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BASIC EDUCATION IN THE NORDIC REGION

Similar values, different policies



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Dear Reader,

Education in the Nordic region is an interesting area to explore. Quoting a former Swedish colleague, Nordic education systems are similar enough to understand and different enough to make them interesting.

Equity is the cornerstone in the Nordic region countries. These countries are known for providing equitable, high-quality education to all its pupils and students while paying a lot attention to their well-being and happiness.

This comparative report aims at giving an overview of basic education in the Nordic region, in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The report describes and provides statistical data on central features such as governance, structures, expenditure, accessibility and equity, quality assurance, support for learners and teachers.

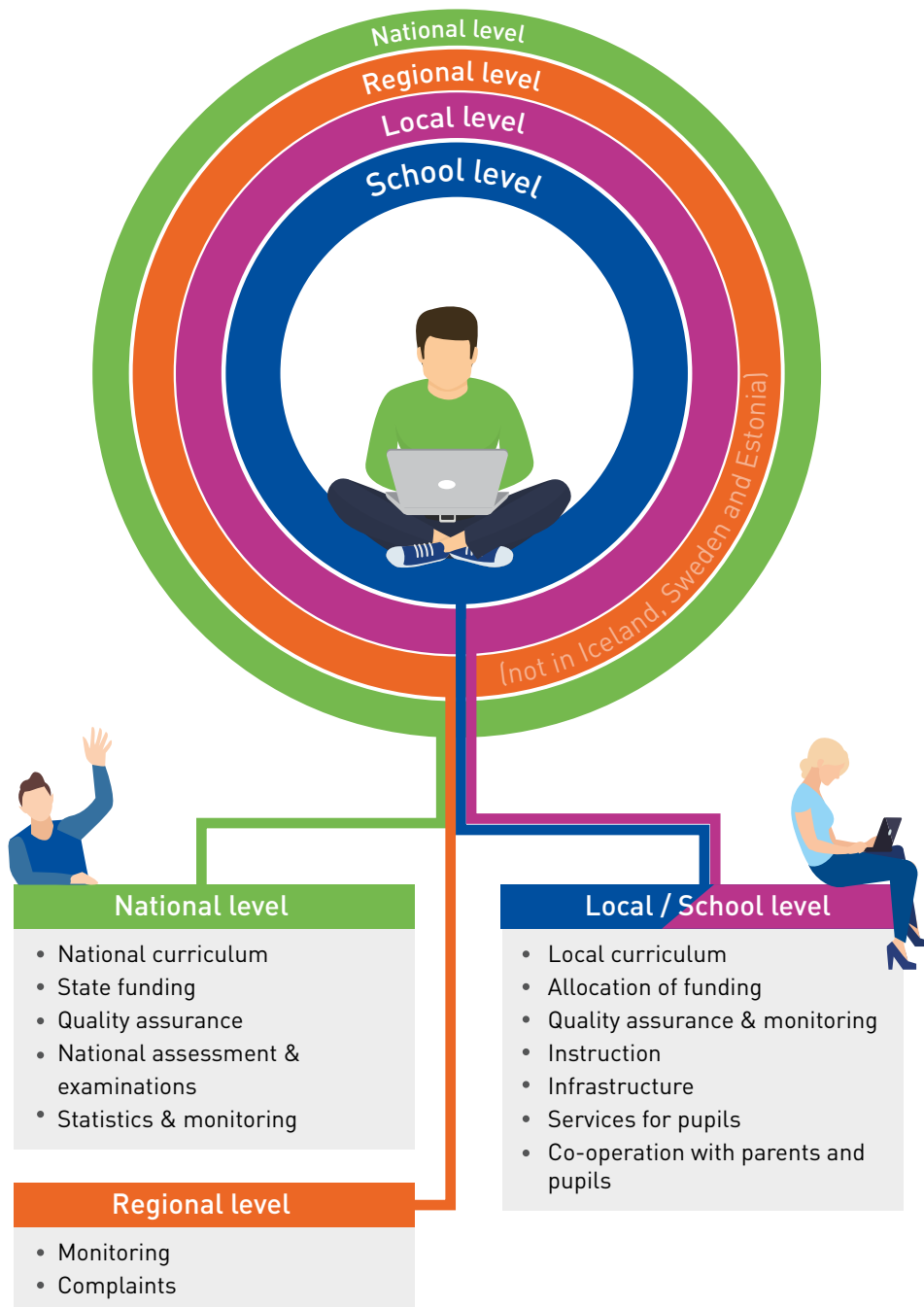
I sincerely thank all the colleagues at the Finnish National Agency for Education who have contributed to this report,

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Aapo Koukku, counsellor of education,
Hanna Laakso, senior adviser,
and Paula Paronen, senior adviser.

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Kristiina Volmari
editor
Head of Statistics and analysis

1 Governance



1. GOVERNANCE

Decentralisation of decision-making and administration of basic education to regional and local bodies is typical in all Nordic region countries. National-level decision-making is also divided between ministries and one or several national agencies in all these countries except in Estonia. In Sweden the number of such agencies is the highest. In addition to the Ministry of Basic Education, there are four national agencies dealing with basic education (See table 1, page 9). In Iceland the national agency the Directorate of Education is relatively new, it was established in 2015.

1.1 National agencies play a central role in steering and monitoring basic education

In all Nordic region countries, the ministries of education are responsible for basic education. Their main tasks are development, steering, monitoring and evaluation as well as enacting legislation. National education policies are formulated by decisions made by political bodies such as parliaments and governments

There are differences in the structures of the ministries in the Nordic region countries. For example Sweden has three ministers of education, one for basic education, one for upper secondary education and training and one for higher education. In Denmark there are four ministries of education: Ministry for Children and Social Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education and Science, Ministry of Culture and Danish Ministry of Defence. The latter, however, has only some responsibilities related to education at ISCED levels 5-8.

In most Nordic region countries ministries have delegated responsibilities to national agencies.

The division of responsibilities between the ministries and national agencies vary. For example the national core curricula are drawn up either by the Ministry or a national agency. In Denmark, Estonia and Iceland the curricula are the responsibility of the ministries. In Finland, Sweden and Norway a national agency is responsible for drawing up the national curricula.

All countries in the Nordic region have private schools. These are mainly government-dependent, that is, they have to apply for a license from a ministry or national agency. More about private schools in Section 2.2.

In Finland and Iceland learning materials are produced by the national agencies. While the national agency in Iceland is responsible for all learning materials, the Finnish national agency only produces low-circulation learning materials that private publishers are not interested in producing.

All countries in the Nordic region have national bodies responsible for monitoring basic education. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate and Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training are responsible for monitoring and supervising schools. In Norway and Iceland the national agencies are also responsible for the national tests and their quality. In Finland follow-up and monitoring based on statistics is the responsibility of the Finnish National Agency for Education together with the Ministry of Education and Culture. Quality assurance mechanisms and practices are discussed in Chapter 5.

Only Sweden has a specific national body dealing with complaints

Generally complaints are not dealt with at national level, but at local and regional level. Only Sweden has a specific national body dealing with complaints.

TABLE 1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL AGENCIES DEALING WITH BASIC EDUCATION AND WORK UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION, 2018

| Country | Agency | Main tasks |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Denmark | National Agency for IT and Learning (Styrelsen for IT og læring STIL) | Supports digitalisation and development of education |
| | National Agency for Education and Quality (Styrelsen for Undervisning og Kvalitet) | Promotes quality development on education, supervises the quality of education and supports effective institutional operations. https://www.stukuvvm.dk/om-styrelsen |
| Estonia | ----- | ----- |
| Finland | Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus, OPH) Also hosts Finnish education evaluation centre (FINEEC). | National core curricula, assessment of learning outcomes, structures and quality assurance systems at provider level. Other activities are e.g. statistics and analysis, production of low-circulation learning materials. |
| Iceland | Directorate of Education (Menntamálastofnun) | Evaluation and monitoring of basic education, learning materials, national tests, education data and analysis, licenses for private schools |
| Norway | Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet) | National core curricula, school inspections, monitoring and follow-up, national tests, evaluation and assessment |
| | National service for special needs education (Statlig spesialpedagogisk tjeneste, Statped) | National service for special needs education made up of four regions |
| Sweden | The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) | National core curricula, support for schools, monitoring and evaluation of schools, statistics and analysis |
| | The Board of Appeal for Education (Skolväsendets överklagandenämnd, ÖKN) | Complaints and legal right of pupils and students. |
| | The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektion). | School inspections, guidelines for schools, licenses for private schools |
| | The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten, SPSM) | Advice and support for schools, further training, learning materials, financial support. |
| Regional agencies | | |
| Denmark | 5 Regional offices | Responsibility for special needs schools. |
| Estonia | ----- | ----- |
| Finland | 6 Regional State Administrative Agencies (Aluehallintovirastot, AVI-keskukset) | Information, monitoring and development, complaints, rectification of pupil assessment |
| Iceland | ----- | ----- |
| Norway | 19 County Governor's offices (Fylkesmenn) | Monitoring and evaluation, complaints, monitoring of organisation of national examinations. |
| Sweden | ----- | ----- |

1.2 Regional bodies important in ensuring legal right of pupils

Half of the countries in the Nordic region, Finland, Norway and Denmark, have regional bodies with responsibilities related to education. Education is generally not their main task. Regional authorities have tasks related to monitoring and follow-up of education. Their task is also to ensure the legal rights of pupils, in most cases they deal with complaints from parents for example regarding the pupil's assessment.

There are no regional-level agencies in Sweden, Estonia and Iceland. In Estonia the regional administration was discontinued recently, in 2018. The tasks of the former regional bodies have been reassigned to other authorities and municipalities.

In Finland regional authorities also provide information on education and training. In Denmark the regional authorities are responsible for provision of special needs education for those under 18.

1.3 Main responsibility for basic education lies with education providers

Local level governance is very strong in all the Nordic region. Local authorities in this case refers to both schools and education providers.

Municipalities are generally the education providers in these countries. In every country in the Nordic region the municipalities are obliged by law to provide basic education to all compulsory school-aged children in their area.

Local authorities have responsibility for the administration and provision of education in the schools. They are responsible for planning, implementation and development. They must also ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive instruction. Education providers are also responsible for monitoring the schools, the organisation of instruction, organisation of cooperation with homes, hiring school personnel, school health care, possible school transports and meals. Municipalities as education providers also have the right and obligation to adapt the national curricula to suit the local needs and specificities.

Local level governance is very strong in all the Nordic region.

Municipalities have different types of decision-making bodies, for example

municipal boards, school boards and committees. These make decision regarding the organisation of basic education in their area. The members are elected politically in all these countries.

1.4 School leadership is team work

All basic education schools have a school head, whose task is to lead, steer and monitor the instruction and education provided in the school. The school head is also responsible for administration and expenditure of the school.

School heads make decision together with other stakeholders.

All countries in the Nordic region have groups or committees that participate in the decision-making together with the school head. For example in Denmark the school head can be supported by a pedagogic council, although these are not compulsory anymore. In Estonia support for decision-making is provided by teachers' councils and boards of trustees.

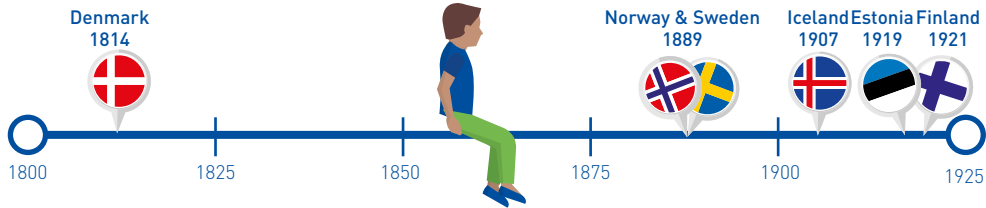
School boards or school councils are mandatory in many of the countries. In Finland these are, however, voluntary.

Parents' participation in the schools' decision-making is generally ensured in the legislation. Schools are usually obligated to involve parents and guardians as well as pupils in cooperation. Details, such as how the cooperation is organised, is decided at local level. For example in Finland the legislation does not specify at which age or grade a pupil council must be established. Similarly to Sweden, the forms the cooperation must take have not been specified.

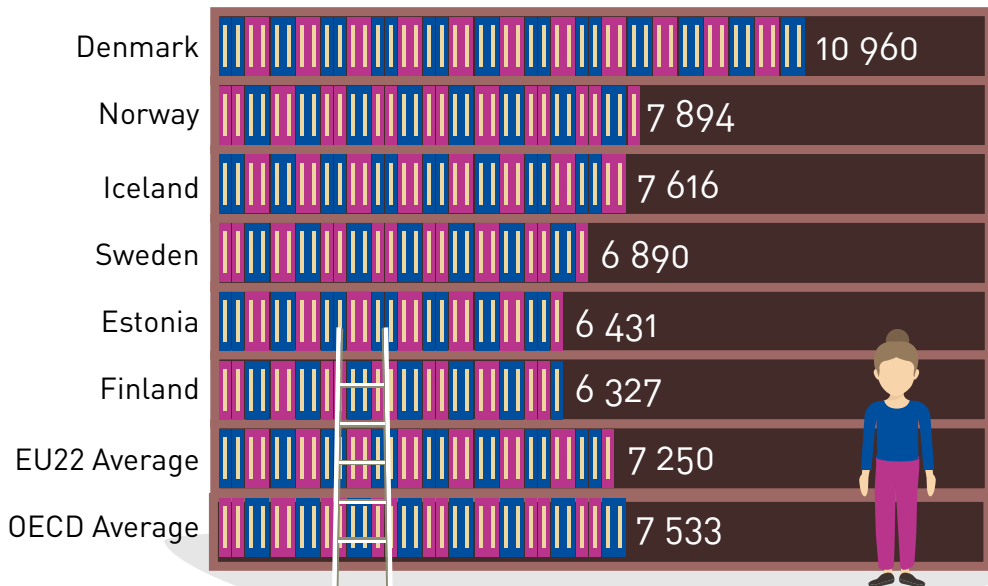
There are also other models of cooperation. In Iceland and Norway cooperation with pupils and parents has been nationally defined in more detail than in Finland and Sweden. Schools in Iceland must set up a parents' council. In Norway there is a national parents' council (FUG) whose task is to monitor that parents' and guardians' views are taken into account in the political debate.

2 Structure of basic education

Year of adopting legislation on compulsory education



Total number of 60-minute lessons during compulsory basic education, 2018



2. STRUCTURE OF BASIC EDUCATION

The basic education systems in the Nordic region resemble each other in many respects. In most countries a comprehensive school ideology was implemented in the 1960s and 1970s. The main aim was to increase equity and offer education to the whole age groups based on the same learning objectives set in a national curriculum. Before comprehensive school pupils were streamed at an early age into different types of schools, the other being more vocationally oriented. As a consequence pupils had different opportunities for further studies and professions.

Some historical dates

- Sweden was the first country to adopt the comprehensive school approach. The decision to implement the new type of compulsory education was taken as early as 1962. The reform was implemented gradually so that all schools in the country were comprehensive schools in 1971.
- A similar decision was made in Finland in 1969. The reform was also implemented gradually and finished by 1978.
- In Estonia the comprehensive school system was in use long before the country became independent again in 1991.

2.1 Single structure basic education system in all Nordic region countries

Today there is no division between primary and lower secondary levels, basic education is provided within a single structure. This comprises all year grades in basic education and, in some cases, also pre-primary education. A single structure school is generally lead by one school head and can operate at many locations.

In practice, a division between primary and lower secondary still exists. In Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Denmark primary education encompasses grades 1-6 and lower secondary grades 7-9. In Norway and Iceland primary education ranges from grades 1-7 and lower secondary from 8-10.

In Estonia and Sweden primary education is further divided into different levels, the first one being 1-3 and the second 4-6. In years 4-6 there are more subject teachers than in the first three years but less than in 7-9.

Although primary and lower secondary education are administratively unified, lower secondary school can be in another location. This is because many of the school buildings were constructed before the single-structure reform. Many pupils therefore have to change school when moving to lower secondary education.

In practice, a division between primary and lower secondary still exists.

