparent and justified way;
- organise school life in a way that ensures an appropriate balance between learning effort and opportunities for developing and pursuing learners' own interests;
- edit and publish a school newspaper;
- organise cultural, educational, sports and entertainment activities in line with learners' needs and organisational capacities, in co-operation with the school head;
- choose the teacher responsible for the learner self-government ([Eurydice](#)).

6.2 Does the legislation and policy framework ensure curriculum development processes take account of all learners and their communities?

No.

6.2a Description of how the legislation and policy framework around curriculum development processes take account of all learners and their communities

Not applicable.

6.2b Explanation

No core curriculum has been defined for learners with profound intellectual disabilities.

A separate core curriculum for education has been developed for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities.

The core curriculum for pre-schools and schools and the educational legislation pertaining to them do not directly address differences between learners related to their gender, background or sexual orientation. However, the core curriculum is a universal document, providing a framework for education, on the basis of which each teacher develops their own curricula for a given group of learners. Curricula are approved by the director of the



school (after consultation with the board of education). These curricula should be adjusted to the needs and abilities of the learners for whom they are intended (Article 22a paragraph 5–6, [Act on Education System consolidated 2022](#)).

The educational system ensures in particular the adjustment of the content, methods and organisation of teaching to the psychological and physical capabilities of learners, as well as the possibility of psychological and pedagogical support and special forms of didactic work (Art. 1 pt.5, [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)).

The charter of each school shall include the goals and tasks of the school, among others, in enabling learners to maintain their sense of national, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity. In addition, in accordance with Article 98(1)(6) of the above-mentioned act, the charter of the school contains the organisation of the school's work, including the organisation of the teaching of the national minority language, ethnic minority language or regional language, if the school conducts such departments or teaching (Art. 98 paragraph 1 item.43, [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)).

A separate core curriculum for education was developed for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities.

The inclusion of religious differences among learners is included in the regulations stating that religious lessons in pre-primary and primary schools are organised at the request of parents. In secondary schools, parents of underage learners and adult learners may decide to attend religious or ethics lessons alternatively, in accordance with the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 April 1992 on the conditions and modality of organising religious instruction in public pre-schools and schools (Journal of Laws 2020, [item 983](#)).

Teaching in a foreign language may be provided in international wards at school. In such a ward, learners who are not Polish citizens are provided with instruction in Polish as a foreign language (Art. 22 [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)).

6.3 Does the legislation and policy framework support the active involvement of different stakeholders in ensuring inclusive learning environments?

Parents and families

Yes. Public schools (and pre-schools and other public institutions) also establish the parents' council which represents parents of all learners in a given school. The parents' council can make proposals concerning all school matters to the school head and other school bodies, the school administering body or the body responsible for pedagogical supervision.

The powers of the parents' council include:

- adopting a school education and care programme and a problem prevention programme in consultation with the school's teaching council;
- giving its opinion on a programme and schedule of activities designed to improve school performance;



- giving its opinion on a draft financial plan submitted by the school head.

The parents' council may raise funds to support the statutory activities of the school. Funds can come from voluntary contributions made by parents and other sources.

School-leaders/leadership teams, teachers and specialist staff

Yes. A school (a pre-school or another educational institution) which employs at least three teachers should establish the teaching council. The teaching council is a collective body whose remit covers the school's statutory tasks related to education and care. Where less than three teachers are employed, teachers are members of the teaching council of the school that supervises the school campus in which they work. The teaching council is chaired by the school head and composed of all teachers employed in the school. Meetings of the teaching council can also be attended, in an advisory capacity, by individuals invited by the chair of the council and with the council's consent or at its request. They can be representatives of associations and other organisations, in particular scouting organisations which aim to provide education or extend the range of education and care activities in a school or institution ([Eurydice](#)).

The school head is required to present, at least twice in every school year, general conclusions from the pedagogical supervision exercised and information on the activities of the school.

The decision-making powers of the teaching council include in particular:

- approving school activity plans;
- adopting resolutions on the results of learner assessment and promotion and on teaching innovations and experiments;
- adopting organisational arrangements for in-service training of teachers in the school;
- adopting resolutions to strike learners from the register;
- determining how findings from pedagogical supervision, including supervision exercised by the pedagogical supervision body, will be used to improve the performance of the school.

The teaching council gives opinions on the following matters:

- the organisation of work in the school;
- draft financial plans of the school;
- the head's proposals concerning distinctions and awards for teachers;
- the head's proposals for regular tasks and classes to be assigned to teachers as part of their basic salary and activities for which they receive additional payment.

The teaching council drafts the statutes of a school and amendments to the statutes and presents them to the school council. The council can also submit a request to the school administering body to dismiss a teacher from the post of school head or any other management position in the school. In such a case, the body authorised to dismiss the head is required to conduct an enquiry and inform the teaching council about its findings within 14 days of the receipt of the request ([Eurydice](#)).



