

Basic education 2045: For Life

Vision Summary



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION AND CULTURE

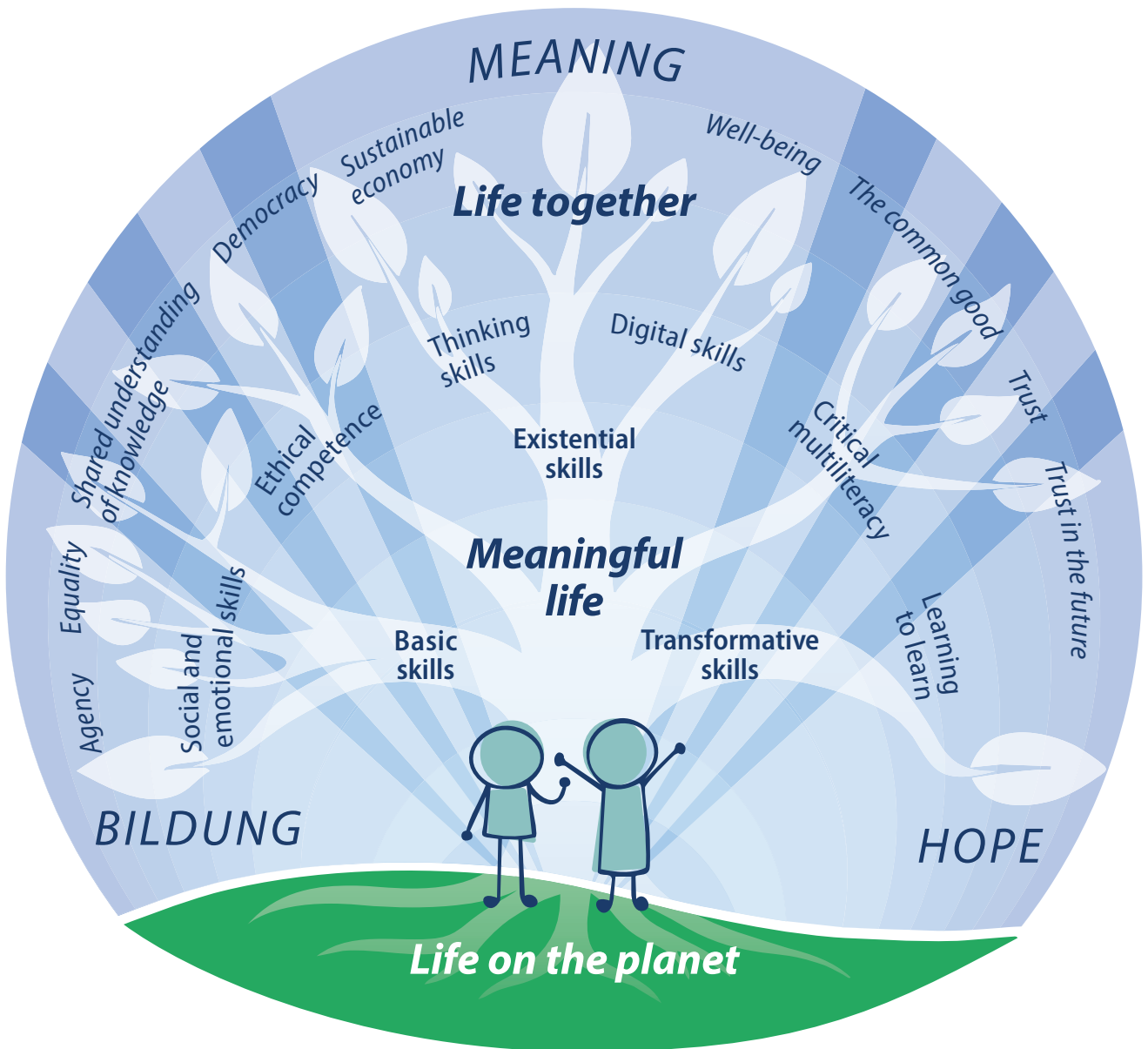
Basic education 2045: For Life

Vision Summary

The *Peruskoulu* comprehensive school is Finland's most important future institution. Its purpose is not only to prepare young people for the changes ahead, but also to equip them with the capacity to change the world and to shape society.

The world surrounding basic education is undergoing profound transformation. The challenges and crises we face cannot be solved by technological innovation alone, but require strong human development. We must find ways to alleviate social polarisation, strengthen democracy, use rapidly advancing technology wisely, and live within the planetary boundaries. In our vision, basic education responds to this challenge by recognising that learning is humanity's opportunity to develop.