Primary and lower secondary education differ from each other in most of the Nordic countries. In Estonia, Finland, Norway and Sweden teachers at primary level are generalist teachers while they are subject teachers at lower secondary level. In Iceland the same generalist teacher teaches throughout basic education whereas in Denmark there are subject teachers in both primary and lower secondary level. For more information on teachers see Chapter 7.

2.2 Schools mainly maintained by municipalities

The majority of basic education pupils in the Nordic region attend schools which are maintained by municipalities. There are also private schools which are not maintained by the state or a municipality.

Denmark has the highest number of private schools, Finland the lowest. Approximately 25 % of basic education schools in Denmark and some 2 % in Finland were private in 2017.

Denmark has the highest number of private schools.

Private schools in Finland and Sweden cannot charge tuition fees. In Denmark, Estonia and Norway it is possible to charge reasonable fees.

It is not possible for schools to make profit in Denmark and Finland. In Estonia, Iceland and Sweden this is possible at least in theory. How the profit can be used is strictly regulated in Estonia and Iceland. Consequently, the only country where the profits can be used freely is Sweden.

Private education in Sweden

The private school system, the so-called *free-schools*, in Sweden is exceptional. Any actor can establish a school provided they get a license from the National Agency for Education.

In most cases pupils and their families can freely choose which school to attend. The school chosen receives public funds for each pupil, in other words, the money follows the pupil. In some areas schools compete with one another, for example by investing in pupil welfare and well-being.

The free-school system was established in 1992. Since then the number of free-schools have increased, so that today circa 15 % of the basic education pupils attend a free school.

In case a private education provider can organise the education with lower cost than public providers, it can keep the funds saved from the public funding and make a profit.

One of the means private schools can provide education at a lower cost is to have less teachers per pupils. There is a remarkable difference in teacher resources between public and private schools in lower secondary level in Sweden. In public schools the teacher-pupil ratio is 1 teacher to 12 pupils, while the corresponding ratio in private schools is 1 to 17. In other EU countries there is no such difference between public and private schools. (Education at a Glance 2018.) More information on teacher-pupil ratio and expenditure in Section 4.3.

The right for schools to make profit in education has been debated for a long time in Sweden. It has also been a hot topic politically. One of the criticisms has been that private companies are allowed to make profit with public funds. It has been suggested that the profits should be allowed to be used for school improvement and development only. Despite the debate which has been going on for years and political efforts, no decisions on restricting the profit-making have been made.

2.3 Home education is allowed in most Nordic region countries

Although education is compulsory, attending school is not mandatory in other Nordic region countries except Sweden, and therefore basic education can also be provided in the homes. Home education is allowed in all other countries, except in Sweden where a permission is granted only in exceptional cases. Such exceptions can be health reasons or the family living abroad. In Sweden the policy is to restrict home education and bring the children to school as early as possible. It is more common in other European countries to allow home education if parents so wish without any special reason.

The number of pupils attending home school is marginal. The highest share was in Estonia, where 0.4 % of pupils attended home school in 2017-2018. In both Denmark and Finland, the share was much smaller, only 0.07 % attended home school. Data from other Nordic countries was not available.

The number of pupils attending home school is marginal.

The regulations regarding home education vary from one country to another. In some cases it is enough if the parents inform the education providers or schools of their intention to provide home education. In Denmark a prerequisite is that the parent in charge of the education is a qualified teacher.

Follow-up and assessment is organised in different ways. For example, in Iceland the pupils educated at home must take and pass the national examinations in grades 4, 7 and 9. In Estonia, the school assesses at least once in a semester that the learning objectives have been reached unless the pupil is taught at home for medical reasons. In case the objectives have not been reached, the schools have the right to discontinue the home education.

2.4 Duration of compulsory education commonly 10 years

The duration of compulsory education is 10 years in all other Nordic region countries except Estonia, where it is one year shorter. Compulsory education in Sweden was lengthened recently as pre-primary education at the age of 6 became compulsory in autumn 2018.

Compulsory education starts in the year that the child turns 6, except in Estonia where children start school in the year they turn 7. At the end of compulsory education the pupils are generally 16 years old.

The first year of compulsory education is pre-primary education in Finland and Sweden. In other Nordic region countries pre-primary education is not compulsory.

Pre-primary education at the age of six compulsory in Finland and Sweden

After basic education, pupils in Denmark and Finland, as well as in Estonia in certain cases, can opt for an extra year. During this additional year pupils can revise and improve their grades as well as get more time to think about what they want to do in future. In Estonia additional studies may be offered to basic education leavers with learning difficulties so that they can continue with studies or move to the labour market.

Universal compulsory education in the Nordic region countries introduced more than a 100 years ago

Universal compulsory education was introduced at very different points of times in the Nordic region countries. The first country to introduce compulsory education for all was Denmark in 1814. Also, in Norway and Sweden this took place in the 1800s, in 1889. Compulsory education in Estonia and Finland was introduced more than a hundred years later than in Denmark, 1919 in Estonia and 1921 in Finland.

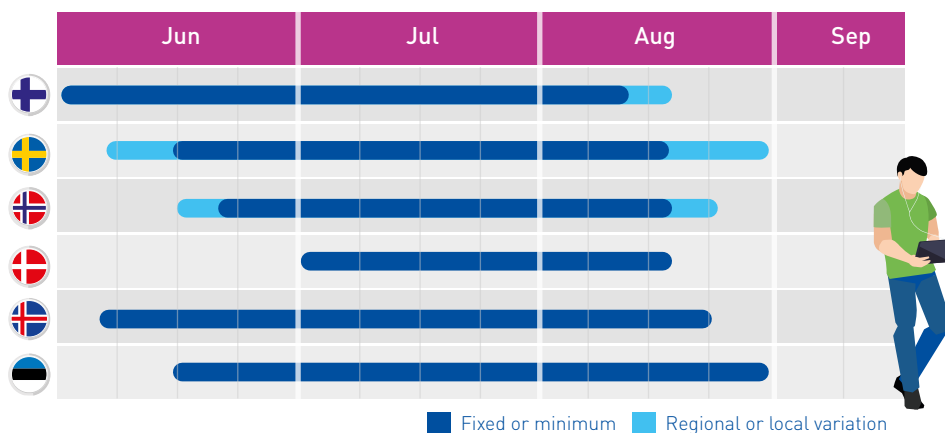
2.5 Length of the school year varies

The length of the school year in the Nordic region varies from 175 school days in Estonia to 200 in Denmark (Table 2.2 in the Appendix). The school year is also among the longest in Denmark compared to other EU and OECD countries.

Local autonomy is considerable regarding school start and end as well as holidays. The only exception is Denmark and Finland where the end of the school year is decided nationally. In both Denmark and Finland the reason is the desire that schools finishes on the same day so that schools have a common graduation day all over the country. In Estonia the school year and holidays are defined nationally. Schools may however decide on different time for holidays under certain conditions (length of summer holidays in the Figure 2.1). In other European countries it is more common to regulate when school starts and ends as well as timing of the holidays.

School generally starts in August, except in Estonia where it starts in September. In Denmark and Finland school starts already at the beginning of August, which is early compared to other European countries.

FIGURE 2.1 LENGTH OF SUMMER HOLIDAYS IN BASIC EDUCATION IN WEEKS, 2018



Source: Eurydice (2017): The Organisation of School Time in Europe. Primary and General Secondary Education -2017/18

2.6 Great variation in compulsory instruction time

Compulsory instruction time is regulated at national level in all countries in the Nordic region. In all other countries except Denmark, the education provider can decide on how the instruction time is divided between year grades. In Denmark this is regulated at national level so that all schools follow the same distribution of lesson hours.

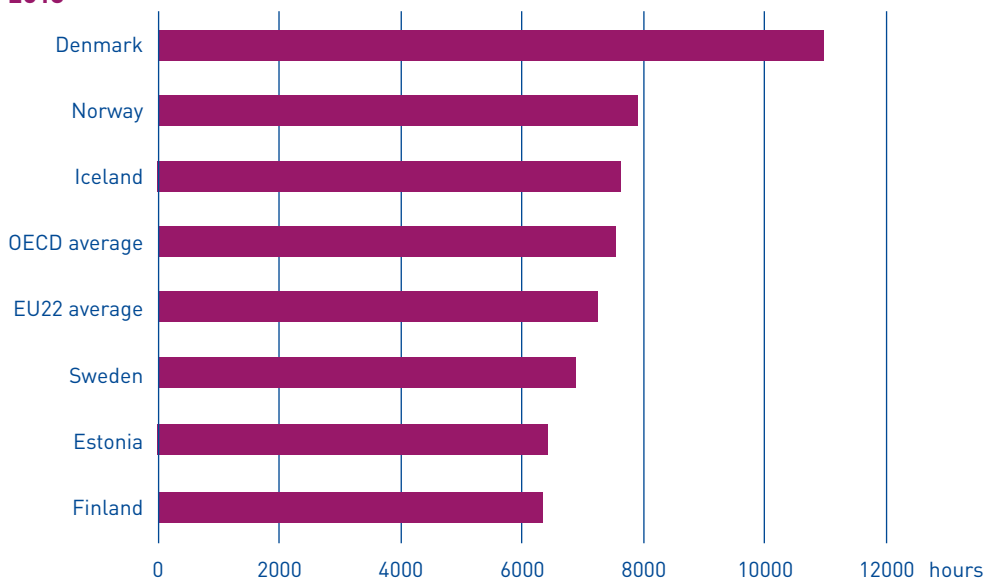
Local autonomy has been strongest in Sweden; only the total number of instruction time per each subject has been decided nationally for the whole 9-year basic education. However, the regulations have changed and since autumn 2018 the instruction time for different subjects are divided in three smaller parts. The lower stage includes grades 1-3, middle stage grades 4-6 and higher stage grades 7-9. Students attending lower and middle stages have followed the new instruction time from autumn 2018 and finally all students after a period of transition in 2021.

In Estonia, Finland, Iceland and Norway the instruction time for the different subjects are defined for two or three groups of grades. For example, in Iceland and Norway the number of lessons for mother tongue as well as for mathematics has been defined for grades 1-4, 5-7 and 8-10. The education provider decides on how the number of lessons is distributed among these.

Number of compulsory instruction hours highest in Denmark, lowest in Finland

There is remarkable variation in compulsory instruction time during basic education in the Nordic region (Figure 2.2). Instruction time is highest in Denmark and lowest in Finland. In Denmark the number of instruction time is highest also compared to other EU and OECD countries.

FIGURE 2.2 INSTRUCTION TIME IN COMPULSORY BASIC EDUCATION, IN HOURS, 2018



Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018 (Table D1.1)

Table 2.3 in the Appendix

The difference in compulsory instruction time during basic education between Denmark and the other countries in the Nordic region varies from approximately 3 000 hours less in Norway to 4 600 hours less in Finland.

Basic education in Denmark was reformed in 2014. The reform aimed at improving the learning outcomes. One of the solutions was increasing the compulsory instruction time. The outcome was that the instruction time increased by 35 % in compulsory education.

2.7 Share of compulsory subjects in basic education similar in all countries

The proportion of instruction time devoted to so called academic subjects – reading and writing, mathematics, natural sciences – is fairly similar in the reviewed countries as well as in EU and OECD countries on average. At primary level the share devoted to these three subject groups ranges from 38 % in Denmark to 50 % in Norway.

The European Commission and OECD annually collect joint data on instruction time for compulsory education in the European Union and OECD countries. The data was collected at the end of 2017 for the latest Eurydice and OECD publications which are used as a source in this chapter.

Grouping of subjects (OECD & EU Commission)

Natural sciences Includes subjects such as science, physics, chemistry, biology, environmental sciences and ecology.

Social studies Includes subjects such as history, geography and all related studies.

Arts education Includes subjects such as arts, history of arts, music, visual arts, drama, music and dance performance, photography, and creative handicraft.

Other subjects This category includes diverse subjects in each country. It may include for example following subjects:

Languages: in addition to first foreign language

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Technology: construction, electricity, electronics, graphics and design

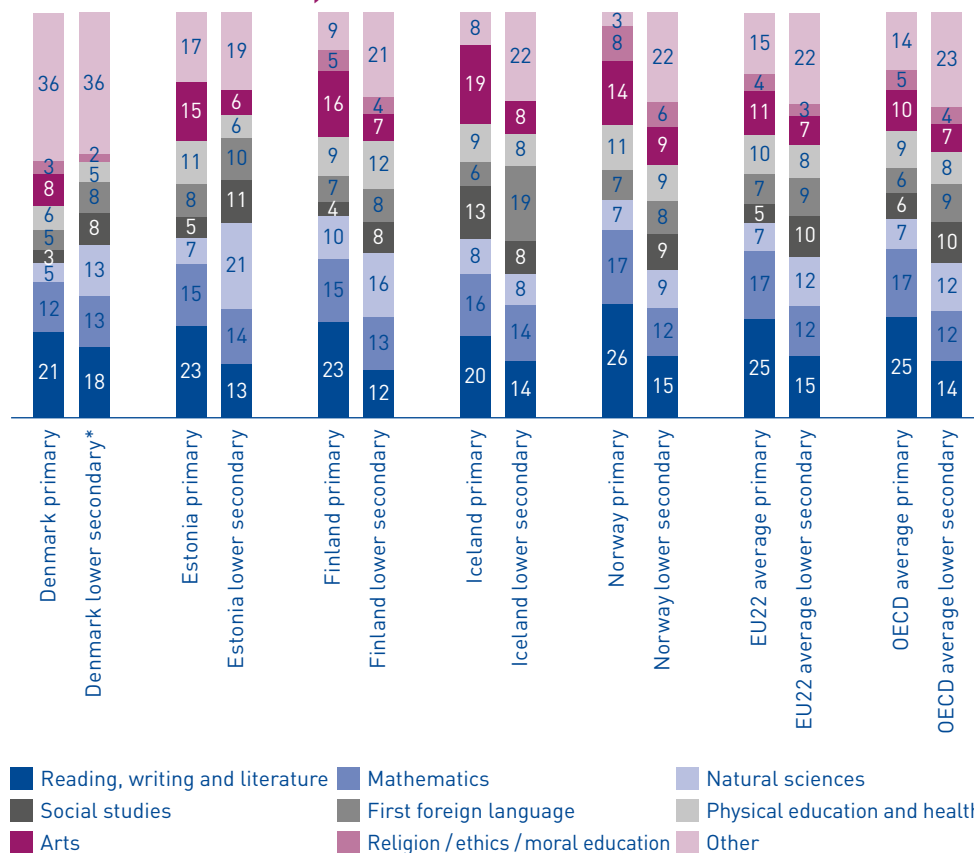
Practical and vocational skills: accountancy, business studies, career education, clothing and textiles, driving and road security, home economics, nursing, secretarial studies, tourism and hospitality, woodwork, metalwork and sewing.

Compulsory subjects chosen by students/schools: can be almost any kind of subject schools offer for students to choose. For example, schools may be offering more science, art, physical education etc.

There can be some differences with grouping of the subjects between the countries.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the shares of subjects for primary and lower secondary levels. The data for Sweden is not applicable as it is not comparable with the other countries because compulsory instruction time was defined as a total number for the whole nine years of basic education in 2017 when the latest data was collected.

FIGURE 2.3 SHARE OF COMPULSORY SUBJECTS IN PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2018



*Arts is included in 'other subjects'

Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table D1.3a&b

Table 2.4 in the Appendix

The subject 'reading, writing and literature' represents the largest share of instruction time in all countries at primary level. The share ranges from 20 % in Iceland to 26 % in Norway. It decreases in all six countries when moving to upper grades. The decrease between these levels is highest in Finland and Norway, 11 percentage points and lowest in Denmark, 3 percentage points.

The second largest share of hours in all countries is devoted to mathematics. Compared to lower grades the share decreases in upper grades but less than in the case of reading and writing. The exception is Denmark, where the share of mathematics increases slightly at lower secondary level. The difference between the two levels is biggest in Norway where the share of mathematics is 5 percentage points bigger at primary level.

The share of natural sciences increases as well when moving to upper grades except in Iceland, where the share is the same at both levels. The increase is highest in Estonia, it rises from 7 % at primary to 21 % at lower secondary level.

