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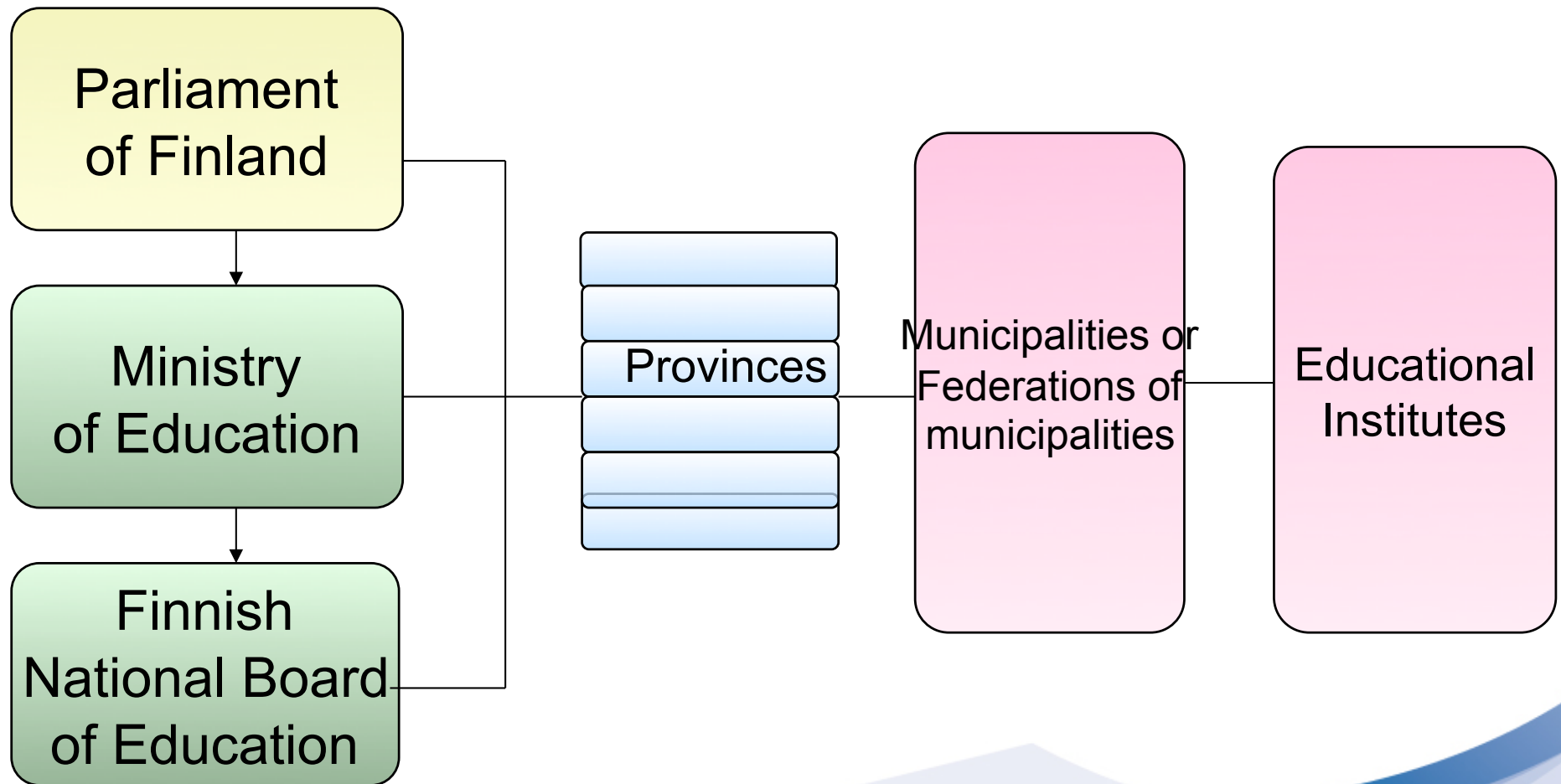
The Finnish Comprehensive and Upper Secondary Education and Inclusive Education in Finland

Pirjo Koivula

Counsellor of Education

Finnish National Board of Education

Administration





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THE ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION GOVERNMENT