In our vision, school is for life: for a meaningful life, life together, and life on the planet. The future of basic education is built on *sivistys* or *Bildung*, meaning, hope, agency, and the common good. The most profound transformation envisioned for the future of basic education is to continue the learning journey from individual knowledge and skills towards shared agency and the co-creation of a meaningful life together.



1

Meaningful Life

***Sivistys*, Bildung as a force for change**

Comprehensive school's definition of *sivistys* or Bildung, holds as its core the motivation to use one's knowledge and competence for good. School does not merely react to expected changes or future scenarios, but actively shapes the path toward a positive future.

Learning and human growth

The goal of learning is human growth and flourishing, in which strong foundational knowledge and basic skills are combined with ethical competence, social and emotional skills, flexible thinking skills, metacognitive skills, and the ability to direct one's own learning. Teachers support students in strengthening transformative skills, existential and life skills, as well as their capacities for meaning-making. These include agency, the ability to understand oneself and others, and the ability to sustain hope in uncertain situations. Teaching is diverse: the importance of emotion, movement, imagination, and culture for the development of skills and human growth is recognised in basic education.

Wellbeing as the foundation and outcome of learning

The interdependency between learning and wellbeing is recognised and nurtured: well-being is a prerequisite for learning, and learning enhances wellbeing. Well-being is understood as both a shared quality and an individual goal. The psychological, social, and physical wellbeing of the entire school community also supports the individual wellbeing of each student. A well-functioning and safe school is a place where it is possible to fail and try again safely and where everyone's success is shared and celebrated.

High level of competence combined with social sustainability

School ensures equality in students' basic skills, learning, and human growth in an increasingly

diverse society, even if social gaps in individual backgrounds and resources widen. Equality and equity are promoted by maintaining high expectations for each student and by providing systematically sufficient support to achieve learning goals. High overall competence strengthens Finnish society as students continue along the educational pathway to next levels of education.

Sustainable skills in the age of technology

Future technologies exceed many limits of human capacity. In this context, learning cannot be based on the assumption that humans must master what machines cannot do. The comprehensive school ensures the sustainability of *sivistys* by placing human growth and human capabilities at the centre of learning – with technology used to complement human capacities. Thinking skills and ethical skills are seen as core goals, combined with diverse digital skills, the ability to regulate one's relationship with technology, and the wisdom to understand what humans should not do, even if it is technologically possible.

Meaning and purpose are created every day

A meaningful life is woven throughout the school's educational mission. Teachers guide students toward personal purpose by helping them identify what is meaningful for them and what also contributes to the good of others. Meaningfulness is also connected to the experience of being meaningful to others. The school strengthens connections with other people and with nature, and guides encounters with humanity through the arts. A sense of meaningfulness in everyday life enhances learning; school does not motivate learning solely on the promise of a future, but is meaningful to students every day. A sense of meaning and purpose is also nurtured in the work of teachers and other adults in the school.

2

Life Together

School as a community aims for the common good

The comprehensive school positions itself courageously as a counterforce to developments that erode community, by nurturing communities that support participation and inclusion. Community does not require sameness, but accommodates diverse thoughts and world views. At the heart of the community lies a shared commitment to strive for the common good. Teachers and other adults in the school form the heart of the community, and pedagogy recognises that many of the most important future skills are learned together. A sense of belonging and responsible agency foster mutual trust in society and the capacity to face uncertain futures together.

A future-competent school and student

The school is oriented toward the future at the level of the entire education system. Shared goals are negotiated and re-evaluated through broad national collaboration so that the education system can seize positive opportunities in a rapidly changing world. Shared and systematic national practices and research-based development increase resilience and equality. Students' future competences also develop at school: strong learning-to-learn skills, an identity as lifelong learners, and diverse democratic skills together with a shared epistemic framework for knowledge.

Technology supports humanity

The school directs the continuously developing technologies to serve human growth. The selection and application of technology in school are pedagogically assessed and balanced. Technology is used to deepen human interaction and to enable guidance that takes into account students' individual characteristics, supports more equitable learning, and improves the use of data and knowledge in school practices. Practicing foundational knowledge and skills provides an

essential basis for the thoughtful use of artificial intelligence and technology in support of the development of thinking.