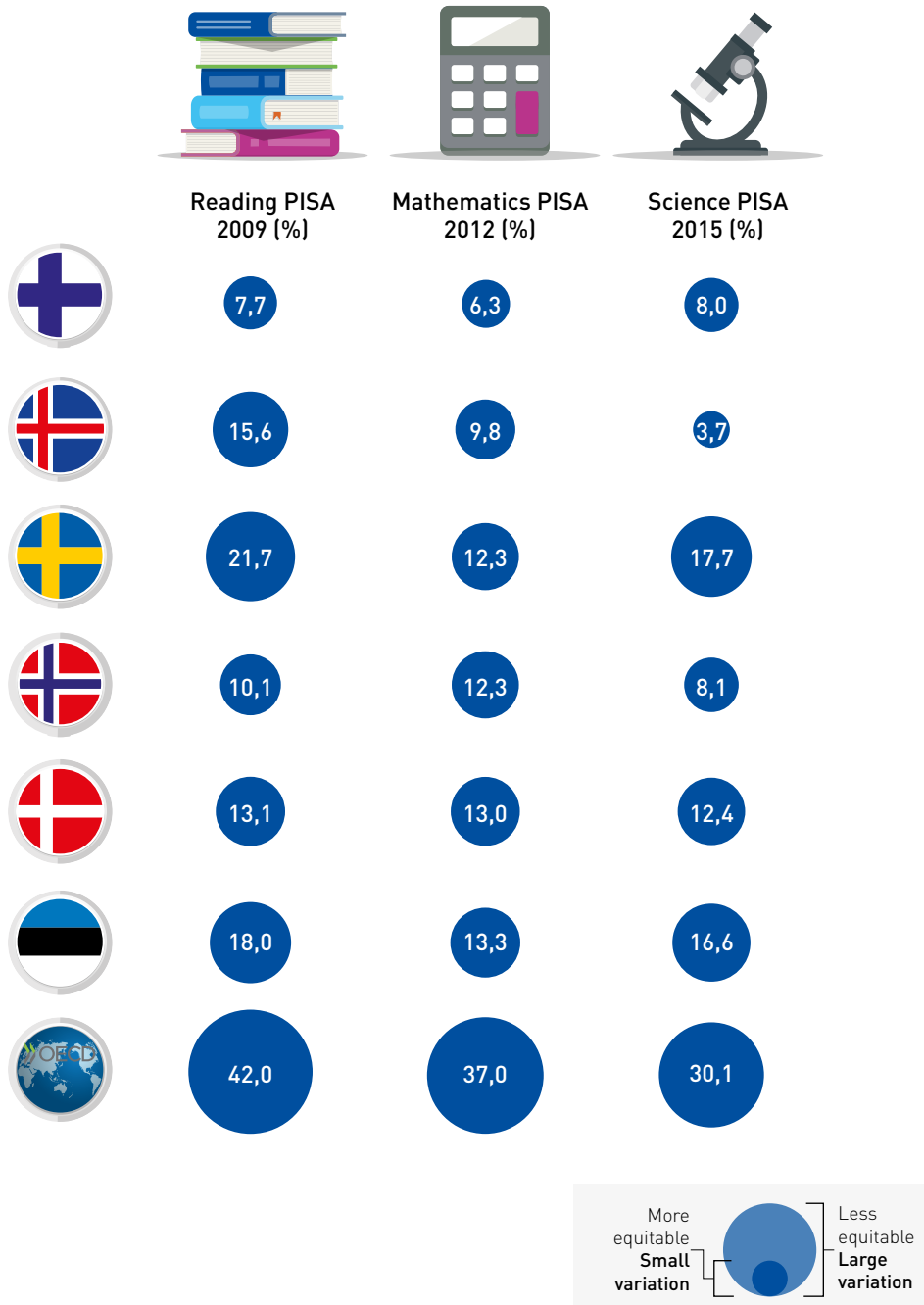
The share of so-called non-academic subjects, such as arts and physical education, is biggest in Finland and Norway. In Finland the share of physical education increases at lower secondary level, and that is an exception among Nordic region countries as well as in EU and OECD countries on average. However, these numbers are not fully comparable between countries because there can be instruction time devoted to these subjects classified also in other categories, such as 'compulsory options chosen by the students/schools'. In Figure 2.3 these compulsory optional hours are included in the category 'other subjects'. In Denmark, for example, in addition to hours devoted to physical education, 45 minutes of exercise and physical activity must be organised every day. In Denmark's national distribution of lesson hours that activity is included in 'other subject' category and not in 'physical education' category.

***In Denmark,
45 minutes of exercise
and physical activity
is mandatory every
day in addition to
physical education
lessons.***

Finland is the only country where distribution of instruction hours also comprises additional optional studies, so-called non-compulsory parts of the curriculum. These are voluntary hours in foreign languages which schools can offer for pupils to choose.

3 Accessibility and equity

Between-school variation as a percentage of the average total variation in reading, maths and science performance across OECD countries



3. ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY

It can be claimed that the education systems and provision of education are equitable in the Nordic region. The differences in learning outcomes between schools are small and most children go to their nearest school. Group sizes are close to the OECD average or just below.

Geographical accessibility, however, is a challenge particularly in the northern parts of the region. In these areas the distance to school are long. The distances have also grown as municipalities have been forced to close small schools as the number of children has diminished.

3.1 Geographical accessibility is a challenge in sparsely populated regions

The number of inhabitants, land area and population density in different regions affect provision of education. Finland, Norway and Sweden differ from the other countries in the Nordic region because of their big land areas and the regional differences in population density. In Finland and Norway the population density in the capital areas, for example, is several thousands of inhabitants per km², while the population density in the northernmost areas can be as low as 1-2 inhabitants per km² (Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

| | Population, million | Land area km ² | Total number of pupils 2016 | Total number of schools | Population density persons / km ² |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Denmark | 5 731 000 | 43 098 | 712 927 | 2 430 | 135 |
| Estonia | 1 316 000 | 45 339 | 122 282 | 497 | 31 |
| Finland | 5 495 000 | 338 424 | 538 780 | 2 440 | 18 |
| Iceland | 334 000 | 103 000 | 42 734 ¹ | 167 ² | 3 |
| Norway | 5 295 000 | 324 000 | 633 029 ³ | 2 848 ⁴ | 17 |
| Sweden | 9 903 000 | 447 435 | 985 620 | 4 847 | 24 |

1 2013

2 2012/2013

3 2017/2018

4 2017/2018

Generally children go to their nearest school, assigned to them by the local authorities, in all the countries in the Nordic region. If the parents so wish, the child can attend another school provided that they have space. (Table 3.2).

In Sweden this situation is slightly different. In some municipalities all parents must actively choose the school before the child starts school. In other municipalities the child is placed in a school by the authorities and parents can then apply for a place in a different school if they so wish.

Main principle is that children go to their nearest school.

The differences between the schools are small in the Nordic region (see also Section 3.2). Therefore the parents can rely on the fact that the nearest school is of high quality.

In the Nordic region many areas are sparsely populated, particularly in Finland, Norway and Sweden. In these sparsely populated areas the distance to school can be long or dangerous. Accessibility is ensured by free school transport: municipalities or local governments are obligated to offer a child free school transport if the distance between the home and the school is 2-6 km, depending on the country, or otherwise difficult, strenuous or dangerous.

In Denmark the municipal council shall arrange for transportation between the school and home or its proximity for:

- children who have a longer distance to school than 2½ km in the kindergarten class and in 1-3 grade; 6 km in 4-6 grade; 7 km in 7-9 grade and 9 km in 10th grade and
- children who have a shorter distance to school, but the need for the childrens' safety in traffic makes it particularly necessary.

3.1.1 School choice most prominent in Sweden

School shopping or choosing a school that is thought to be better instead of the nearest school, is not very usual in the Nordic region, except in Sweden and to some extent in Denmark. Iceland is the only country where there is no school shopping.

School shopping is most prominent in Sweden. Publicly funded independent schools, free-schools, exist mainly in big cities and they create a market (more on free-schools in Section 2.2). There are, however, also very popular municipal schools in Sweden which compete for the best pupils.

*School shopping
not very usual in
the Nordic region.*

Also in Denmark choice of school is an issue, particularly in the bigger cities. School choice is typical in districts with a large share of inhabitants with a migrant background. Sometimes this can be the result of small municipal schools being closed down. In such cases many parents choose an existing private school or try to establish a private school.

In Estonia the problem of school shopping is encountered in case of schools which have the right to choose children attending in year 1. There are less than 10 such schools with a special programme, for example schools where some subjects – foreign languages English, French, German, and mathematics/ science - are taught in-depth from year 1. Such schools provide both basic and upper secondary education. These schools test the children who apply and consequently not everyone who wants are admitted.

Even if the differences in learning outcomes between schools are still among the smallest among the PISA countries, school shopping seems to be on the increase in bigger cities.

3.1.2 School network and class size

The density of the municipal school network in a country can be calculated by how many schools there are per inhabitant. According to this type of calculation Norway has the densest network of schools, one school per 1 900 inhabitants. Estonia has the lowest density with one school per 2 647 inhabitants. This is partly explained by the fact that these countries are very different in terms of size and distances. (see also Table 3.1)

Distance from home to school in Finland

According to an evaluation carried out by regional authorities in 2017 most pupils in primary education live relatively close to their schools. Circa 90 % of the 7-12-years-olds live at a distance of less than 5 kilometres from their schools. In 2016 some 42 % of the pupils lived at a distance less than one kilometre.

Only very few pupils have a distance of over 50 kilometres to school. Their share of all pupils in primary education was only 0.1 % in 2017. In lower secondary education the share of these pupils was 0.3 %. The long distances were most common in the northernmost parts of the country and in the eastern part.

The pupils have a right to the free school transport if the way to school is more than 5 kilometres. There were about 20 per cent of such pupils of all the pupils of the basic education in 2017. Of those pupils the proportion who reported that they spent 1-2.5 hours per day on their way to school was 49 % in primary and 57 % in lower secondary education.

The sizes of schools in the Nordic region are reasonable. In Iceland and Estonia nearly half of the schools have less than 150 pupils. In Norway the number of schools in different size categories, less than a hundred, hundred to three hundred and over 300 pupils, is quite similar (Table 3.2).

In Finland the number of basic education schools has diminished between 2008 and 2016 by 18 %. The most common size are schools with 100 to 299 pupils. These schools account for 35 % of the schools. The average number of pupils per school is 260.

Average class size in all these countries varied between 18 to 21 pupils in 2016. In EU countries the average class size in 2016 in primary education is 20 and lower secondary education 21. The average in OECD countries was 21 and 23, respectively.

TABLE 3.2 SCHOOL CHOICE, SCHOOL AND CLASS SIZE

| | Denmark | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Norway | Sweden |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|---|--------------------|---|---------------------|
| Class size | not regulated* | max 24, SNE max 4-12 | not regulated | not regulated | not regulated** | not regulated |
| Average class size | primary 21 | primary 19 | primary 20 | primary 19 | - | primary 19 |
| | lower secondary 21 | lower secondary 18 | lower secondary 20 | lower secondary 20 | - | lower secondary 21 |
| School size | - | 44 % 21-140 pupils 27 % 301-900 pupils | 19 % under 50 pupils 35 % 100-299 pupils 9.6% over 500 pupils | 45 % 1-150 pupils | 30 % 1-99 pupils 40 % 100-299 pupils 30 % over 300 pupils | 70 % 100-599 pupils |
| School/ inhabitants | 1 : 2 358 | 1 : 2 647 | 1 : 2 252 | 1 : 2 000 | 1 : 1 900 | 1 : 2 043 |

Source: National descriptions, Eurydice 2018, Education at a Glance 2018

* The pupil numbers in elementary school classes may not normally exceed 28 at the beginning of the school year. However, the municipal council may, in exceptional cases, allow a higher student number in elementary school classes, but not more than 30.

** New norm for student-teacher ratio 2018.

Class size is generally not regulated, except in Estonia: according to the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, the upper limit of the size of a class or study group is 24 pupils in basic education. The education provider may establish an upper limit higher than specified in regulations. In classes for children with special educational needs, the upper limit of class size is smaller, 4-12 students, depending on the type of class.

In Norway a new regulation determining a national standard for the average number of students per teacher in each school was introduced in August 2018. The regulation apply to main-stream education and does not include hours for special needs education and extra language teaching for minority children. The norm does not regulate the organisation of teaching, i.e. class size.

The standard will ensure a maximum of :

- 16 students per teacher in grades 1 – 4
- 21 students per teacher in grades 5 – 10

As of 1 August 2019 the ratio will be reduced, as follows:

- 15 students per teacher in grades 1 – 4
- 20 students per teacher in grades 5 – 10

In other countries, there are no provisions governing the size of teaching groups, with the exception of special needs education in Finland, where the upper limit is 10 students.

In Denmark, Finland and Norway some schools educate children of different ages in the same class. In Iceland, there has been a tendency in recent years to offer different types of instruction in respect to the rate at which the syllabus is covered in grades eight to ten. Pupils select a group according to ability, that is, the most able pupils choose a group where they can move faster through the subject, while those who need more support choose a group where the subject matter is covered more slowly.

3.2 Equity in outcomes

A small variation between schools is considered evidence of educational equity. Small between-school variation is characteristic of all Nordic region countries. Between school variation is in all these countries much smaller than the OECD average (Table 3.3). This is largely due to the fact that these countries have non-selective education systems where all students are provided with the same kind of comprehensive education.

TABLE 3.3 BETWEEN-SCHOOL VARIATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE AVERAGE TOTAL VARIATION IN READING, MATHS AND SCIENCE PERFORMANCE AND WITHIN-SCHOOL VARIATION IN SCIENCE, 2009–2015

| | Reading PISA 2009 % | Mathematics PISA 2012 % | Science PISA 2015 % | Within-school variation of the total variation, science 2015 % |
|---------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Denmark | 13.1 | 13 | 12.4 | 77 |
| Estonia | 18 | 13.3 | 16.6 | 71 |
| Finland | 7.7 | 6.3 | 8 | 93 |
| Iceland | 15.6 | 9.8 | 3.7 | 92 |
| Norway | 10.1 | 12.3 | 8.1 | 95 |
| Sweden | 21.7 | 12.3 | 17.7 | 96 |
| OECD | 42 | 37 | 30.1 | 69 |

Source: OECD PISA 2009, 2012, 2015

It is challenging to analyse the differences between schools. Generally the variation between schools and the homogeneity of the pupils are considered the same phenomenon. In comprehensive school systems the performance of the pupils in a school tends to be very heterogeneous. Therefore the variation between schools is generally small.

If there are big differences between schools, there has to be some level of homogeneity, caused for example by tracking pupils with different abilities to different schools.

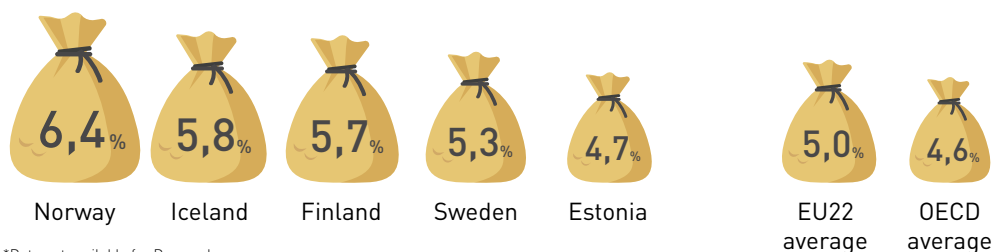
Small between-school variation is characteristic of all Nordic region countries.

The variation between schools in the Nordic region countries has been clearly below the average in international assessments (Table 3.3). In Finland the variation has been very small, but has increased a little. The between-school variation was smallest in Iceland among the PISA 2015 countries, in Finland second smallest. Iceland has managed to lower the variation between schools considerably. The variation also diminished in Norway and Denmark.

In all Nordic region countries the within-school variation is higher than the OECD average. This is typical for comprehensive systems with the whole age group in the same school. The big variation between classes in Finland is, at least partly, accounted by the fact that small classes are groups with a higher proportion of pupils with either intensified or special needs support. Differences also arise from groups within school with classes with a special emphasis such as foreign languages or music.