Public schools (and pre-schools and other public institutions) may establish the school council. The council should include at least six members representing, in equal proportion, teachers (elected by teachers); learners' parents (elected by parents); and learners (elected by learners; except in nursery and primary schools, special schools for learners with intellectual disabilities, and some other institutions referred to in relevant regulations). The council actively participates in solving internal problems.

Moreover, the council:

- adopts the school statutes;
- gives its opinion on the draft school financial plan;
- can make proposals to the body responsible for pedagogical supervision of the school to evaluate the activities of the school, the school head and teachers;
- gives its opinion on the school activity plan, proposals for educational innovations and experiments, and other matters relevant to the school;
- may, on its own initiative, evaluate the activities of, or conditions in, the school and make proposals concerning, in particular, extra-curricular activities and optional school subjects to the school head, the school's teaching council, the school administering body or the regional school education council.

In order to support statutory activities of the school, the council can collect funds from voluntary donations and other sources ([Eurydice](#)).

Stakeholders in the local communities

Yes. The regulation of the Minister of National Education of 17 August 2017 on requirements for schools and educational facilities specifies the requirements for public schools and educational facilities on the fulfilment of necessary activities, including co-operation with the community, as referred to in Article 44 (1) of the Act of 14 December 2016 – Education Law. For different types of educational facilities, requirements have been specified relating to their co-operation with the community. According to the requirements, public pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, art schools, continuing education facilities, vocational training centres and other educational facilities co-operate, in a purposeful manner, with institutions and organisations operating in the local community. A school providing vocational education also co-operates with employers. The co-operation of a pre-school/school/educational facility with the local community influences their mutual development and the development of learners ([Regulation on school requirements 2020 consolidated](#); [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)).

Local-level decision-/policy-makers

Yes. The co-operation of local policy makers/influencers (including in the field of education) operating within local government structures is carried out in co-operation with the voivodeship government administration. The Regional Education Authority is part of the composite government administration in a voivodeship. The Head of the Regional Education Authority conducts pedagogical supervision in those schools and educational facilities, the operation of which is the responsibility of the local government unit. The



school superintendent implements the educational policy of the state, and also co-operates with the heads of the Education Authority in the development and implementation of regional and local educational policies, respectively, consistent with the educational policy of the state giving opinions on documents concerning, for example, school networks, school work plans, co-operating with education councils established at the constituting bodies of local government units (Art. 51 [Law on School Education 2021 consolidated, as amended](#)).

The forum for working out a common position of the government and local self-government is the Social Dialogue Council. The Council consists of representatives of the government, representative trade union organisations and representative employer organisations. The tasks of the Council include expressing opinions and taking positions on socio-economic matters and giving opinions on draft legislation ([Act on Social Dialogue Council 2015](#)).

Non-governmental organisations, disabled people's organisations or other organisations representing vulnerable groups

Yes. Schools (and other educational institutions) may host activities of various associations and organisations, and, in particular, scouting organisations. These can be organisations whose statutory aims include conducting educational activities or extending the range of educational and care activities at a given school. No political parties or organisations can operate in schools. Non-political organisations obtain permission to conduct activities in a school from the school head, based on the terms and conditions agreed beforehand and a positive opinion of the school council and the parents' council ([Eurydice](#)).

See also the information above (Stakeholders in the local communities) on the requirement for pre-schools, schools and institutions to co-operate with the local communities, which is included in the current educational regulation.

6.4 Does the legislation and policy framework ensure that curriculum development processes involve the participation and contribution of different stakeholders?

No.

6.4a Description of the legislation and policy framework ensuring the involvement of stakeholders in curriculum development processes

Not applicable.

6.4b Explanation

There are no separate regulations governing the participation of various stakeholder groups in the development or modification of the core curriculum for general education, vocational education or pre-primary education. These documents are annexes to legal acts – regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science/MoES. Thus, in accordance with the applicable legislative procedure, their drafts are subject to public consultations, and thus to opinions from, among others, local government units, trade unions (including



teachers' unions) and representatives of employers and other stakeholders. MoES, at the stage of legislative work, consults the aforementioned drafts with many entities/associations representing communities interested in education issues (MoES maintains a list of social partners).

During the legislative process, at the public consultation stage, draft legislation is always made public on the pages of the Government Legislative Centre, so everyone interested has the right to send in their comments and opinions. When preparing a comprehensive revision of the core curriculum for general education, it is also a practice to hold so-called pre-consultations, within which preliminary consultations are held on the draft core curriculum for individual subjects. An example of pre-consultation within the framework is the work on the 2016–2017 [core curriculum for general secondary school, technical secondary school and stage 1 sectoral vocational school](#).

6.5 Does the legislation and policy framework support the development of learning communities in local/regional areas?

Yes.