Strengthening collaboration with homes

In an increasingly diverse society, upholding trust and attachment to school requires consistent dialogue and cooperation. Skilfully led educational partnership with homes strengthen the school's capacity to fulfil its pedagogical mission. Through respectful collaboration, the school can also draw support from local communities and enhance students' equality by supporting families.

An ecosystem of learning supports the school

The school builds connections with society and neighbourhood communities, and the strengthening network of actors such as public services, organisations, companies, and citizens supports the school in its purpose. The collaboration between actors is organised into a functioning ecosystem of learning coordinated by the school. The aim is for the school to receive strong, goal-oriented support from beyond its own boundaries, as students' needs diversify and challenges become more complex. At the same time, collaboration enables more meaningful experiences of learning, belonging, and accomplishment for students.

School buildings as meeting places for communities

The role of schools as social hubs evolves: school buildings function as meeting places where different actors bring communities together and expand students' opportunities for hobbies and activities. School buildings also strengthen continuity in students' daily lives, safety, and bridge opportunities for exercise, hobbies, crafts and shared activities into the students' day.

3

Life on the Planet

Education within the planetary boundaries

The comprehensive school creates *sivistys* that promotes an ecologically sustainable life for the whole society. The scope of sustainability includes ecological, cultural, social, and economic sustainability, which are holistically present throughout both the curricular content and everyday school culture and practices. The school provides students with a systemic understanding of societal sustainability by integrating content across subjects. The school promotes agency that does not reproduce development exceeding planetary boundaries, but instead treats the planetary boundaries as its ethical foundation.

A deep relationship with nature

The comprehensive school fosters a relationship with nature, characterised by joy and understanding of nature's importance for individuals and for society as a whole. At the same time, understanding deepens of humanity's place as part of nature and of ecosystems as the foundation of life: the planet is our only home. Learning forms a cognitive, experiential, and action-oriented whole that strengthens compassion and a sense of connection. Nature is present in schools through the design of spaces and schoolyards, as well as through nature excursions that experientially support well-being and learning.

Agency fosters hope

The school's transformative capacity sustains hope and trust in the future. Hope does not mean the student's ability to wait passively for good things to happen, but an understanding of one's own agency and capacity to act for a better future, together with others. The school teaches students to imagine better futures and builds trust in humanity's ability to solve together even unknown challenges of the future.

As one young participant in the vision process expressed it:

"Don't be afraid of the future. Here, you'll learn for it."

Our vision for education is grounded in the identified strengths of Finnish comprehensive school, which provide a solid foundation for change. A shared, inclusive and publicly funded education system, together with motivated, highly educated teachers and other school professionals in both Finnish- and Swedish-language tracks, forms a globally strong starting point for meaningful education. Building on these strengths and supported by society as a whole, the comprehensive school of the future will be the best possible place for pupils to learn, and an attractive workplace for teachers.

The aim is that through implementing the change outlined in the vision, our comprehensive school and education system will continue to develop through national and international collaboration grounded in research-based knowledge, producing excellent learning outcomes with resources comparable to those of other high-performing education systems. The future school is also a source of meaning for teachers, principals and other staff, whose work is characterised by a having time to think, a strong sense of community, and opportunities for professional growth.

This vision is shaped by more than 5,000 voices. The co-creative vision process was designed to embody, in itself, the principles of a future-oriented and sustainable school. A diverse group of participants was invited into dialogue, including researchers, experts from various fields, teachers, education professionals, parents, grandparents and – most importantly – pupils. At the core of the vision process was a delegation of 46 members representing a wide range of professional backgrounds and areas of expertise.

The views and ideas gathered during the vision process 2024–2025 were brought together by an editorial team composed of civil servants from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education, who are also responsible for the final formulation of the written reports of the vision.

The purpose of the vision is to serve as a tool that supports development and decision-making in changing circumstances and helps to shape a desirable future. Rapid and profound changes that are reshaping societal, economic and competence structures require an increasingly deliberate point of reference for development and for identifying new opportunities. Our hope is that vision-building through re-imagining futures will continue as an integral part of a future-skilled education system.

The time horizon of the vision extends far into the future, to the year 2045. The horizon is long to encourage us all to look and imagine beyond the immediate concerns of the present, and far enough ahead. At the same time, the aim is for start acting for the change immediately: the future starts tomorrow.

Further information

Further information about the vision and the vision process is available in the background discussion report: *Basic Education 2045: For Life – A Vision for Finnish Comprehensive Schools*.

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