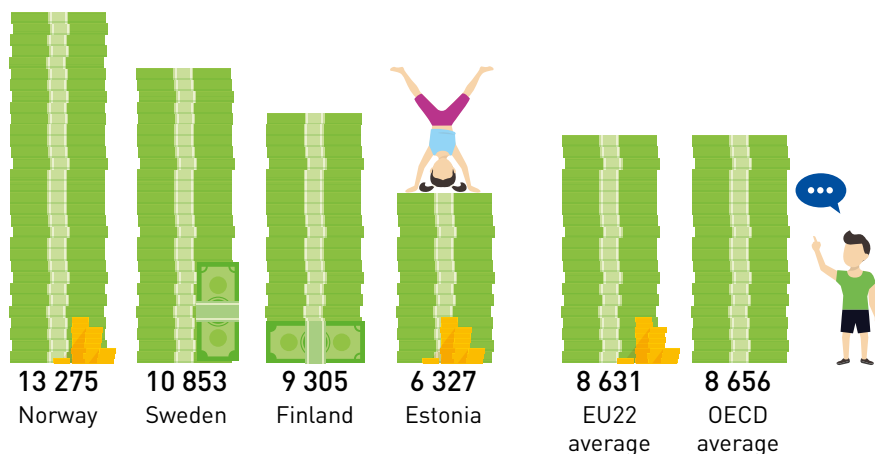
4 Funding and Expenditure

Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2015, PPP-adjusted)

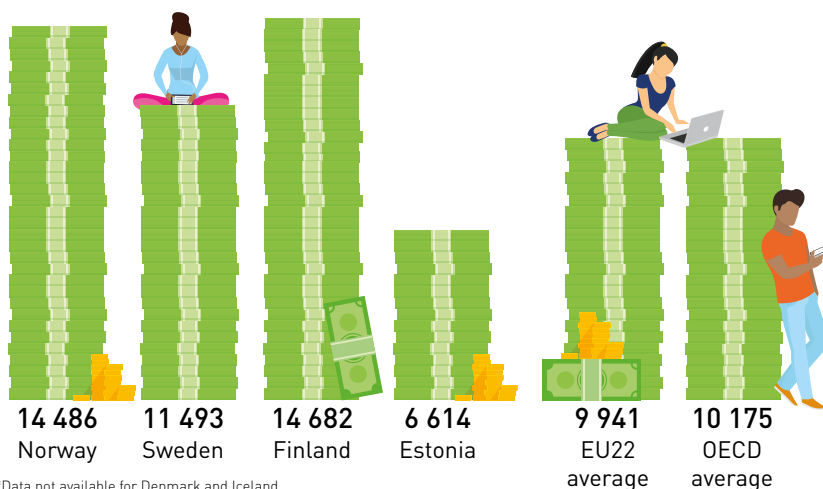


*Data not available for Denmark

Total expenditure on primary education per pupil (2015, PPP**-adjusted USD)



Total expenditure on lower secondary education per pupil (2015, PPP**-adjusted USD)



*Data not available for Denmark and Iceland

** Purchasing power parity

4. EXPENDITURE IN BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education is mainly publicly funded in all of the Nordic region countries. The funds come from the state as well as regional and local authorities. Basic education is free for the pupils in all the countries as are also learning materials.

4.1 Expenditure as a proportion of GDP above the OECD average

The data on expenditure in this chapter is based on OECD's Education at a Glance 2018. The latest data on expenditure on education covers the year 2015. Data for Denmark is not available for that year, so there is no information on Denmark in this chapter.

The proportion of educational expenditure as a proportion of GDP varied from 4.7 % in Estonia to 6.4 % in Norway in 2015. In all the Nordic region countries, except Estonia, the proportion was above the OECD average.

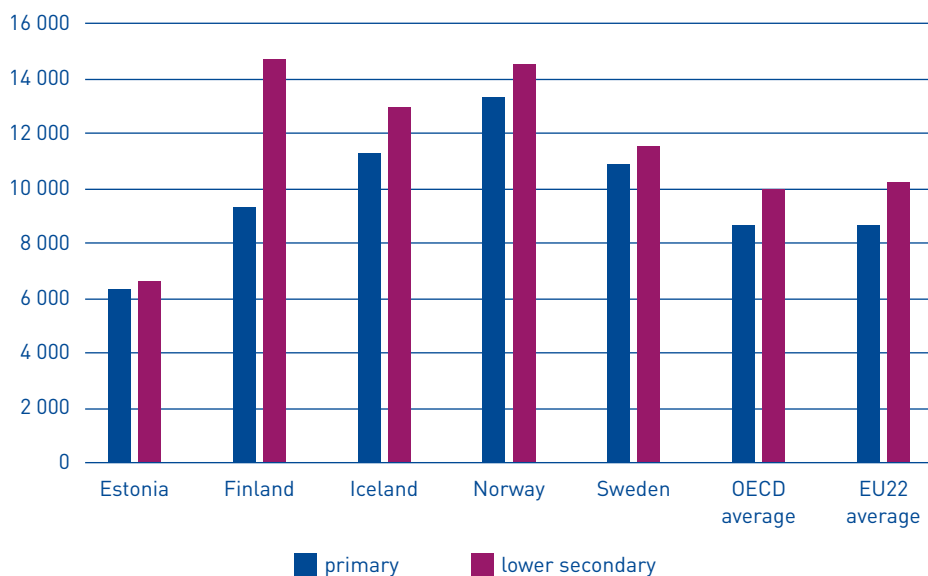
Looking at the trend in expenditure, one can see that the expenditure as a percentage of GDP between 2005 and 2014 has grown slightly in most of the Nordic region countries as well as in the OECD countries on average. The exceptions are Iceland and Sweden where the expenditure has diminished as a proportion of GDP. It must be remembered, however, that economic cycles can have an effect on these proportions, during economic downswings the proportional expenditure might look more positive.

4.2 Expenditure per pupil varies considerably

When comparing the costs per pupil between the countries it is good to bear in mind that according to the OECD the used amount of money and learning results are not necessarily dependent on each other. From the point of view of learning outcomes it is more significant how the funds are directed and for what purpose they are concretely used.

The average expenditure per pupil in basic education varies considerably within the Nordic region. Comparing the purchasing power parity (PPP) adjusted data - that is, equalise the purchasing power of different currencies equalise by eliminating the differences in price levels between countries - the expenditure per pupil is on the same level in Sweden, Finland and Iceland. In Norway, however, the expenditure per pupil is considerably higher than in the other countries (Figure 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1 ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL IN BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS, USD, 2015



In equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP, direct expenditure within educational institutions

Source: OECD / UIS / Eurostat (2018)

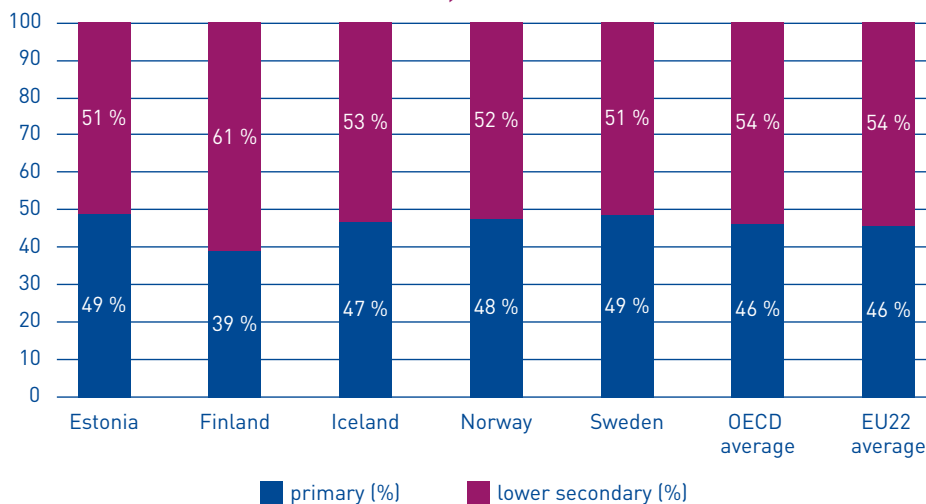
Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table C1.1

Table 4.1 in the Appendix

In Estonia the expenditure is the lowest within the region. Estonia is the only country in the Nordic region where the expenditure per pupil was below the OECD average in 2015.

Comparing expenditure between levels of education, it is higher at lower secondary level than at primary level in most countries.

FIGURE 4.2 ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL, SHARE BETWEEN PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2015



In equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP, direct expenditure within educational institutions

Source: OECD / UIS / Eurostat (2018)

Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table C1.1

Table 4.1 in the Appendix

Generally, the difference is not very big except in Finland. Finland differs clearly in that the expenditure at lower secondary level is clearly higher than at primary level.

Some clear reasons are for example the differences in group sizes. There are less pupils per teacher at lower secondary than at primary level in all countries in the Nordic region.

The difference in the teacher-pupil ratio between primary and lower secondary education is biggest in Finland, where there are 4 pupils more per teacher in primary education than in lower secondary education. The corresponding difference in Estonia is 3 pupils, while there is no remarkable difference between the levels in Iceland, Norway and Sweden (Table 4.2 in the Appendix).

4.3 Most expenditure on instruction

Comparable data on expenditure on different cost items was only available in Finland and Sweden. The break-down of the expenditure was very similar in 2016 (Figure 4.3). The clearly biggest expenditure was on instruction, the proportion being more than half of the total expenditure in both countries.

FIGURE 4.3 SHARE OF EXPENDITURE PER SERVICE IN BASIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND AND IN SWEDEN, 2016

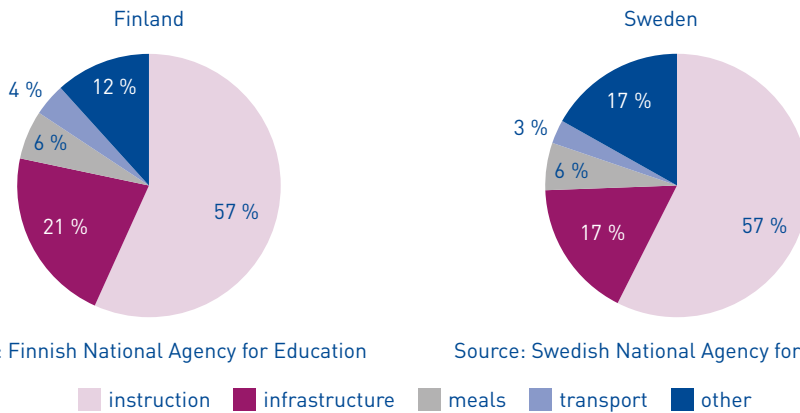


Table 4.3 in the Appendix

Similarly to Finland and Sweden instruction is the biggest cost item in all Nordic region countries. This mostly comprises teacher salaries and learning materials. In all these countries learning materials are free for the pupils.

Learning materials are free for the pupils in all Nordic region countries.

Class size and the teacher-student ratio have a clear effect on expenditure. The smaller the groups are the bigger the costs of instruction. The high costs of Norway can partly be explained by the small class size. This in turn reflects the reality that Norway is sparsely populated and has a high number of small schools as can be seen in Table 3.2. In Norway also teacher salaries are second highest within the Nordic region. More information on teacher salaries in Section 7.4.

Maintaining buildings is also a remarkable cost item, although clearly smaller than instruction. More detailed data on the expenditure on school building maintenance are not available for other countries than Finland and Sweden.

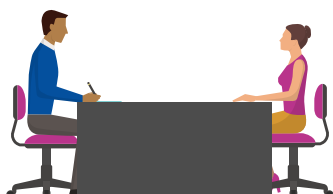
Another cost item is school transport. All Nordic region countries offer free school transport to pupils who live far away from their school, more information in Section 3.1. As the countries differ in size and population density (see Table 3.2) expenditure on transport naturally differ from one country to the other. Data on the expenditure on school transport are available only for Finland and Sweden, but its share is quite small of the total expenditure in all Nordic region countries.

In Finland, Sweden and most municipalities in Estonia pupils are also offered a free meal during the school day. In these countries the share of the total expenditure spent on school meals is quite low, only 5 % of the total expenditure.

5 Quality assurance



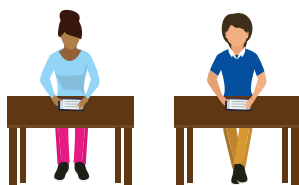
Considerable local autonomy



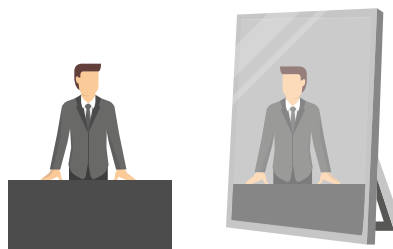
Regulated teacher assessment



School inspection



National examinations



School self-evaluation



5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is an important part of the education systems in the Nordic countries and in Estonia. Differences between these countries are small and quality assurance is quite typically defined in the legislation. All reviewed countries use pupils' learning outcomes as a national level quality measurement. It is also typical that local authorities have a lot of autonomy and often decide on the tools and methods used in assuring quality.

Some tools and actions to monitor quality of the education system in the Nordic region include, but are not limited to:

- national evaluations
- school inspections
- school's self-evaluation and reporting
- teacher evaluation
- pupil assessment

Besides the items listed above, the schools are accountable to the responsible education authorities for the fulfilment of laws and other regulations such as the curriculum. Together these different quality assurance methods and tools enable the national authorities to access a wide quantitative and qualitative data mass that is used, for example, in decision-making.

The authorities responsible for quality assurance in the Nordic region are typically ministries responsible for education. In some countries, such as in Sweden, there are specific national bodies that are responsible for quality assurance tasks. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) conducts regular supervision of all Swedish schools, grants licenses to independent schools and makes decisions on complaints. The inspectorate has a right to levy penalties or fines to schools that continuously fail to reach the national quality requirements and even revoke the school license of an independent school.

5.1 School inspections are used for quality assurance in most Nordic region countries

School inspections are one way to identify schools' strengths and weaknesses on a national scale. School inspections are usually enforced in the legislation and overseen by national authorities, the level of which varies from country to country.

In Denmark and Finland no school inspection system exists, but other policies are in place to ensure quality. School inspections are required by law in Estonia, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

School inspections are required by law in Estonia, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

School inspections in the Nordic region include assessment of pupil achievement, personnel, administration, curriculum and the learning environment. The inspection frequencies vary by country: in Iceland the frequency for the inspections is not defined and in Estonia the inspections may be performed every year, however, not in the same schools. In both Norway and Sweden, the inspections must be performed every three years or so.

The results of school inspections are widely shared to various interest parties. These are education authorities, directly with school administrators, classroom teachers and other external audiences. In Iceland, Norway and Sweden the results are also shared directly with parents, students and the media.

The results of school inspections are widely shared to various interest parties.

Even though all reviewed countries that have school inspections check the school's compliance with existent rules and regulations, there are differences regarding what areas are inspected.

For example, Norway is the only country that evaluates financial management. Iceland in turn is the only one of these countries to include satisfaction and perception of parents in their school inspection scheme. Student perceptions, satisfaction and performance are also included in the inspection agenda in Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Quality of instruction is part of the school inspections in Estonia and Iceland.

5.2 Emphasis on school self-evaluation

Another quality assurance method in the Nordic region is school self-evaluation and reporting. In self-evaluation the school reviews and reflects its operations from a qualitative point of view. In many of the countries the frequency or methods of self-evaluation are not nationally defined but can be decided locally. However, most of the reviewed countries place great emphasis on such internal quality assurance. Finland is the only country that has no national level regulations concerning the organisation of internal evaluation. In the other reviewed countries, however, the regulations give room for local decision making.

School self-evaluation in the Nordic region countries may cover some of the following areas:

- financial management
- quality management
- student performance
- satisfaction and perceptions of students, parents and personnel

The welfare of pupils and young people is being actively monitored in the region. Further information on this theme is found in Chapter 6 Support for learners.

5.3 Teacher assessment generally not regulated

Teacher appraisal can also be used as an internal quality assurance method. From the reviewed countries Sweden, like most European countries, has regulations concerning teacher appraisal. In Denmark, Estonia, Finland and Norway local authorities or schools have autonomy on whether teachers are appraised. In Iceland there is no teacher appraisal.

In Sweden teacher appraisal is an internal process that takes place in the school, not involving external stakeholders. Training on appraisal is included into the training programme of aspiring school leaders in Sweden.