Ministry of Education

- educational policy
- legislation



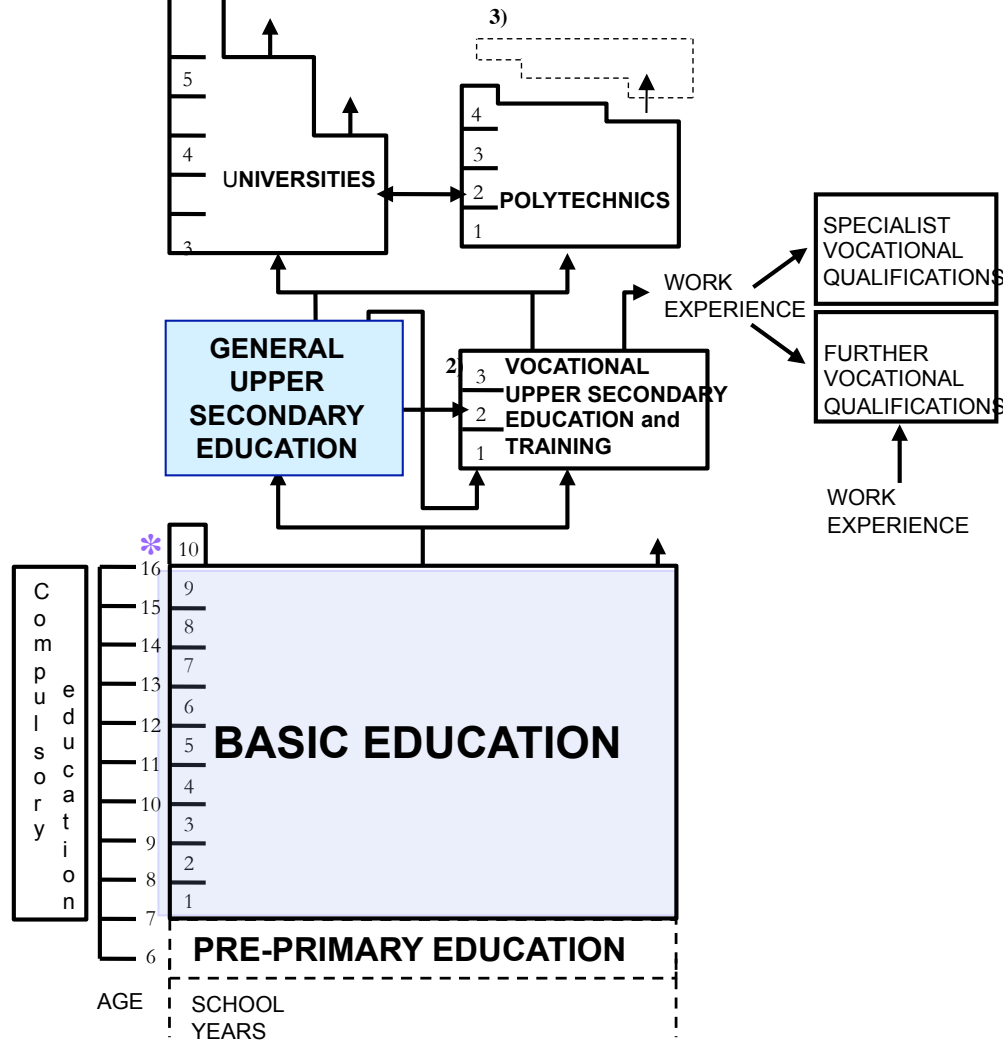
Finnish National Board of
Education

- development of education
 - national core curricula
 - national evaluation
- information services



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THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF FINLAND



***An additional 10th year is voluntary giving pupils an opportunity to improve their grades and clarify their career plans (3 %)**



EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Early childhood education (for 0-5 year-olds)

Pre-school education (for 6 year-olds)

Comprehensive **basic** education (9 years, for 7-16 year-olds)

Voluntary 10th grade, 2 % of basic school graduates

Upper secondary **general** education (3 years)

50.2 % of basic school graduates

Upper secondary **vocational** (3 years)

