Comprehensive school education is a cornerstone of the Finnish welfare state. Regardless of their background, it guarantees everyone an equal opportunity to learn the skills they need in life. With a budget of EUR 180 million, the Government will launch a programme for 2020–2022 to improve the quality and equality of comprehensive school education.

The programme seeks effective measures to reverse the rise of inequality and to reduce group sizes. It aims to reduce and prevent learning differences arising among children’s socio-economic background, immigrant background or gender, to strengthen support for learning, to develop special needs support, and to improve literacy.

In Finland, along with household wealth, the impact of a parent’s education and occupation on learning outcomes has increased rapidly when, even as recently as 2009, the differences were among the smallest among the OECD countries. Now is the time to put an end to this worrying rise in inequality.

It is also important that we pay attention to regional and gender differences. In Finland, the performance gap between girls and boys is the largest in the OECD countries. Regional equality has become a new challenge as the learning outcomes of the Helsinki metropolitan area differ significantly from those of the rest of the country.

The programme’s projects will prepare legislation, facilitate permanent financing arrangements and promote effective practices and methods that strengthen equality.

Calls for project proposals for providers of comprehensive school education and other organisations in the sector ensure that the projects are linked to long-term development goals for comprehensive school education.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN EQUALITY TOGETHER

The National Forum for Comprehensive School Education and ECEC brings together experts and stakeholders in the promotion of educational equality.

RESEARCH: the development of comprehensive school education in research data. The programme will contribute to knowledge research data to improve the equality and quality of comprehensive school education.

Calls for project proposals for providers of comprehensive school education and other organisations in the sector ensure that the projects are linked to long-term development goals for comprehensive school education.

THE FORUM supports the implementation and continuation of the programme and improves the effectiveness of development actions. The Forum combines the expertise and research outcomes of ECEC and comprehensive school education.

We will launch an extensive follow-up study to enable evidence-based development of comprehensive school education.

THE NARROWING OF THE LEARNING GAP

NATIONAL PRINCIPLE

EQUALITY EDUCATION

EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

EFFECTIVE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND EQUALITY IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL EDUCATION

Call to action: project proposals for providers of comprehensive school education and other organisations in the sector ensure that the projects are linked to long-term development goals for comprehensive school education.

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THE FORUM supports the implementation and communication of the programme and improves the effectiveness of development actions. The Forum publishes the experiences and outcomes of ECEC and comprehensive school education.

RESEARCH: The development of evidence-based strategies and research data to improve the quality and equality of comprehensive school education.

Necessary: new projects, calls for proposals, implementation of the programme, follow-up studies.

WE WILL LAUNCH AN EXTENSIVE FOLLOW-UP STUDY TO ENABLE LONG-TERM EVIDENCE-BASED DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL EDUCATION.
WE WILL CREATE EQUAL CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING PATHS
High-quality and equal comprehensive school education is the foundation of the Finnish welfare state, based on the ability to reduce the significance of family backgrounds in learning outcomes. To improve the quality and equity of comprehensive school education, we will launch an equality fund that reduces socio-economic, regional and gender gaps in learning.

REDUCING LEARNING GAPS
We will make available financial support for comprehensive school education providers to identify effective measures to level out the differences in learning outcomes that stem from parents’ educational background. We will introduce guidance counselling more effective and reduce group sizes. We will improve the learning conditions and transitions of children and young people with immigrant backgrounds. We will strengthen democracy education and sustainable development.

LITERACY
We will strengthen literacy and the culture of reading in ECEC and comprehensive school education. We will ensure that every child gets the support they need to learn to read.

NEW LITERACY SKILLS
We will improve children’s and students’ media literacy, ICT and digital self-expression skills through a multi-annual development programme.

WE WILL MAKE AVAILABLE BETTER SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN
The right to learn belongs to every child, but to ensure equal learning opportunities we need adequate support provision. The programme will improve the support for learning, develop special needs support and use effective, nationwide measures to promote inclusion.

SUPPORT AND INCLUSION
We will develop the national level support programme for reinforcing inclusion, to support learning and to improve special needs support. We will evaluate the effectiveness of special educational needs legislation and Aim, as well as the adequacy of measures. We will improve the transparency in the support model and endeavour to put in place uniform and effective rules at national level, if necessary by reforming legislation. We will develop the support for learning and accessibility of education.

MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION
We will strengthen the support for learning, improve special needs support and develop multi-professional approaches in schools. We will invest in low-threshold prevention services. These measures will underpin the support for the transitions in the education path and the implementation of compulsory education.