According to the OECD TALIS 2013 survey feedback from other teachers varied in the Nordic region countries. In Denmark and Norway nearly 60 % of the teachers had received feedback for their peers. In Iceland and Sweden, however, only 24 % and 34 % respectively had received such feedback. In Sweden and Estonia it was slightly more common to receive feedback from the school heads.

*In Estonia only
7 % of teachers
report never having
received feedback in
their current school.*

The proportion of teachers who had never received feedback in their schools was lowest in Estonia. In Estonia only 7 % of teachers report never having received feedback in their current school. In Iceland almost half of the teachers, 45 %, had never received feedback in their current school.

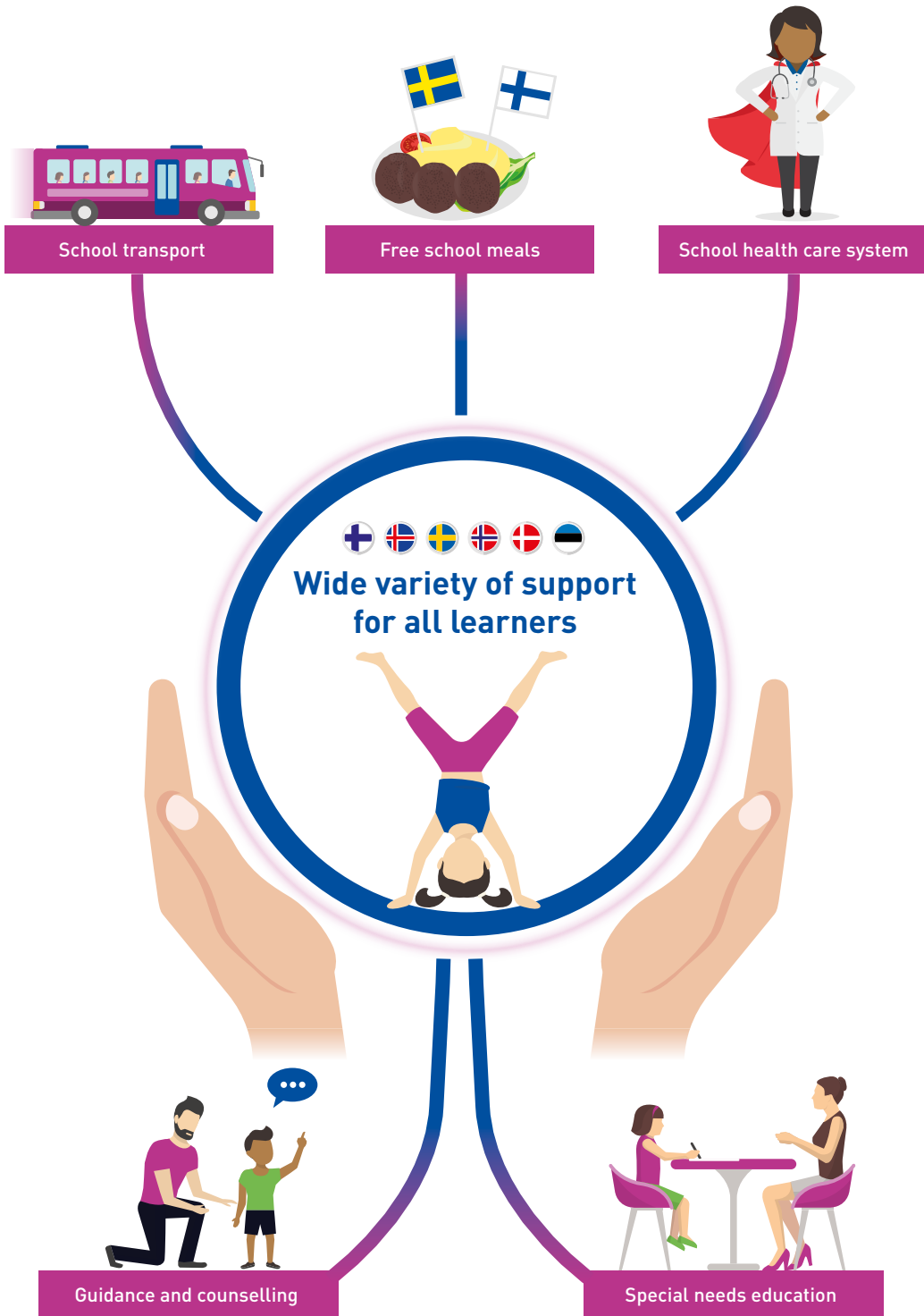
5.4 National examinations commonly used to assess learning outcomes

The most common way to assess the pupil's learning outcomes is to arrange national level examinations. National examinations refer to standardised tests that all pupils of a defined grade take. These tests are governed by central or top-level education authorities and have centrally set procedures concerning the test's content, administration and marking as well as the results' interpretation and use of results. Denmark, Estonia, Norway and Sweden have national level examinations.

In Finland, there are no national level examinations in basic education. However, the Finnish education evaluation centre evaluates pre-primary and basic education with learning outcomes assessments and various thematic and system evaluations. The aim is to provide information for further improving the effectiveness and quality of education and ensure educational equity.

These assessments are sample-based and random. Only some 10 % of the relevant pupil groups participate in these.

6 Support for learners



6. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

The support systems in schools in the Nordic region build on the structures and values of a welfare society.

Support systems in the Nordic region comprises support for learning, physical and mental health as well as promoting wellbeing and schools as environments that support wellbeing and health.

In all Nordic region countries pupils are supported by extensive support systems that cover, for example,

- guidance and counselling
- special-needs education
- school health care services
- school meals and support for transport.

Guidance and counselling in all these countries focus on support for learning as well as pupils' further studies and career counselling. Guidance in primary schools also support pupils in developing their learning-to-learn skills and skills for learning.

Special needs education focuses on integration and early intervention. It is typical that special need pupils are educated in mainstream educational settings in all these countries, because the intention is not to segregate anyone.

Meals offered in schools are seen as a means to support the growth and development of the pupils. School meals are free in Finland, Sweden and mostly in Estonia.

Safety on the way to school is also a right of every pupil. Basic education is generally organised in the nearest school or so that the way to school is as safe as possible. If this is not possible, all the countries in the Nordic region offer free school transport to the pupils (see also Section 3.1).

6.1 Home-school cooperation and transition phases emphasised in guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling in basic education is compulsory. According to regulations pupils and children have an individual right to receive counselling and guidance. In all the Nordic region the transition to further studies, career counselling and support for learning are central.

In all Nordic region countries the cooperation between the schools and homes and the role of parents is important. It is defined in the national core curriculum that cooperation with parents ensures that each child receives support, guidance and instruction according to their individual development level and needs. Cooperation with guardians helps to obtain information and making choices related to pupils' further studies.

Guidance in primary education concentrates on decreasing social inequality, preventing dropout and integrating pupils with a migrant background. In Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Norway helping pupils to develop their learning-to-learn skills and capabilities for learning are central. Guidance and counselling should help pupils become aware of their interests and potential, including informal competences.

Guidance and counselling is integrated into the instruction of other subjects and activities in most countries in the Nordic region.

Guidance and counselling is generally provided by a qualified guidance counsellor or teacher who has received continued professional development in the subject. In guidance and counselling also the role of other teachers is emphasised especially in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland.

In compulsory education guidance and counselling is integrated into the instruction of other subjects and activities in Estonia, Finland, Denmark and Iceland. The responsibility lies with the respective teachers. In Denmark "Education and Job" is a compulsory subject in primary and lower secondary schools. In Iceland guidance given in lower and upper secondary education concentrates more on education and career counselling and is part of the work for one or more teachers in each school.

In Estonia guidance and counselling is mainly provided in schools but also at municipal guidance centres. In these centres guidance and counselling is provided by career specialists who work in municipal educational support services centres.

6.2 School health care ensures a balanced growth and development

School health care is preventive and supports the development of the pupils. The main purpose is to monitor the state of health of all pupils, to support a healthy lifestyle and school environment as well as provide first aid and primary aid, if necessary.

The health care provided in these countries focuses on the well-being of the children and young people. The health care system aims at creating a health-promoting environment and atmosphere where development and health are systematically supported in several ways.

All countries in the Nordic region provide free school health care to pupils.

In Finland and Sweden school health care is a continuation of the services provided by child health clinics. These continue from early childhood up to school age.

More and more attention is paid to mental problems. School health care provides preventive and focused support for the mental well-being of the pupils. The school plays a remarkable role in building pupils' self-image, mental well-being, and their sense of security.

Health examinations are common. For example, in Sweden the school health system assures that every pupil in compulsory education is entitled to have at least three general health examinations. In all the reviewed countries pupils have sight and hearing tests and other special health examinations. Dental care and vaccination programmes are also part of school health care. Children with special needs are offered further examinations, guidance and assistance.

In Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland school health care also comprise the services of school psychologists and school social workers. In Denmark all school children are offered preventive health examinations by a doctor or a school nurse when starting school at the age of 6 and before continuing at upper secondary level.

6.3 School meals are seen as an investment for the future

Free school meals are provided to offer the pupils a healthy and nutritious meal in the middle of the school day. Regular school lunch is seen as investment for the future. Healthy lunch affects pupils' ability to learn and increases wellbeing, growth and individual development. In addition to healthy meals, purpose of nutritional education is teach manners and how to act in a group. School lunch gives pupils calm and unhurried time to enjoy their meals and has also social role as it gives time to interact with others.

Free school meals are offered free to all pupils only in Finland and Sweden. In Estonia, depending on the municipality, school meals are either free or the families have to pay a small contribution.

Recommendations on healthy school meals are given in all the reviewed countries even when school meals are not free or offered by the schools. These recommendations specify that sufficient time should be reserved for the meal, commonly a 30-minute break in the middle of the school day. The meals should be nutritious, healthy and tasty.

Free school meals are offered to every pupil in Finland and in Sweden.

The recommendations also comprise other advice such as environmental considerations and alternative options for pupils with special dietary needs. Pupils are entitled to a special diet whether it is connected to religion, ethical beliefs or health issues.

In Denmark and in Norway, most children in primary school bring their own packed lunches from home. In these cases the parents have a big responsibility for the meal itself.

6.4 Special needs education based on inclusion

Special needs education (SEN) in the Nordic countries and in Estonia is based on the principle of inclusion. This means that SEN pupils are not segregated from other pupils. Instead all pupils attend mainstream education as much as possible while receiving the necessary support.

There are, however, differences in how special support activities are organised. This is also related to how the matter is recognised in the country's legislation. It is typical that the principles of inclusion and right to special needs education are set in the legislation on education. The right to support might also be mentioned in several other acts, such as the constitution in Finland where equal rights are determined for everyone or laws that aim to ensure the rights of certain groups of people, such as *the Act on the Affairs of Disabled People* in Iceland.

Despite the differences, the degree of integration is high in all the reviewed countries. However, in all the countries also separate SEN schools exist for pupils who require support not available in mainstream education. The lack of uniform data on the number of institutions and the high level of integration make comparisons challenging. It can, however, be estimated that the proportion of special needs institutions varies from almost none to a few per cent of all the schools.

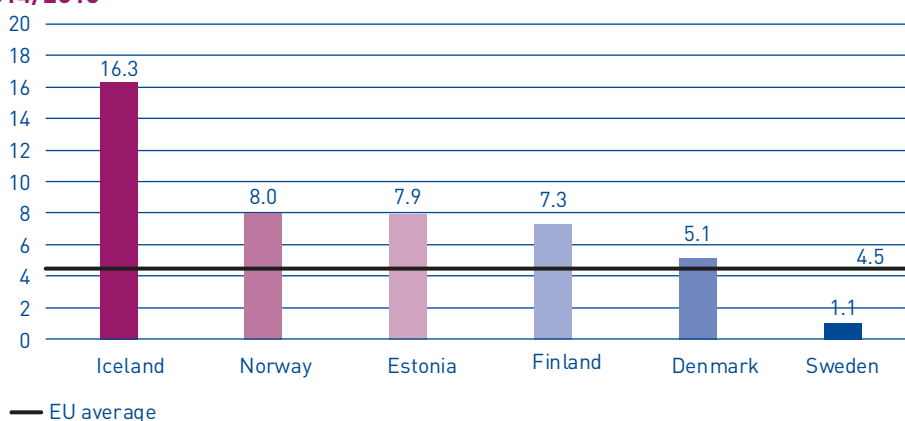
In Sweden and Denmark there is a tendency to educate SEN pupils in separate special schools. In Norway the situation is the opposite and almost all SEN pupils are educated in mainstream educational setting for at least 80 % of the time.

Finland, Estonia, Norway and Iceland focus on integration

In Finland, Estonia and Iceland, the focus is more on integrating the SEN pupils with their peers in mainstream education, but not as radically as in Norway. Estonia has the highest percentage of SEN pupils that attend separate special classes in mainstream schools.

The proportion of pupils receiving special needs support compared to all pupils varies from country to country (Figure 6.1).

FIGURE 6.1 PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WITH AN OFFICIAL SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS DECISION OF ALL PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SETTING, 2014/2015



Source: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, data tables for respective countries and countries' background information 2014/2015

Table 6.1 in the Appendix

Among the Nordic region countries the proportion is lowest, 1.1 % in Sweden, where reported SEN pupils account for only those students that attend special programmes and special schools. The highest proportion of pupils with an official SEN decision, 16.3 %, can be found in Iceland.

Due to the systemic differences (e.g. pupils may receive support without having officially received a SEN decision as in Sweden) in the countries the data is difficult to compare but gives an overview of the situation in special needs education.

6.5 Individual pupils' needs starting point for special needs measures

The ways of defining the need for special support, how it is organised and followed up differs by country. To determine the need for special support the pupil is typically assessed from pedagogical, medical, social and psychological viewpoints to define the kind of support measures needed.

In some countries this assessment is followed up by a plan that aims at assisting the pupil and supporting the follow-up on the pupil's progress. In some countries, such as in Finland, a need for a specially drafted learning plan has been stated in the legislation. In other countries, such as in Denmark, the decision-making as to how the learning goals are met is subject to local decision-making. It is, however, quite typical in all these countries to have some form of an individual plan for the pupil.

Pupils are readily taken back to a mainstream group when special support measures are no longer needed

In all the reviewed countries the revision and follow-up play an important role. The idea is that the measures are taken and adjusted according to need, for example when the pupil's need for support increases or decreases. Also, the pupils are readily taken back to a mainstream group when special support measures are no longer needed.

6.6 Skilled teachers support pupils' special needs

All teachers have access to training to teach special needs pupils in all the Nordic region countries. The aim is to ensure SEN pupil's access to an equal level of learning and competences as other pupils. How this is ensured in practice, varies slightly from country to country.

In addition to taking a separate special needs teacher qualification some countries in the Nordic region provide opportunities for all teacher students to include SEN studies into their qualification. The teacher students may specialise as SEN teachers or select study modules in special needs education during their initial teacher studies: this is done in Denmark and Finland. In Estonia, Iceland, Norway and Sweden courses or modules of special needs education are integrated into all teacher qualifications. In Sweden and Denmark separate teachers for special needs education do not exist, instead SEN support is provided by teachers into whose qualifications special needs pedagogy is integrated.

In addition, teachers can further develop their skills in SEN in continuing education and training programmes.

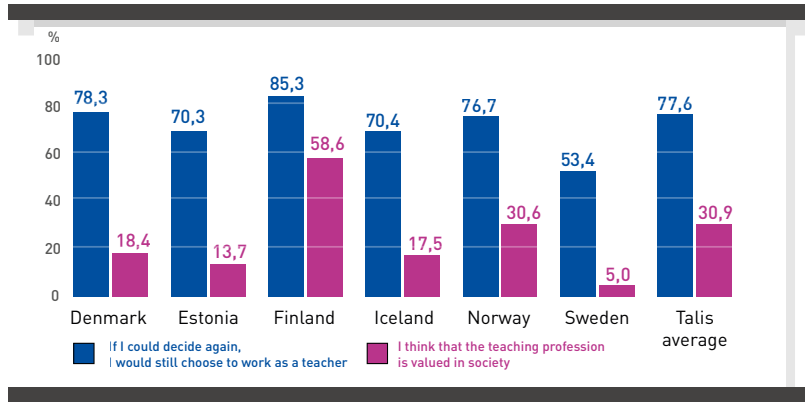
The availability of qualified SEN teachers varies. There is a shortage in most countries. In Finland the situation has improved in the last few years. In 2016 an average of 87 % of SEN teachers were qualified compared to 76 % in 2010. There are, however, regional differences. The variation between the regions is from 77 % to 98 %.