41.2 % of basic school graduates

Polytechnics and Universities

Open adult education





SECONDARY EDUCATION

Lower secondary

1. grades 7-9 of the basic education
2. voluntary 10th grade

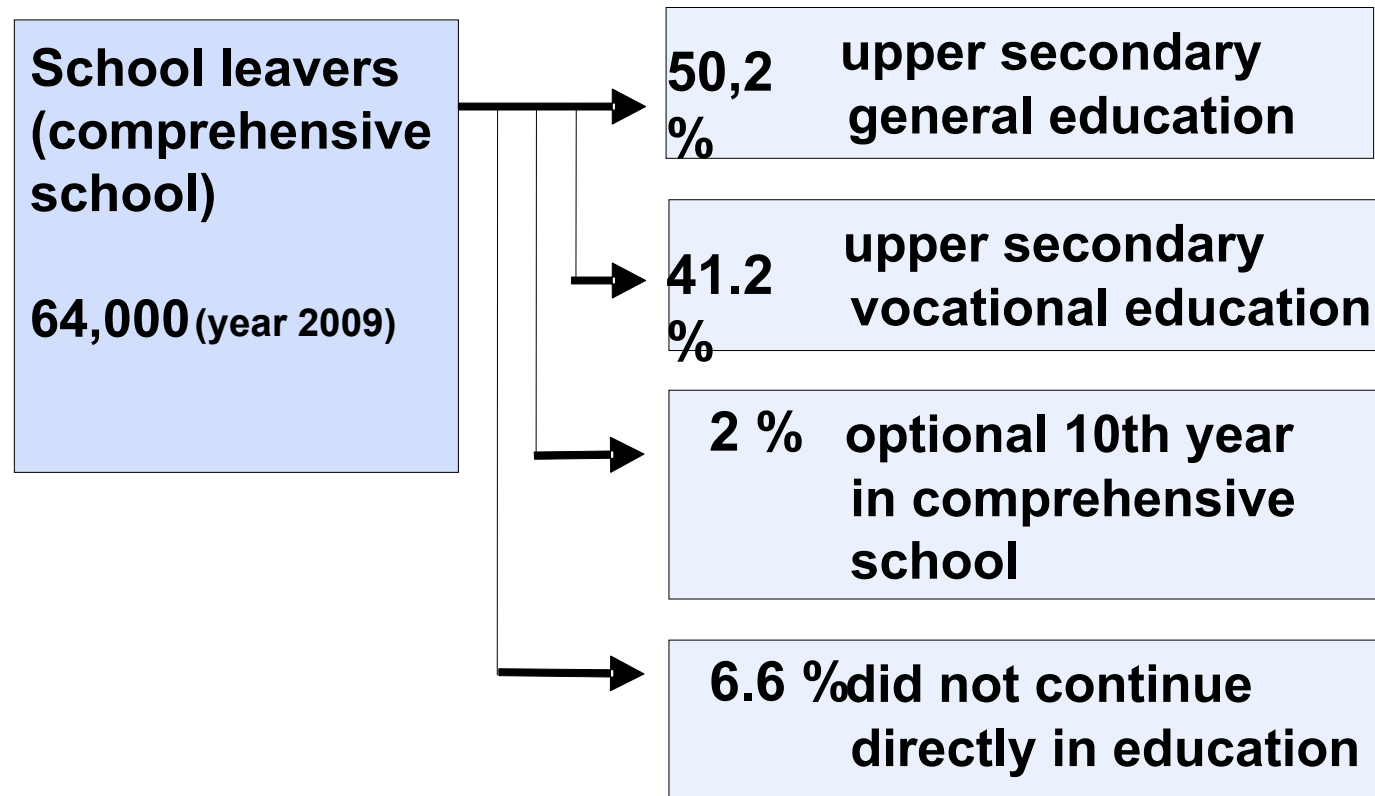
Upper secondary

- general (academic) upper secondary
- vocational upper secondary





DIVISION OF STUDENTS AFTER COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN 2009





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CENTRAL FEATURES OF THE FINNISH EDUCATION POLICY



Equal opportunities for education irrespective of age, domicile, sex, economic situation or mother tongue

Instruction free of charge

Education system almost entirely publicly funded

National core curriculum as a common base for all schools



CENTRAL FEATURES OF THE FINNISH EDUCATION POLICY

Flexibility

1. Flexible administration
2. Good interaction between national and municipal authorities and schools
3. Opportunities to build individual learning programmes
 - ◆ **Possibility to choose the school**
 - ◆ **Optional subjects in basic education**
 - ◆ **Totally individual learning plan in upper secondary education**





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CENTRAL FEATURES OF THE FINNISH EDUCATION POLICY

Central guidelines and steering - local implementation

Supportive administration – spirit of trust

Development-oriented evaluation and pupil assessment

- no inspection system
- in basic education sample-based national testing of learning outcome, no ranking lists
- national matriculation examination at the end of the upper secondary education