QUALITY OF TEACHING
The professional competence of teachers plays a key role in ensuring learning outcomes. It is important to develop multi-professional practices and to ensure the quality of the implementation of the curriculum.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
We will support the continuing learning of teachers through a project developing their knowledge and skills, school principals and other staff and support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum.

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REBUILDING LEARNING GAPS
We will make available financial support for comprehensive school education providers to identify effective measures to level out the differences in learning outcomes that stem from parents’ educational background. We will create guidance counselling more effective and reduce group sizes. We will improve the learning conditions and transitions of children and young people with immigrant backgrounds. We will strengthen democracy education and sustainable development.

BASIC SKILLS
We will advocate the learning of basic skills during the early years by fortifying pre-primary education and the first two years of primary school into a more coherent system. Furthermore, we will investigate the opportunities for introducing two-year pre-primary education.

LITERACY
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NEW LITERACY SKILLS
We will improve children’s and student’s media literacy, ICT and digital self-expression skills through a multi-annual development programme.

EQUALITY
We will strengthen the role of local schools in guaranteeing equal education paths, in providing a focal point for the community and trans- forming wellbeing. We will prepare legislative proposals to reinforce the school-based principle. We will develop regional cooperation between administrative branches to reverse the rise in inequality. At the same time, we will reform financing of comprehensive school education.

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SUPPORT AND INCLUSION
We will develop an extended support programme for reinforcing inclusion, to support learning and to improve special needs support. We will evaluate the effectiveness of special educational needs legislation and practices, as well as the adequacy of measures. We will improve the three-tier support model and endeavour to put in place uniform and effective support at national level, if necessary by reforming legislation. We will develop the culture of learning and accessibility of learning.

MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION
We will advocate the support for learning, improve special needs support and develop multi- professional approaches in schools. We will extend in-house preventive services. These measures will underpin the support for the transitions of the education path and the development of the compulsory education.

GOAL 1

WE WILL CREATE EQUAL CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING PATHS

GOAL 2

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GOAL 3

WE WILL STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
We will support the continuing learning of teachers through a project developing their professional cooperation.

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REDUCING LEARNING GAPs

We will make available financial support for comprehensive school education providers to identify effective measures to level out the differences in learning outcomes that stem from parents’ educational background. We will include guidance counselling more effective and reduce group sizes. We will improve the learning conditions and transitions of children and young people with impairments. We will strengthen democracy education and sustainable development.

BASIC SKILLS

We will advocate the learning of basic skills during the early years by reconfiguring pre-primary education and the first two years of primary school into a more coherent system. Furthermore, we will investigate the opportunities for introducing two-year pre-primary education.

LITERACY

We will strengthen literacy and the culture of reading in ECEC and comprehensive school education. We will ensure that every child gets the support they need to learn to read.

NEW LITERACY SKILLS

We will improve children’s and student’s media literacy, ICT and digital self-expression skills through a multi-annual development programme.

EQUALITY SUPPORT AND INCLUSION

We will advocate equality in the assessment of comprehensive school education by reforming the assessment criteria. In addition, we will improve the knowledge and skills of teachers, school principals and other staff and support teachers in the implementation of the curricula. Continuation of professional education. This will reinforce teachers’ knowledge and skills, especially in the fields of educational equality, inclusion, the rise in inequality and the development of multi-professional cooperation.

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The right to learn belongs to every child, but to ensure equal learning opportunities we need adequate support provision. The programme will improve the support for learning, develop special needs support and use effective, nationwide measures to promote inclusion.

SUPPORT AND INCLUSION

We will develop a nationwide support programme for reinforcing inclusion. The support will aim to improve special needs support. We will evaluate the effectiveness of special educational needs legislation and measures, as well as the adequacy of measures. We will improve the resources for support model and endeavour to put in place uniform and effective measures at national level.

NEW LITERACY SKILLS

We will improve children’s and student’s media literacy, ICT and digital self-expression skills through a multi-annual development programme.

MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

We will advocate support for learning, improve special needs support and develop multi-professional approaches in schools. We will meet in-house and inter-professional services. These measures will underpin the support for the transitions on the education path and the school of compulsory education.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

The professional competence of teachers plays a key role in ensuring learning outcomes. It is important to develop school professionals’ skills and to ensure the quality of the implementation of the curriculum.

REINFORCING TEACHERS’ KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

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We will strengthen equality together

The National Forum for Comprehensive School Education and ECEC brings together experts and stakeholders in the promotion of educational equality.

The programme is strongly based on research data. The programme will contribute to monitoring research data to improve the equality and quality of comprehensive school education.

We will launch an extensive follow-up study to monitor long-term evidence-based development of comprehensive school education.

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