In Iceland only approximately 5 % of Icelandic teachers employed in basic education are trained special educators. The lack of SEN teachers can lead to solutions, such as in Iceland where regular teachers are hired on a temporary basis to cover the shortage.

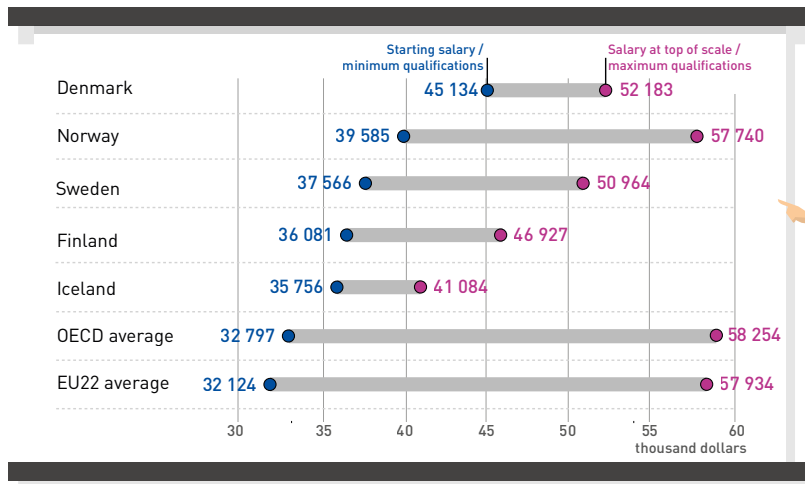
Even though the shortage in Iceland is severe, an external evaluation conducted on inclusive education in Iceland in 2016 concluded that the situation is good. The evaluation included a survey that encompassed a wide range of issues in the inclusive school system. The results of the review in general were positive: schools were perceived to have well-trained staff, adequate educational material and support for the pupils.

7 Teachers in the Nordic region

Job satisfaction and feeling of societal value (% , 2013)

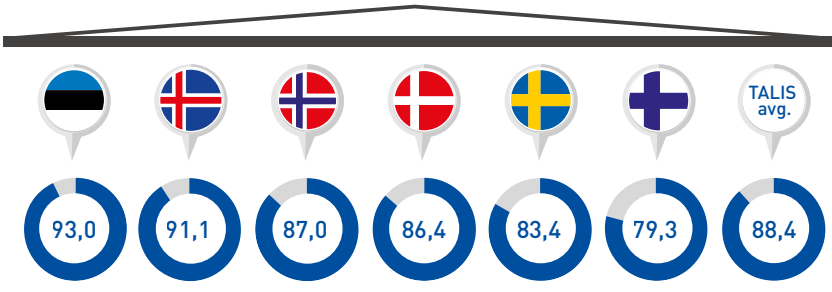


Lower secondary teachers' statutory salaries at different points in teachers' careers (2017, PPP*-adjusted USD)



* Purchasing power parity

Percentage of teachers who undertook continuing professional development activities in the previous 12 months (% , 2013)



7. TEACHERS IN THE NORDIC REGION

Teachers are recognised as keys to successful learning. Different countries have different strategies for ensuring the supply of qualified and competent teachers. There are also remarkable differences between the countries in the Nordic region regarding teacher education, working conditions and attractiveness of the profession.

7.1 Nordic countries are battling with a low number of applicants

Teaching is a complex job. Teachers are expected to teach children with varying levels of motivation and abilities, encourage them to be life-long learners and help them to harness their potential. Everybody knows that good teachers play an important role in how well pupils and the education system perform. Consequently, attracting the right people to become teachers is vital.

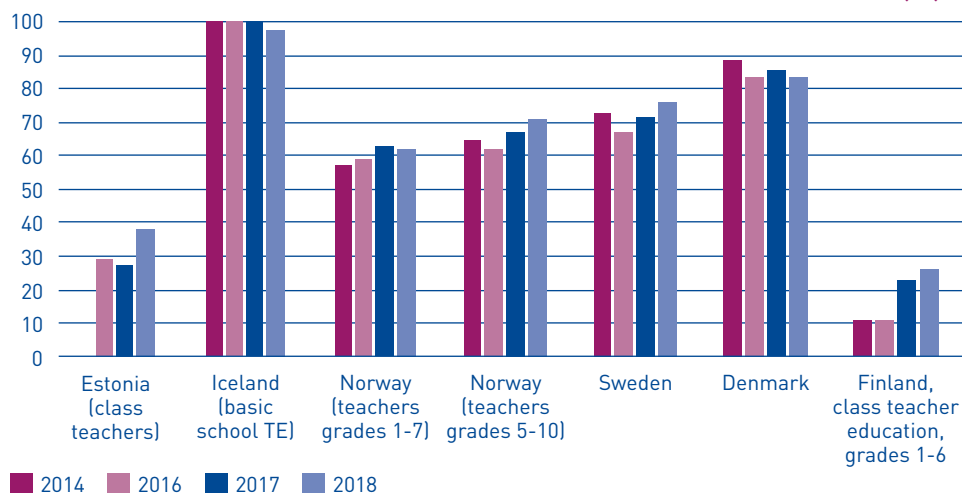
A traditional way to measure the attractiveness of the teaching profession is to compare the number of applicants to teacher education programmes and the proportion of these who were admitted. Reasons for why teaching is an attractive profession in one country but not the next, however, is a question that is difficult to answer.

On one hand, in Finland teachers are very satisfied with their work. According to the OECD TALIS 2013 survey 85 % of Finnish teachers would choose to be teachers again if they had to choose again. In Finland teaching is an attractive alternative for school leavers. This is seen when comparing the number of applicants to teacher education programmes and the intake. In the last few years some 23-26 % of the applicants whose first choice was primary teacher education programmes were admitted.

Very little selection to teacher education in most of the Nordic countries

On the other hand, Danish teachers are satisfied in their work, in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS 2013, 78 % would choose teaching again (more on teacher satisfaction in Section 7.5). In Denmark, however, more than 80 % of the applicants to basic education teacher education are admitted, so there is very little selection. This is a typical situation also in Iceland, Sweden and Norway (Figure 7.1).

FIGURE 7.1 ADMISSION RATE TO INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION 2012-2017 (%)



First priority applicants in DK, NO, SE and FI (2017->)
 Table 7.1 in the Appendix

In Iceland, in practice everybody who has a matriculation exam or similar diploma from upper secondary education and clean criminal record is accepted to teacher education programmes in Icelandic universities.

Iceland has more than enough teachers, that is, people with teacher education and professional certificate to fill all teaching positions. However, a large number of them prefer not to work as teachers in schools. Nearly half of this group work in the school system, but not as teachers or at the school level they are certified to teach at. The teacher shortage will further become worse in the near future, as large groups of qualified teachers will leave the profession for pension.

Sweden has been battling with making the profession more attractive for a number of years. The intake rate has varied between 67 to 76 % during the last few years. Even if the salaries have been raised and there are plenty of vacant jobs, teacher education does not attract enough young people. The Swedish authorities are worried that the “quality” will deteriorate. As the applicant numbers go down, less successful students are admitted. This also increases the risk for dropping out of the studies.

Iceland and Sweden foresee a teacher shortage

Similarly to Iceland, Sweden is battling with training enough teachers and retaining teachers in teaching. A high number of people with teacher training work in other professions. Retaining teachers is considered important as there is a gap between the number of graduates and the actual need for teachers. The Swedish National Agency for

Education has compared the training volumes and the actual need and estimated that in 2029 there will be a shortage of over 40 000 teachers.

In Norway the intake rate for primary and lower secondary teachers has varied between 57 % and 71 % in 2014-2018.

The situation regarding applicants and admitted in Estonia is quite good. The intake rate in Estonia was 29 % and 38 % for class teacher education (ISCED 1) in 2016 and 2018 respectively. In Estonia the universities have autonomy in deciding on the intake. The quality of the applicants seems to be important: the intake was lowered from 80 % in 2016 to 68 % in 2017 as there were not enough successful applicants. Then again in 2018 the intake was raised, the likely reason for this is that there were more qualified applicants compared to the previous years.

7.2 Most Nordic countries require a master's level initial qualification

In nearly every Nordic country the minimum qualification for teachers is a master's level degree. Denmark is today the only country where a bachelor's level qualification is enough for both primary and lower secondary education. Norway updated the required level from bachelor's to master's in 2017. In Norway the general teacher education programme of 240 credits has been discontinued and the former differentiated four-year programmes for years 1–7 and years 5–10 has been replaced by five-year master's programmes. These are differentiated in the same way for years 1–7 and years 5–10. The master's level qualification is 300 ECTS credits in all countries except Sweden. In Sweden the requirement for primary teachers is a 240-credit master's degree and in lower secondary a 270-credit programme. See also Table 7.1 A) in the Appendix.

In Iceland teachers are also required a licence to teach issued by the Ministry of Education. At the moment separate licences are required for pre-primary, basic and upper secondary education. A major reform is underway, aiming at one licence for all teachers.

Teacher education most typically organised concurrently in the Nordic region.

Teacher studies can be organised either concurrently or consecutively. In the concurrent model the theoretical and the professional and pedagogical training are taken at the same time. In the consecutive model, the students first complete a master's degree and then take separate pedagogical studies. The most typical model in the Nordic countries is the concurrent model. Estonia is the only country where the consecutive pathway is the only model for lower secondary subject teachers. In Finland, Sweden and

Norway concurrent teacher education is most common, but the consecutive pathway exists as an alternative way to teaching.

The proportion of practical training in a school varies. In Sweden and Denmark the requirement is 30 credits and in Estonia 25 credits. In the remaining countries the teacher education institutions can decide themselves on the scope of this training. A summary of teacher education can be found in Table 7.1 B) in the Appendix.

Proportion of practical training regulated in Estonia, Denmark and Sweden

Typically primary education teachers are generalists, who teach most of the subjects.

In lower secondary education teachers are most commonly subject specialists. The exceptions are Denmark and Iceland. In Iceland primary and lower secondary teachers are generalist teachers. In Denmark both primary and lower secondary teachers are semi-specialist, specialised in teaching 3 subjects.

In most the Nordic countries no accreditation process exists. Instead successful graduation from an initial teacher education programme is enough. Sweden is the only country where a confirmation of professional competence is required. This *Lärarlegitimation* means that the teacher is registered by Skolverket, the National Agency for Education. In the application process the candidates provide evidence of their qualification and degrees. The registration confirms which subjects the teachers is fully qualified to teach. Only registered teachers are allowed to grade pupils and get a permanent contract.

7.3 CPD mandatory in half of the countries

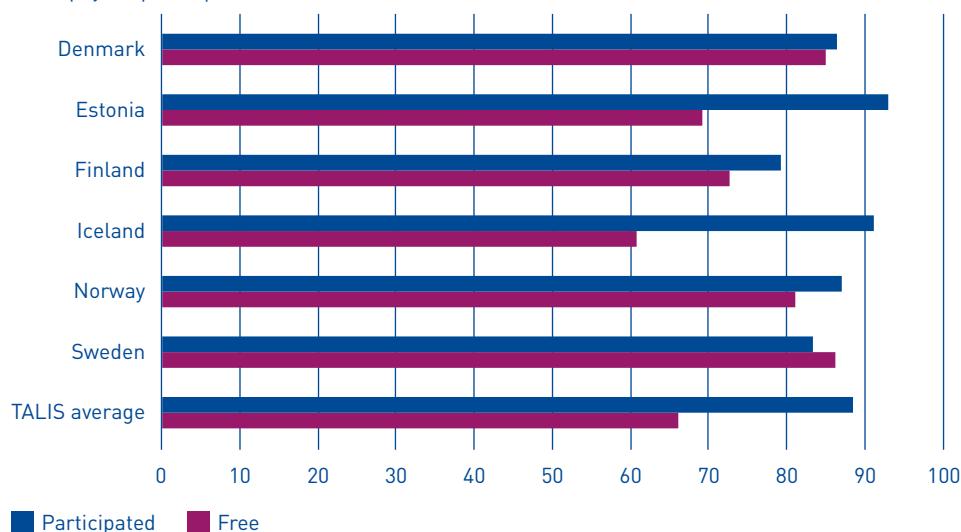
Continuing professional training (CPD) for teachers is not very regulated in the Nordic countries. It is only mandatory in Finland, Iceland and Estonia. In Estonia the requirement used to be 32 hours per year. Today the legislation states generically that it is the teachers' professional obligation to develop their professional skills and be informed of new developments in education. Schools make continuing education decisions on the basis of their needs and development plans.

In Finland only 2-3 days are compulsory according to the collective agreement, part of which are often used for planning the school year. In the other Nordic countries CPD is recommended. In the other countries municipal education authorities decide whether teachers can or should participate. In Sweden and Norway the education providers must ensure that teachers have an opportunity to participate in CPD. In Sweden the employers and employees have in the collective agreement agreed on setting aside an indicative value of 104 hours of CPD per school year during the teachers' regulated working time.

The participation rate is higher than the TALIS 2013 average in Estonia, Iceland and Norway (Figure 7.2). Participation is lower than the TALIS 2013 average in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. In Finland the participation rate is the lowest among the Nordic region countries.

FIGURE 7.2 PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary teachers who had participated in CPD and percentage of these who did not pay for participation



Source OECD TALIS 2013, Table 4.6

Table 7.2 in the Appendix

CPD is free in the majority of cases in the Nordic region. However, in Estonia and Iceland, where the participation rates are the highest, the proportion of teachers receiving CPD for free is the lowest.

7.3.1 CPD plans for teachers are becoming more and more common

In Denmark and Iceland teachers' professional development plans are mandatory. In Finland CPD plans have been recommended for some time. These have become more and more common in the last few years so that nearly 40 % of teachers in basic education had one in 2015. The corresponding figure was 10 % in 2012.

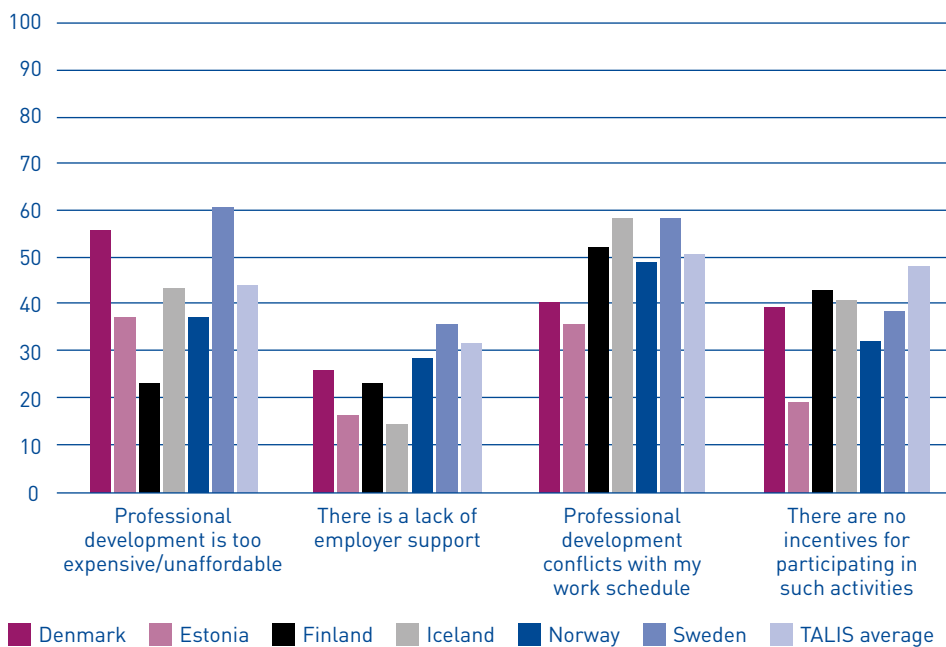
The level of regulation in each country is reflected in the participation rate of Nordic teachers. According to TALIS 2013 Estonian teachers participated in CPD most. More than 80 % of the lower secondary teachers surveyed had participated in CPD during the previous 12 months. This is more than the average among the TALIS countries. Also the number of days of reported CPD was slightly above the TALIS average.