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CENTRAL FEATURES OF THE FINNISH EDUCATION POLICY

Individual support for learning and welfare of pupils –
effort to minimise low achievement through early
intervention

Individual guidance and counselling for building
individual learning programmes

Teachers are highly qualified experts

- all teachers have Master's Degree from university

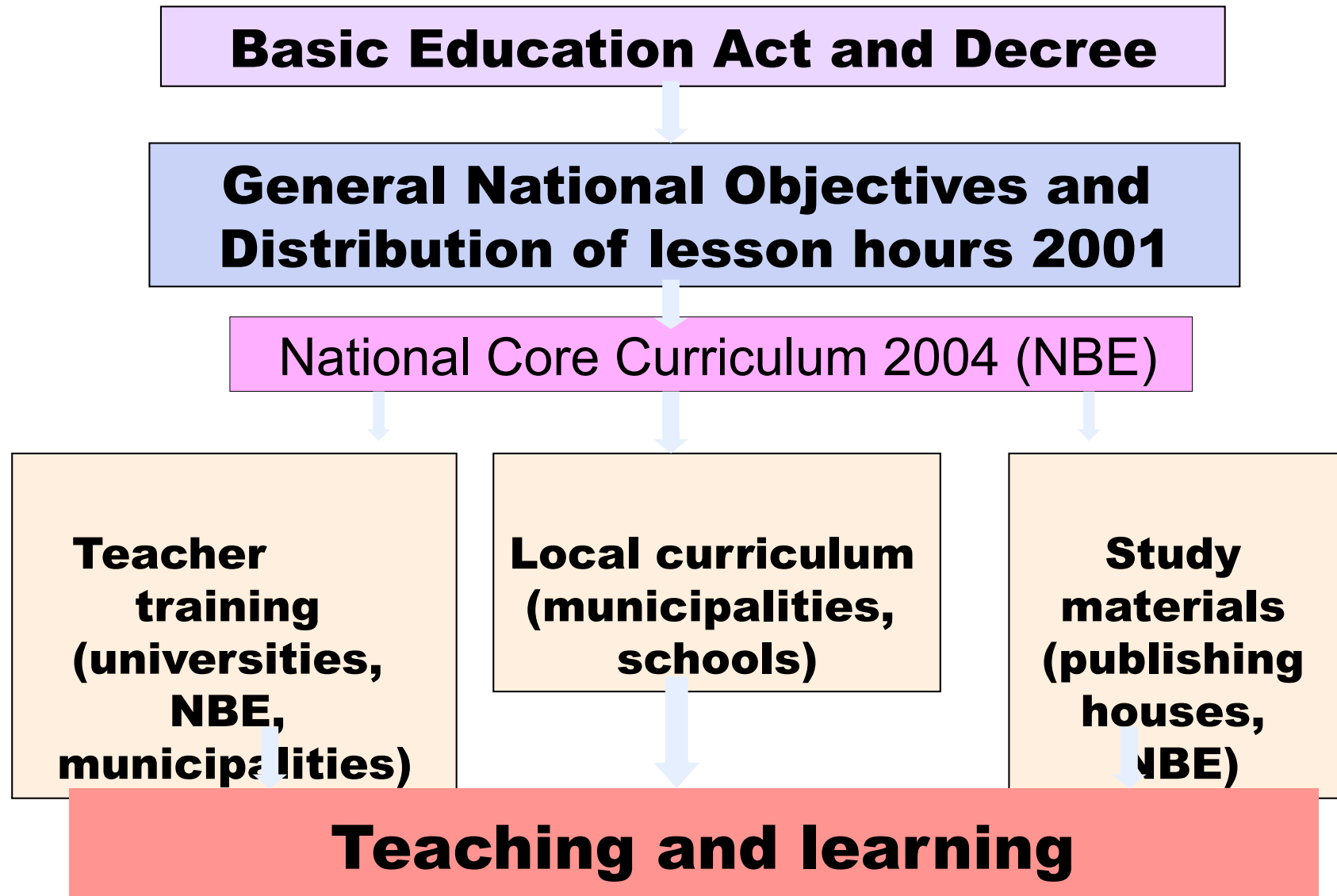
Active role of a student





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THE STEERING SYSTEM OF BASIC EDUCATION



TEACHING AND LEARNING

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

MUNICIPAL CURRICULUM

Teacher Education

Municipal

guidelines

Study materials

**National Core Curriculum
Government Decree on the General National
Objectives and Distribution of lesson hours
Education Act and Decree**



