

# THE RIGHT TO LEARN

AN EQUAL START ON THE LEARNING PATH

TOWARDS  
EQUALITY AND  
WELLBEING  
IN FINLAND

**COMPREHENSIVE  
SCHOOL EDUCATION**

PROGRAMME FOR QUALITY AND EQUALITY 2020–2022

# EFFECTIVE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND EQUALITY IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL EDUCATION

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.

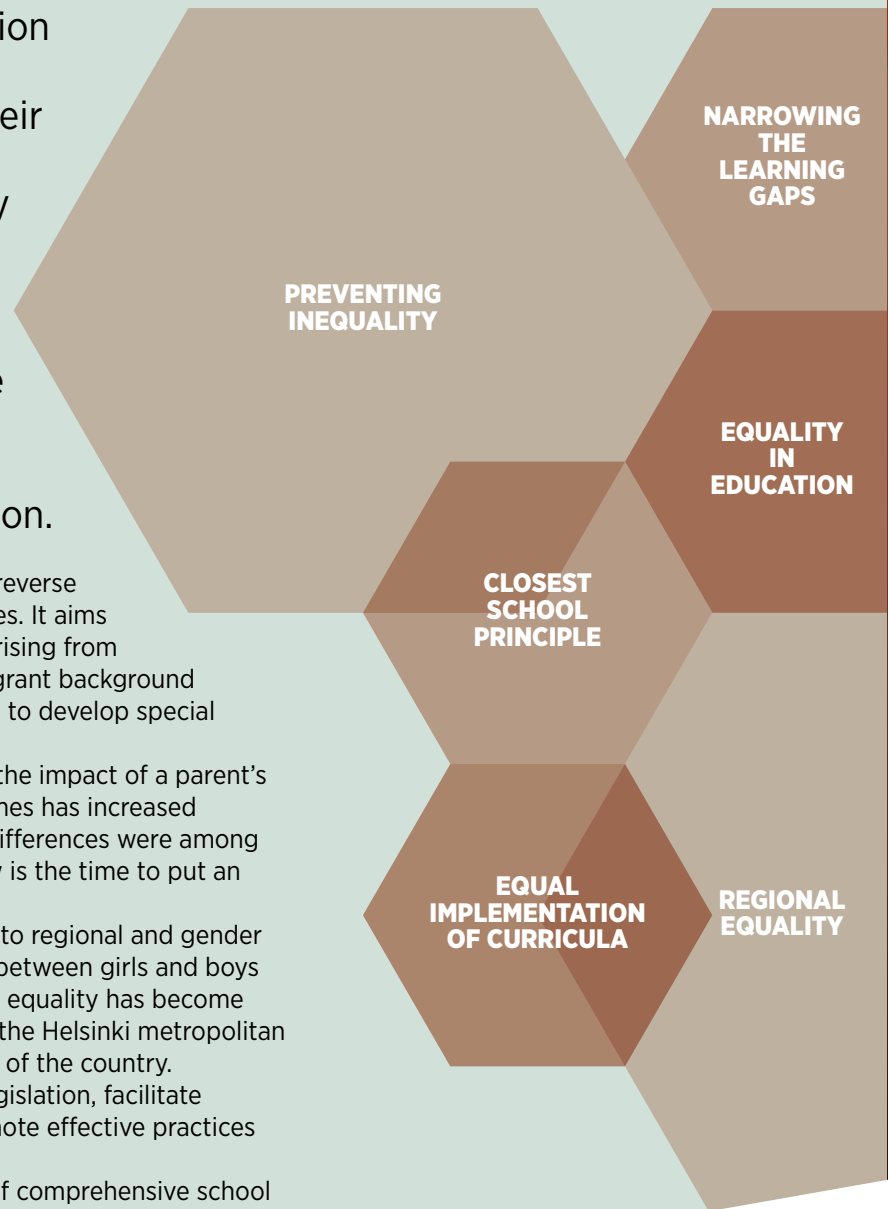
The programme seeks effective measures to reverse the rise of inequality and to reduce group sizes. It aims to reduce and prevent learning differences arising from children's socio-economic background, immigrant background or gender, to strengthen support for learning, to develop special needs support,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



**DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ARE THE BASIS FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT**

## GOAL 1

GROUP  
SIZES

GUIDANCE  
COUNSELLING

EUR  
**120**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

DEMOCRATIC  
EDUCATION

LITERACY

EQUAL  
DIGITAL  
SKILLS

BASIC SKILLS  
IN EARLY  
CHILDHOOD

# 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 equality of comprehensive school education, we will launch an equality fund that reduces socio-economic, regional and gender gaps in learning.

### **EQUALITY**

We will strengthen the role of local schools in guaranteeing equal education paths, in providing a focal point for the community and in promoting wellbeing. We will prepare legislative proposals to reinforce the closest school principle. We will develop regional cooperation between administrative branches to reverse the rise in inequality. At the same time, we will reform financing for comprehensive school education so that it contributes to the realisation of equality in education. We will prepare a model for establishing an equality fund as an effective part of the financing of comprehensive school education.

### **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 make 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

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 students' media literacy, ICT and digital self-expression skills through a multi-annual development programme.



## GOAL 2

EUR  
**50**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

REINFORCING  
THREE-TIER  
SUPPORT

EFFECTIVE  
INCLUSION

STRENGTHENING  
MULTI-  
PROFESSIONAL  
COOPERATION

LOW-  
THRESHOLD  
SERVICES IN  
SCHOOLS

ACCESSIBILITY  
OF LEARNING  
SUPPORT

# 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 draw up a national development programme for reinforcing inclusion, to support learning and to improve special needs support. We will evaluate the effectiveness of special educational needs legislation and inclusion as well as the adequacy of resources. We will improve the three-tier support model and endeavour to

put in place uniform and effective practices at national level, if necessary by reforming legislation. We will develop the support for learning and accessibility of learning.

### **MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION**

We will improve the support for learning, improve special needs

support and develop multi-professional approaches in schools. We will invest in low-threshold preventive services. These measures will underpin the support for the transitions on the education path and the extension of compulsory education.



## GOAL 3

REINFORCING  
TEACHERS'  
KNOWLEDGE  
AND SKILLS

SUPPORTING  
THE IMPLI-  
MENTATION OF  
CURRICULA

STRENGTHENING  
THE KNOWLEDGE  
AND SKILLS  
OF SCHOOL  
PRINCIPALS

EUR  
**10**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

SUPPORTING  
THE QUALITY OF  
TEACHING AND  
LEARNING

EQUAL  
ASSESSMENT  
CRITERIA

DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT FOR  
TEACHERS'  
CONTINUING  
PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATION

# WE WILL STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

The professional competence of teachers plays a key role in narrowing learning gaps. It is also important to develop equal assessment practices and to ensure the quality of the implementation of the curriculum.

### QUALITY OF TEACHING

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.

### CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

We will support the continuing learning of teachers through a project developing their

continuing 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.





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

**RESEARCH:** the development programme is strongly based on research data. The programme will contribute to producing research data to improve the equality and quality of comprehensive school education.

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

**#RIGHTTOLEARN**

[www.minedu.fi/qualityprogramme](http://www.minedu.fi/qualityprogramme)



Ministry of  
Education  
and Culture