The participation rate in Denmark and Iceland, where CPD plans are mandatory, was close to this average. The lowest participation rate could be found in Finland, Norway and Sweden. In these countries CPD plans are not required. In these countries also the required participation is either voluntary or required scope very low as in Finland.

The most common barriers to participation in CPD were costs and work schedule (Figure 7.3). The highest proportion of teachers who reported that CPD was too expensive could be found in Denmark and Sweden.

FIGURE 7.3 BARRIERS TO TEACHERS’ PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers indicating that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that the following reasons represent barriers to their participation in professional development



Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 4.14

Table 7.3 in the Appendix

Work schedules were experienced as the biggest barrier particularly in Finland, Iceland and Sweden. Other reasons were lack of employer support and, to a lesser degree, lacking qualifications.

7.3.2 Induction and mentoring: most beginning Nordic teachers receive some type of support

Induction and mentoring have been high on the European and global agenda for years and recognised as powerful means to strengthen teachers' professional capacity. Induction is the support and guidance provided to new teachers generally in the early stages of their careers.

Induction is compulsory in most European countries. However, among the Nordic countries Sweden is the only one with compulsory induction. Newly qualified teachers in Sweden have the right to an induction year with a mentor. The responsibility for the induction lies with the employer, the municipality or the organisation managing the grant-aided independent school. The induction period should offer support in using various teaching methods, to plan and carry out lessons, development plans for pupils, assessment and documentation. It is also important to develop the ability to lead, meet students and interact with others in the role of teacher. However, only half of all newly qualified teachers get an induction year from their employer.

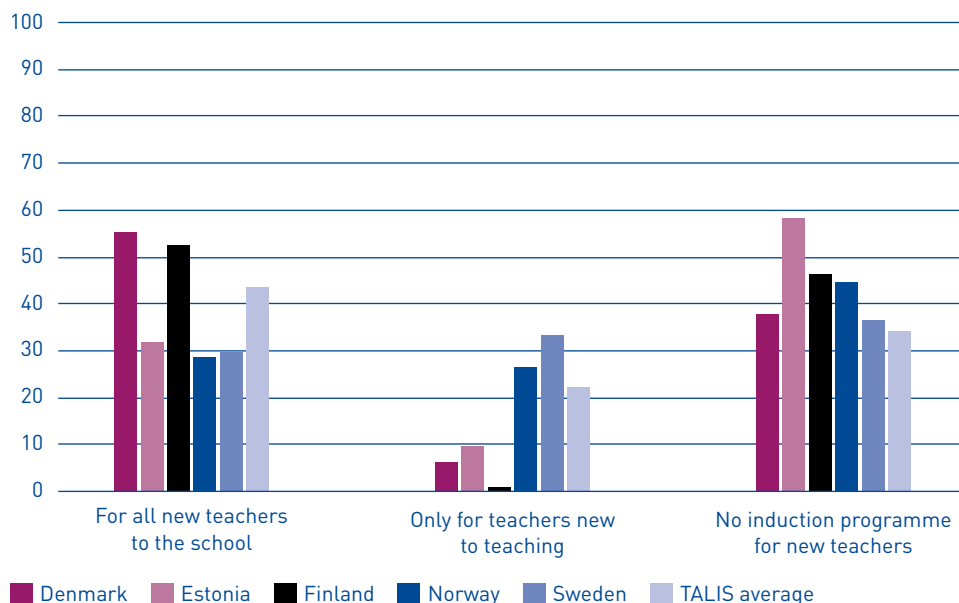
Sweden is the only country with compulsory induction.

In Finland and Estonia induction for new teachers is recommended. In Estonia all teachers, who first start working in the teaching profession, are recommended an induction phase, excluding those who have completed a teachers' training curriculum while working in a pedagogical position. In Finland the recommendation comprises not only teachers new to the profession but any teacher who is in need of peer support.

According to TALIS 2013 most Nordic teachers in lower secondary education received some type of support at the beginning of their careers. In the TALIS survey school heads were asked what proportion of their teaching staff had the opportunity to participate in formal induction. Formal induction refers to structured activities at school. In Denmark and Finland more than half of the teachers had this opportunity (Figure 7.4).

FIGURE 7.4 ACCESS TO FORMAL INDUCTION PROGRAMMES, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers whose school principal reports the existence of induction processes for new teachers in the school



Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 4.1

Table 7.4 in the Appendix

In the rest of the Nordic region, however, only 30 % or less had the same opportunity. Looking at informal measures the situation looks much brighter. The proportion of teachers receiving informal induction varied between 95 % in Iceland to 64 % in Sweden. Although teachers have the right to induction only 37 % of the Swedish school heads reported that this was available in their schools. General and administrative induction was available to most teachers in the Nordic region countries.

7.4 Working time and salaries: teachers' working time defined differently

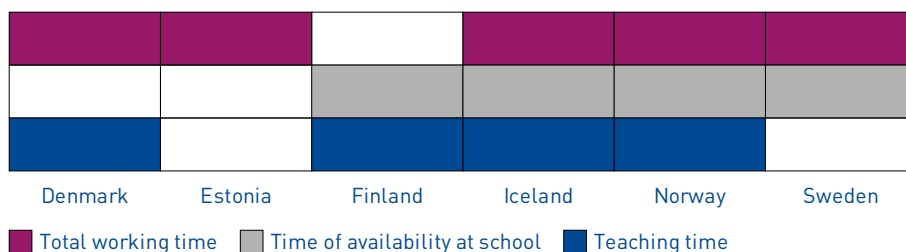
Working time and salaries are agreed on at national or school level in the Nordic region. A collective bargaining process with room for local adaptation is the main mechanism in Finland and Norway, while in Sweden most decisions regarding teachers' working conditions are taken at school level. In the remaining countries, decisions are taken both at national level or in a collective bargaining process and at local or school level.

7.4.1 Required working time at school lowest in Finland and highest in Iceland

Nordic countries define teachers' working time differently. While working time at national level is mainly defined as teaching hours in Finland, it is only defined as a statutory annual working time in Denmark (Figure 7.5).

FIGURE 7.5 DEFINITION OF WORKING TIME

Components in the official definition of the working time of teachers in lower secondary education, according to central regulations 2013/2014.

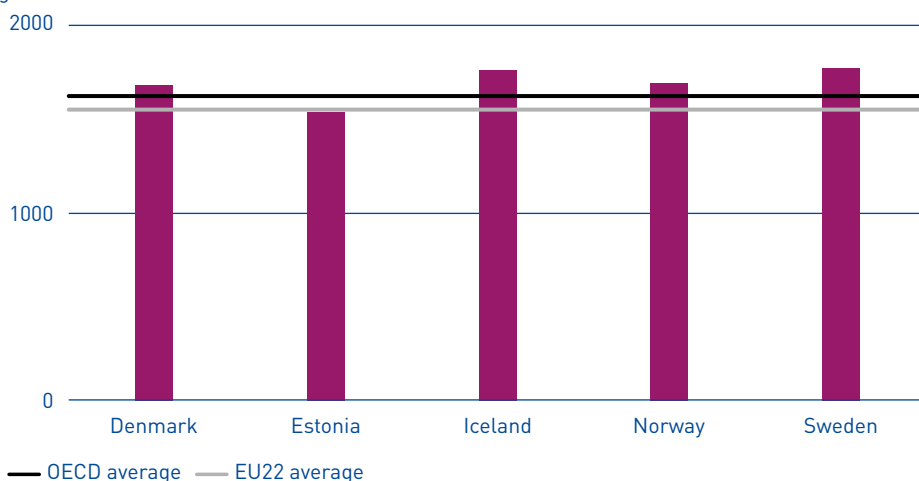


Source: Eurydice, The teaching profession in Europe 2015

All Nordic region countries except Finland have defined a statutory annual working time for basic education teachers either in the legislation or a collective agreement (Figure 7.6). The annual working time is lowest in Estonia and highest in Iceland.

FIGURE 7.6 TEACHERS' STATUTORY ANNUAL WORKING TIME, 2015

Number of statutory annual working hours in public institutions as defined in agreements or legislation.



Annual working time not defined in Finland. More data on working time in Table 7.6 in the Appendix

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2018, Table D4.1

Table 7.6 in the Appendix

In Finland an annual working time has been discussed for some time. In 2018 an agreement was reached to pilot this type of arrangement in some schools. The planned working time would be 1 520 hours, which would be the lowest among the Nordic countries.

Most Nordic region countries have defined a statutory annual working time for basic education teachers.

At the moment the required time at school in Finland is clearly lowest, nearly half of the required time in the other Nordic countries (see Table 7.6 in the Appendix). Required teaching time does not vary dramatically among the countries. Norwegian primary teachers have the highest number of teaching hours per year and Estonian primary teachers the lowest.

At lower secondary level Finnish teachers have the lowest and Norwegian and Danish teachers highest number of statutory teaching hours. The teaching time for primary and lower secondary teachers is the same in all countries except Finland and Norway. In Finland lower secondary teachers teach 85 hours less and Norwegian lower secondary teachers 78 hours less than their peers in primary education. In Sweden teaching time is negotiated at school level.

Comparing to other OECD countries, teachers in Nordic countries, except Finland, have to be available at their schools more than average. Also their annual statutory working time is higher than the OECD average, except in Estonia.

Teachers' statutory working time in most Nordic countries higher than the OECD average.

Data on actual teaching time is available regularly only for Estonia and Denmark. Actual teaching time is 122 hours more than statutory teaching time per year in Denmark for both primary and lower secondary teachers.

According to Education at a Glance 2018 actual teaching time in Estonia is lower than the statutory. In Estonia there have been some changes in the legislation concerning teaching time. The statutory working time used to be 35 hours per week including 18-24 lessons. Since 2013 the number of lessons has not been regulated any more. Thus, there is no statutory teaching time any more but the old statutory teaching time, 24 lessons, is still used in the statistical calculations.

In Finland data was collected for the first time on actual teaching time in a survey in 2015. On average additional teaching hours are few, for primary teachers the number of extra hours was only 35.5 hours per year. Lower secondary teachers in turn taught 6.5 hours less per year than the statutory requirement.

7.4.2 Teacher salaries: generally small differences between education levels

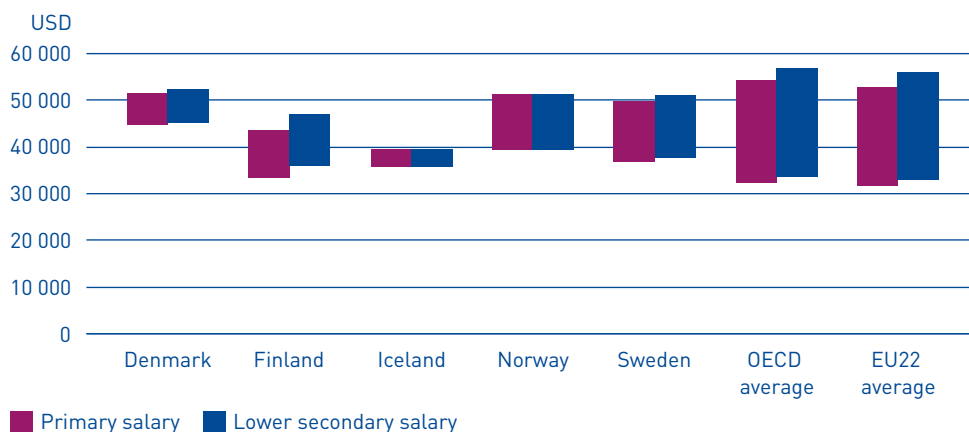
There are no big differences between the salaries of teachers in primary and lower secondary education except in Finland. In Finland lower secondary teachers earn 10 % more than primary teachers. In Sweden and Denmark the difference is less than 3 %. In Estonia and Norway no differentiation is made between the teachers at different levels.

Salary progression during the career relatively modest.

Typical for most of the countries in the Nordic region is that the salary progression during the career is relatively modest (Figure 7.7). The difference between the starting salary and the salary at the top of the scale varies between 30 % in Finland and 17 % in Denmark and Norway at both primary and lower secondary level. The salary progression is much lower than in the OECD countries on average.

FIGURE 7.7 SALARY PROGRESSION OF PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY TEACHERS, 2017

Lower secondary teachers' statutory salaries at different points in teachers' careers: starting salary and salary at the top of the scale.



Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2018, Table D 3.1a

Table 7.7 in the Appendix

The most relevant and transparent way of comparing teacher salaries is relative to workers with similar education. This data is available in Education at a Glance 2018 in all other Nordic region countries except Denmark and Iceland. Teacher salaries relative to workers with tertiary education is available for all other countries except Iceland.

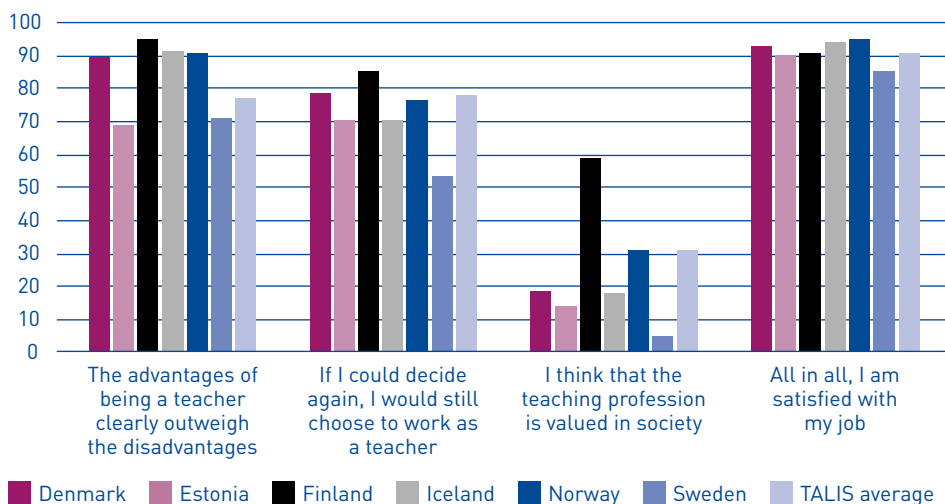
In the Nordic region teachers at primary and lower secondary level earn some 80-90 % of the salaries of similarly or tertiary educated full-time workers. The OECD average is not available, but the EU average varies from 82 % in primary to 86 % in lower secondary education.

7.5 Most teachers in the Nordic region satisfied with their work

Salaries and professional satisfaction do not always correlate with each other. In Finland where the relative salaries are lower than in most other Nordic region countries, the level of satisfaction of teachers with their choice of career is the highest. Nearly all Finnish lower secondary teachers in the 2013 TALIS study reported that the advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages. More than 85 % of Finnish teachers also replied that if they could decide again, they would still choose to work as a teacher. In Estonia, where the relative salaries are higher, the corresponding figure was 70 %. Danish teachers enjoy the highest salaries among the Nordic region countries. Danish teachers were also very satisfied with their jobs (Figure 7.8).

FIGURE 7.8 TEACHER'S JOB SATISFACTION, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following statements



Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 7.2

Table 7.8 in the Appendix

Teachers in Denmark did, however, not think that their profession is valued by society. Only 18 % thought so. In Finland the sense of esteem is clearly highest. In Finland nearly 60 % of the teachers thought that society valued their work and 31 % in Norway. In all the other countries less than 20 % thought so. The situation in Sweden was the most alarming, with only 5 % of the teachers replying that they felt valued by society.

7.6 Challenges: Nordic countries share the same challenges of feminisation and aging

The Nordic countries share the same concerns regarding the teaching profession. Teachers are mainly female and they are not getting any younger. However, a balance between age groups and gender in schools is considered an asset. Mutual learning and peer support as well as transfer of tacit knowledge thrives in a school community with teachers of varying ages.

The biggest age group in all countries is between 30-49 years. The biggest share of 50-year-old teachers is clearly highest in Estonia, particularly at lower secondary level. Iceland and Sweden have the lowest proportions of young teachers under 30, while Norway has the highest. Some potential explanations are that the older generations occupy the full-time teaching posts, that cuts in funding has lowered the number of available teaching jobs or that teaching is not attractive to younger generations.