6.5a Description of the legislation and policy framework that supports the development of learning communities

Education Support Programme

Projects that can receive funding under the [Education Support Programme](#) include creating interactive teaching aids and educational materials, organising extra-curricular activities, sports and recreational events, competitions, exhibitions and conferences. This new initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science is aimed at non-governmental organisations, including scout organisations, which carry out their activities in the field of education and upbringing. The Ministry of Education and Science will allocate PLN 10 million for the implementation of the programme until the end of the year.

The Programme's main aims:

- to promote a patriotic upbringing;
- to involve learners in active participation in the life of the family, school, local and national community;
- forming in learners a sense of self-dignity and respect for the dignity of others;
- supporting the educational system through the use of new technologies and innovative educational solutions;
- strengthening the sense of individual, cultural, national, regional and ethnic identity;
- awakening cognitive curiosity;
- promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical activity;
- shaping work discipline, determination, perseverance, consistency;



- developing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The programme covers the funding of projects (90 per cent grant, 10 per cent own financial contribution) for the following activities:

- creation of interactive teaching aids and innovative educational materials;
- organising extra-curricular and out-of-school activities, including those that develop social activity and encourage active leisure;
- organising school sports competition;
- organising events including competitions, exhibitions, presentations, workshops, lectures, sports and recreational events, seminars, conferences, rallies;
- carrying out other projects in support of pre-schools, schools, educational settings, lifelong learning centres, art establishments, psychological and pedagogical counselling centres.

Programme modules

The activities implemented under the programme must correspond to one of the three modules.

Module 1 – Innovative education:

- developing learners' skills in the efficient use of information and communication technologies;
- developing in learners and teachers an openness to new technologies through the use of innovative educational materials and interactive teaching aids;
- shaping in learners attitudes of entrepreneurship and creativity, which will foster active participation in social and economic life;
- dissemination among learners knowledge on safety and shaping appropriate attitudes towards threats, including those related to the use of information and communication technologies;
- creating conditions for the development of learners' interests and talents, in particular in the area of new technologies.

Module 2 – Patriotic education:

- discovering, documenting and disseminating knowledge of Polish history in accordance with the content of the history subject curriculum;
- maintenance and dissemination of national traditions, cultivation of Polish identity, development of national, civic and cultural awareness, including the demonstration and implementation of universal values related to patriotic attitudes;
- support the educational role of the family in accordance with the curriculum content concerning knowledge of human sexual life, the principles of conscious and responsible parenthood, the value of the family, life in the pre-natal phase, and methods and means of conscious procreation included in the core curriculum



for general education, implemented within the educational classes 'Education for living in the family'.

Module 3 – Education through Sport:

- popularisation and dissemination of the idea of education through sport;
- popularisation and dissemination of an active lifestyle and active leisure activities among learners, including popularisation of various sports disciplines;
- shaping positive role models by using the didactic function of sport;
- disseminating knowledge among learners about the principles of rational nutrition and counteracting food waste ([Eurydice](#)).

Within the framework of the National Health Programme for 2021–2025, the Minister of Education and Science, in co-operation with NGOs, is implementing projects entitled 'Positive School Climate' and 'Positive School', which strengthen universal prevention and support mental health promotion. They include, among others, the following activities:

- School Climate. The purpose of the task is to organise and carry out training for teachers, parents and learners on the principles of positive communication and peer mediation and school mediation as methods of resolving difficult and conflict situations, and to disseminate the projects in the school and local community.
- School volunteerism. The purpose of the task is to activate learners, develop and strengthen peer relationships and protect mental health through volunteer activities carried out in educational, educational or social projects, simultaneously for the benefit of the school community and the local community.
- Protecting the mental health of learners with diversified needs In a multicultural pre-school and school community. The goal of the task is to improve the competency of teachers, including teacher specialists and educators in a multicultural pre-school and school community in the identification of early symptoms of mental health disorders of learners and the appropriate adjustment of individual and group support to the identified needs, including the integration of a multicultural community ([Competition MEiN Positive school climate 2021](#); [Competition MEiN Positive school 2022](#)).



SECTION 7. FINAL COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

The striving to improve the quality of inclusive education will be carried out within the education system, and should therefore be part of a coherent, comprehensive policy to improve the quality of the entire system. A special role in the sustainable quality assurance of any organisation or system is played by mechanisms of external and internal evaluation and monitoring (supported by facts and data, selected short- and long-range goals and adopted indicators), which allow learning, drawing lessons from mistakes made and planning remedial programmes. These mechanisms are conducive to decision-making at various levels of education management – from the school, local to central level – aimed at ensuring the high quality of the organisation to conduct the processes of education, upbringing and care and their effects in the school or educational facility. Inspections and controls alone, serving mainly to detect irregularities in compliance with the law, are not a sufficient mechanism for ensuring quality assurance, since – by definition – they take place sporadically and are strictly formal in nature.