Also the feminisation of the profession is considered problematic. Particularly in compulsory education it is seen as beneficial if the composition of the teaching staff resembles that of the surrounding society, providing the pupils with a model of the equality between men and women.

The proportion of female teachers in Nordic region countries is higher than the OECD and EU averages in all Nordic countries except Norway and Sweden in primary education. In lower secondary education all exceed the OECD and EU averages. Typically the highest proportion of female teachers work in primary education globally. Among the Nordic countries, however, the proportion is the same in Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The difference between primary and lower secondary teachers is 9 percentage points in Estonia and 7 percentage points in Finland.

Many of the Nordic countries battle with attracting young people to become teachers. According to intake rates to initial teacher education Finland would seem to have the best situation followed by Estonia.

The high level of decentralisation in the Nordic region is reflected in the level of autonomy of teacher education institutions. Apart from the qualification level

and inclusion of pedagogical studies, the institutions have relatively free hands in designing their training programmes. For example the amount of practical training in schools is regulated only in Denmark, Estonia and Norway.

Another field showing low levels of regulation is continuing professional training. CPD is mandatory only in Finland, where the required number of days is very low, and in Iceland and Estonia. CPD plans are obligatory only in Iceland and Denmark. In Finland these are recommended.

***Lowest participation
in CPD Nordic
countries where CPD
plans are not required.***

The level of regulation in each country is reflected in the participation rates. Estonian teachers, who used to have the highest requirement, participate in CPD most actively. More than 80 % of Estonian lower secondary teachers in TALIS 2013 had participated in CPD during the previous 12 months.

In Denmark and Iceland, where CPD plans are mandatory, the participation was also fairly high. The lowest participation rate could be found in Finland, Norway and Sweden, countries in which CPD plans are not required.

8. APPENDIX: TABLES

TABLE 2.1 ADOPTION OF COMPULSORY AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

| | The year of adopting legislation on compulsory education | Comprehensive school |
|---------|--|--|
| Denmark | 1814 | - |
| Estonia | 1919 | several years before regaining independence 1991 |
| Finland | 1921 | legislation 1969 implemented 1972–77 |
| Iceland | 1907 | 1974 |
| Norway | 1889 | 1969 |
| Sweden | 1889 | legislation 1962 implemented 1971 |

TABLE 2.2 NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR, 2017/2018

| | |
|---------|---|
| Denmark | 200 |
| Estonia | at least 175 |
| Finland | 190 |
| Iceland | 180 |
| Norway | 190 – exact dates vary on regional/municipal level |
| Sweden | at least 178 – exact dates vary on regional/municipal level |

Source: Eurydice, Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe – 2017/18

TABLE 2.3 INSTRUCTION TIME IN BASIC EDUCATION, 2018

| Country | Total number of hours primary | Total number of hours lower secondary | Total number of hours primary + lower secondary | Average hours per year |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Denmark | 7 360 | 3 600 | 10 960 | 1 096 |
| Estonia | 3 964 | 2 468 | 6 431 | 715 |
| Finland | 3 905 | 2 423 | 6 327 | 703 |
| Iceland | 5 100 | 2 755 | 7 855 | 762 |
| Norway | 5 272 | 2 622 | 7 894 | 789 |
| Sweden | 4 593 | 2 297 | 6 890 | - |
| EU22 average | 4 337 | 2 913 | 7 250 | - |
| OECD average | 4 620 | 2 913 | 7 533 | - |

Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table D1.1

TABLE 2.4 SHARE OF COMPULSORY SUBJECTS IN PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2018

| | Reading, writing and literature % | Mathematics % | Natural sciences % | Social studies % | First foreign language % | Physical education and health % | Arts % | Religion/ethics/moral education % | Other subjects % |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Denmark primary | 21 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 36 |
| Denmark lower secondary* | 18 | 13 | 13 | 8 | 8 | 5 | | 2 | 36 |
| Estonia primary | 23 | 15 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 15 | | 17 |
| Estonia lower secondary | 13 | 14 | 21 | 11 | 10 | 6 | 6 | | 19 |
| Finland primary | 23 | 15 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 16 | 5 | 9 |
| Finland lower secondary | 12 | 13 | 16 | 8 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 4 | 21 |
| Iceland primary | 20 | 16 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 9 | 19 | | 8 |
| Iceland lower secondary | 14 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 19 | 8 | 8 | | 22 |
| Norway primary | 26 | 17 | 7 | | 7 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 3 |
| Norway lower secondary | 15 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 22 |
| EU22 average primary | 25 | 17 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 4 | 15 |
| EU22 average 2 lower secondary | 15 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 22 |
| OECD average primary | 25 | 17 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 14 |
| OECD average lower secondary | 14 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 23 |

*Arts is included in 'other subjects'

Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table D1.3a&b

TABLE 4.1 EXPENDITURE ON BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS PER PUPIL, 2015

| | Primary | Lower secondary | Primary share % | Lower secondary share % |
|--------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Estonia | 6 327 | 6 614 | 49 | 51 |
| Finland | 9 305 | 14 682 | 39 | 61 |
| Iceland | 11 215 | 12 872 | 47 | 53 |
| Norway | 13 275 | 14 486 | 48 | 52 |
| Sweden | 10 853 | 11 493 | 49 | 51 |
| OECD average | 8 631 | 9 941 | 46 | 54 |
| EU22 average | 8 656 | 10 175 | 46 | 54 |

Data not available for Denmark

In equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP, direct expenditure within educational institutions

Source: OECD / UIS / Eurostat (2018)

Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table C1.1

TABLE 4.2 NUMBER OF PUPILS PER ONE TEACHING STAFF MEMBER IN BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS, 2016

| | Primary | Lower secondary | Difference between primary and lower secondary |
|--------------|---------|-----------------|--|
| Estonia | 13 | 10 | 3 |
| Finland | 13 | 9 | 4 |
| Iceland | 11 | 10 | 1 |
| Norway | 10 | 9 | 1 |
| Sweden | 13 | 12 | 1 |
| OECD average | 15 | 13 | 2 |
| EU22 average | 14 | 11 | 3 |

Data not available for Denmark.

Source: OECD, Education at a glance 2018, Table D2.2

TABLE 4.3. EXPENDITURE PER SERVICE IN BASIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND AND IN SWEDEN, 2016

Finland, euro

| Total | Instruction | Infrastructure | Meals | Transport | Other |
|-------|-------------|----------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 8 881 | 5 018 | 1 907 | 530 | 353 | 1 035 |

Source: Finnish National Agency for Education

Sweden, Swedish crown

| Total | Instruction | Infrastructure | Meals | Transport | Other |
|---------|-------------|----------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 106 700 | 61 200 | 18 100 | 6 200 | 3 100 | 17 950 |

Source: Swedish National Agency for Education

TABLE 6.1 PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WITH AN OFFICIAL SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS DECISION OF ALL PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SETTING, 2014/2015

| Country | Pupils enrolled in all formal educational settings | Number of pupils with an official SEN decision | % of pupils with an official SEN decision of all pupils in formal educational settings | EU average % |
|----------|--|--|--|--------------|
| Iceland | 43 136 | 7 043 | 16.3 | 4.5 |
| Norway | 618 996 | 49 672 | 8.0 | 4.5 |
| Estonia | 115 671 | 9 156 | 7.9 | 4.5 |
| Finland | 534 185 | 38 943 | 7.3 | 4.5 |
| Denmark | 567 834 | 29 118 | 5.1 | 4.5 |
| Sweden * | 959 671 | 10 211 | 1.1 | 4.5 |

* Data on SEN pupils includes only pupils in special programmes and special schools.

Source: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, data tables for respective countries and countries' background information 2014/2015

TABLE 7.1 A) ADMISSION RATE INTO TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE NORDIC REGION 2014-2018

| | 2014 | | | 2016 | | | 2017 | | | 2018 | | |
|--|----------|----------|-----|----------|----------|-----|----------|----------|-----|----------|----------|----|
| | applied | admitted | % | applied | admitted | % | applied | admitted | % | applied | admitted | % |
| Estonia | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| class teachers | | | | 274 | 80 | 29 | 249 | 68 | 27 | 208 | 78 | 38 |
| Iceland | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| basic school TE | 114 | 114 | 100 | 101 | 101 | 100 | 135 | 135 | 100 | 241 | 236 | 98 |
| Norway[1][2] | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| teachers grades 1-7 | 2384 | 1366 | 57 | 2290 | 1344 | 59 | 2170 | 1369 | 63 | 2456 | 1527 | 62 |
| teachers grades 5-10 | 2340 | 1528 | 65 | 2557 | 1591 | 62 | 2454 | 1643 | 67 | 2772 | 1972 | 71 |
| Sweden[1] | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 578 | 3 342 | 73 | 5 508 | 3 697 | 67 | 5 480 | 3 963 | 72 | 5 312 | 4 028 | 76 |
| Denmark[1] | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2508 | 2234 | 89 | 3226 | 2700 | 84 | 3146 | 2691 | 86 | 3113 | 2610 | 84 |
| Finland, class teacher education, grades 1-6 [4] | 8195 [3] | 888 | 11 | 6801 [3] | 759 | 11 | 3443 [1] | 793 | 23 | 3039 [1] | 804 | 26 |

[1] first priority applicants

[2] Applicants who were admitted and accepted

[3] All applicants

[4] Teacher education in Finnish

Sources:

Vipunen.fi

Statistics Sweden <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/utbildning-och-forskning/hogskolevasende/sokande-och-antagna-till-hogskoleutbildning-pa-grundniva-och-avancerad-niva/>

Danish Ministry of Education and <https://ufm.dk/uddannelse/statistik-og-analyser/sogning-og-optag-pa-videregaende-uddannelser/2018/hotat-1-overblik-udvikling-uddannelsesgrupper-og-institutioner.pdf>

Ministries of Education in Estonia, Iceland and Norway

TABLE 7.1 B) INITIAL EDUCATION OF BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE NORDIC REGION

| | Denmark | | Estonia | | Finland | | Iceland | | Norway | | Sweden | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Primary | Lower secondary | Primary | Lower secondary | Primary | Lower secondary | Primary | Lower secondary | Primary | Lower secondary | Primary | Lower secondary |
| Initial training | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| -level | Bachelor | Bachelor | Master | Master | Master | Master | Master | Master | Bachelor/ Master (2017->) | Master | Master | Master |
| -ECTS | 240 | 240 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 240 | 240 | 240 | 270 |
| -generalists | - | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| -subject specialists | x ¹ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| -concurrent/ consecutive | con-current | con-current | con-current | concurrent | mainly concurrent | mainly concurrent | con-current | con-current | mainly concurrent | mainly concurrent | con-current | con-current |
| -induction/ mentoring | no | no | R | R | R | R | no | no | R | R | C ² | R |
| Teaching practice | 30 ECTS | 30 ECTS | 15 ECTS | 15 ECTS | autonomy | autonomy | autonomy | autonomy | 100 days | 100 days | 30 ECTS | 30 ECTS |

- 1 Qualified to teach 3 subjects
 - 2 Schools obliged to offer
- R = recommended
C = compulsory

TABLE 7.2 PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary teachers who had participated in CPD and percentage of these who did not pay for participation

| | Participated % | Free % |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------|
| TALIS average | 88.4 | 66.1 |
| Sweden | 83.4 | 86.3 |
| Norway | 87 | 81 |
| Iceland | 91.1 | 60.8 |
| Finland | 79.3 | 72.6 |
| Estonia | 93 | 69.1 |
| Denmark | 86.4 | 84.9 |

Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 4.6

TABLE 7.3 BARRIERS TO TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers indicating that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that the following reasons represent barriers to their participation in professional development

| | Do not have the pre-requisites (e.g., qualifications, experience, seniority) % | Professional development is too expensive/unaffordable % | There is a lack of employer support % | Professional development conflicts with my work schedule % | Lack of time due to family responsibilities % | There is no relevant professional development offered % | There are no incentives for participating in such activities % |
|---------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Denmark | 11 | 55.6 | 2.6 | 40.2 | 20.3 | 38.3 | 39.2 |
| Estonia | 12 | 37.3 | 16.4 | 35.4 | 24 | 29.4 | 19.3 |
| Finland | 7.1 | 23.1 | 23.2 | 51.9 | 37 | 39.8 | 42.9 |
| Iceland | 5.5 | 43.1 | 14.5 | 57.9 | 40.7 | 40.7 | 40.7 |
| Norway | 8.7 | 37.1 | 28.5 | 48.6 | 38.2 | 19.3 | 31.8 |
| Sweden | 7.7 | 60.6 | 35.4 | 58.1 | 22.6 | 46.1 | 38.2 |
| TALIS average | 11.1 | 43.8 | 31.6 | 50.6 | 35.7 | 39 | 48 |

Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 4.14

TABLE 7.4 ACCESS TO FORMAL INDUCTION PROGRAMMES, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers whose school principal reports the existence of induction processes for new teachers in the school

| | Formal induction | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| | For all new teachers to the school % | Only for teachers new to teaching % | No induction programme for new teachers % |
| Denmark | 55.7 | 6.4 | 37.9 |
| Estonia | 31.9 | 9.5 | 58.6 |
| Finland | 52.6 | 1 | 46.5 |
| Norway | 28.9 | 26.5 | 44.6 |
| Sweden | 29.8 | 33.5 | 36.7 |
| TALIS average | 43.6 | 22.3 | 34.2 |

Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 4.14

TABLE 7.6 TEACHERS' STATUTORY ANNUAL WORKING TIME, 2017

Number of annual working hours in public institutions

| | Net teaching hours , in hours | | Working time required at school, in hours | | Total statutory working time, in hours | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Primary | Lower secondary, general programmes | Primary | Lower secondary, general programmes | Primary | Lower secondary, general programmes |
| Denmark | - | - | - | - | 1680 | 1680 |
| Estonia | 585 | 602 | - | - | 1540 | 1540 |
| Finland | 673 | 589 | 787 | 703 | - | - |
| Iceland | 624 | 624 | 1610 | 1610 | 1760 | 1760 |
| Norway | 741 | 663 | 1300 | 1225 | 1688 | 1688 |
| Sweden | - | - | 1360 | 1360 | 1767 | 1767 |
| OECD average | 784 | 703 | 1184 | 1178 | 1622 | 1645 |
| EU22 average | 762 | 668 | 1059 | 1041 | 1551 | 1585 |

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2018, Table D4.1

TABLE 7.7. SALARY PROGRESSION OF PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY TEACHERS, 2017

Lower secondary teachers' statutory salaries at different points in teachers' careers: starting salary and salary at the top of the scale.

| | Primary | | Lower secondary, general programmes | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Starting salary | Salary at top of scale | Starting salary | Salary at top of scale |
| Denmark | 44 919 | 51 506 | 45 134 | 52 183 |
| Estonia | 19 529 | a | 19 529 | a |
| Finland | 33 408 | 43 451 | 36 081 | 46 927 |
| Iceland | 35 756 | 39 477 | 35 756 | 39 477 |
| Norway | 39 585 | 51 209 | 39 585 | 51 209 |
| Sweden | 36 689 | 49 587 | 37 566 | 50 964 |
| OECD average | 32 258 | 54 156 | 33 498 | 56 874 |
| EU22 average | 31 699 | 52 868 | 33 041 | 56 006 |

Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs

Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2018, Table D3.1a

a= not applicable

TABLE 7.8 TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION, 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following statements

| | The advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages % | If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher % | I think that the teaching profession is valued in society % | All in all, I am satisfied with my job % |
|---------------|--|--|---|--|
| Denmark | 89.2 | 78.3 | 18.4 | 92.9 |
| Estonia | 69.3 | 70.3 | 13.7 | 90 |
| Finland | 95.3 | 85.3 | 58.6 | 91 |
| Iceland | 91.4 | 70.4 | 17.5 | 94.5 |
| Norway | 91.2 | 76.7 | 30.6 | 94.9 |
| Sweden | 71.2 | 53.4 | 5 | 85.4 |
| TALIS average | 77.4 | 77.6 | 30.9 | 91.2 |

Source: OECD TALIS 2013, Table 7.2

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