Conception of the Curriculum

Continuum across the education system
Goals are more important than contents
Curriculum covers all areas of school life
Strong future orientation – competence-based thinking
Co-operation with parents, with other authorities and sectors of life
Curriculum as a tool for development



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Conception of Learning

Socio-constructivism, students' active role

Learning is situational - importance of school culture and learning environment

Inclusive pedagogy

Balance between academic achievement and student welfare





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Features of the Finnish education system

Strong individual support



All students have the same objectives and possibilities

The good quality of educational performance of the whole age group

Slow learners drop away from the pace of others without extra support

Every student has a right to be supported in learning and in personal development and welfare

The variation between schools is small

Small variation between students

Mean scores of the schools on the mathematic scale

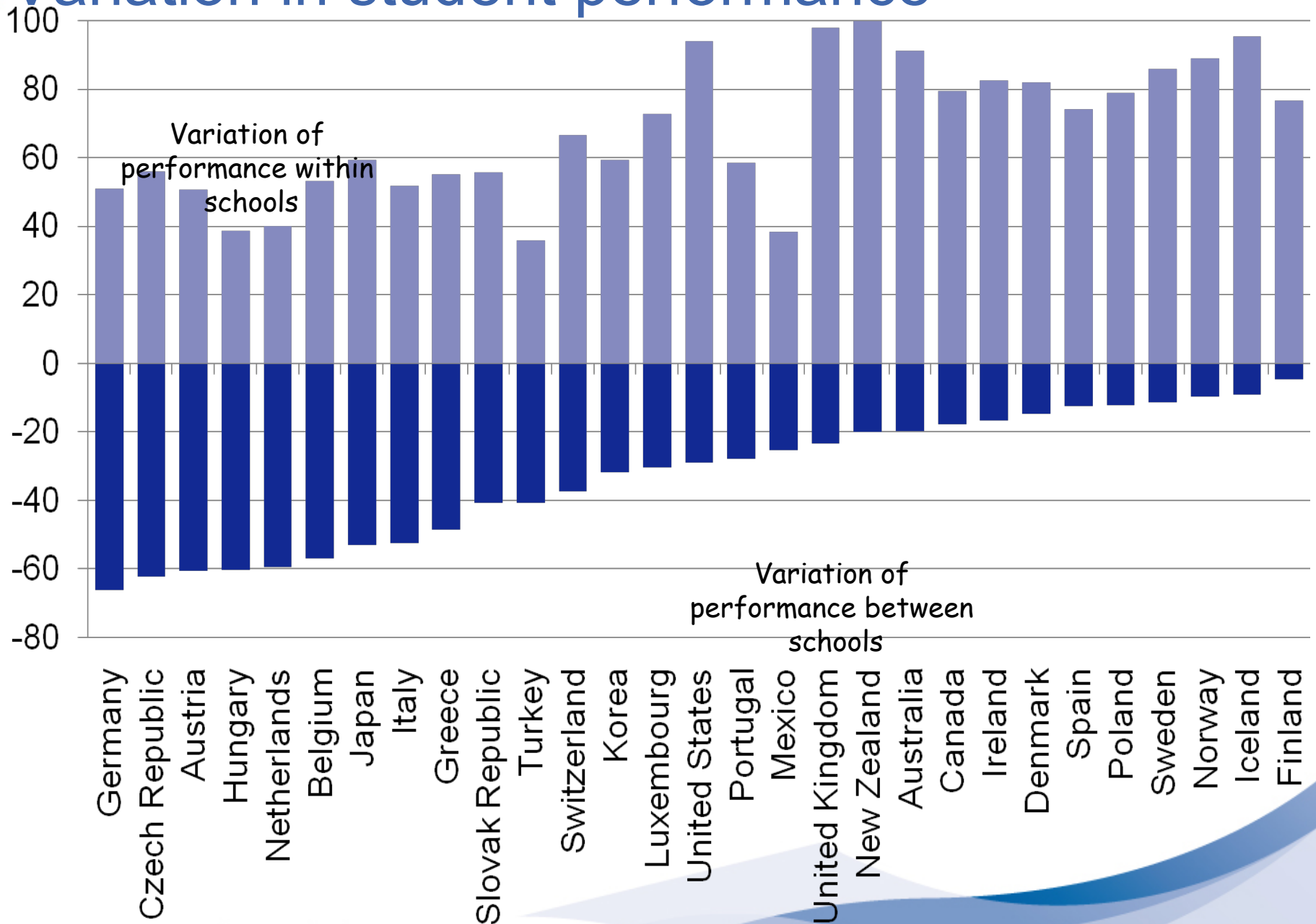


Source: Sèvres 20 May, 2005

Finland OECD



Variation in student performance



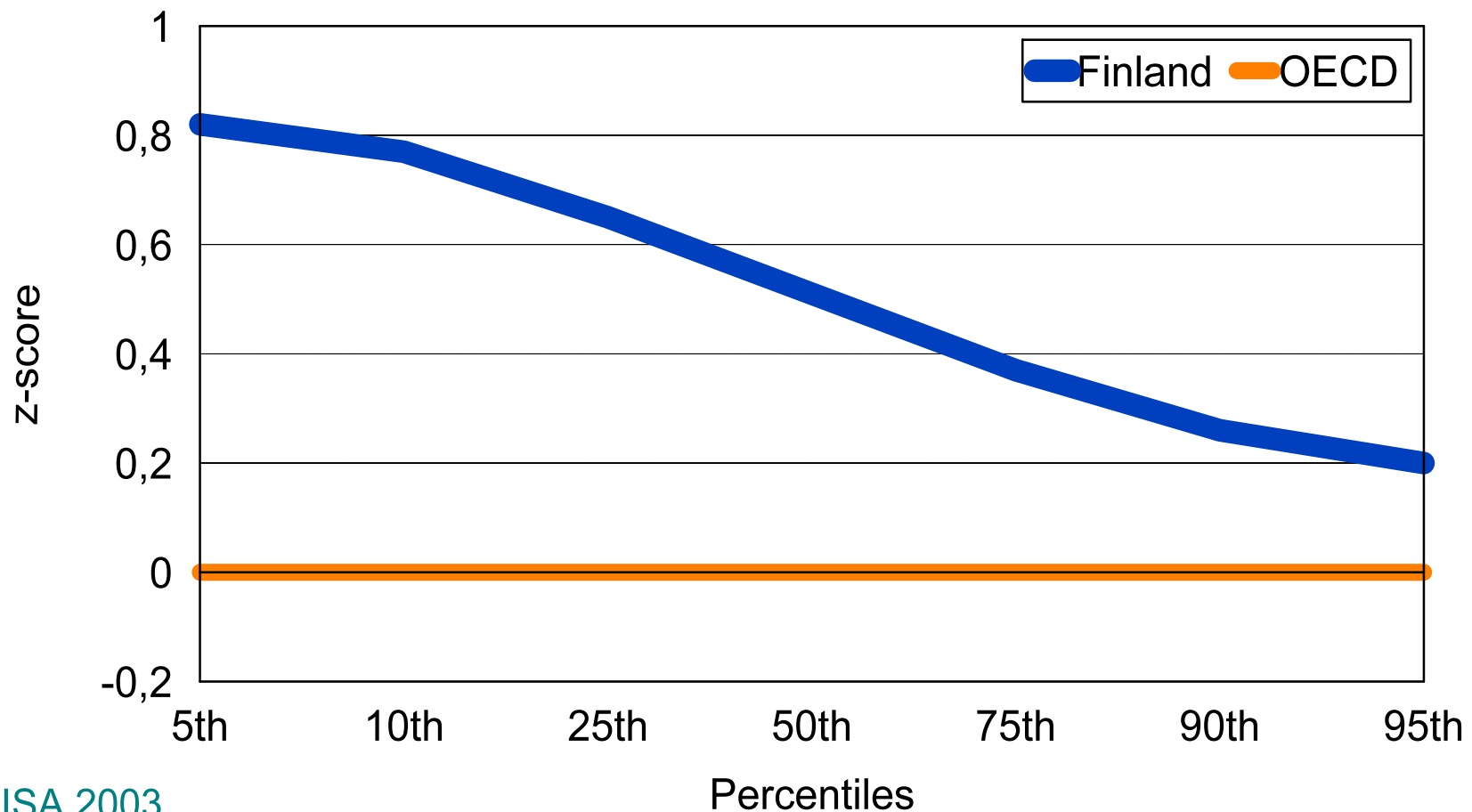
Osaamisen ja sivistyksen parhaaksi

PISA 2006: Science Competencies for Tomorrow's World, Figure 4.1a.

Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th graders by percentiles compared to that of the average of students in the OECD countries.

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OECD averages standardised to be equal to 0



PISA 2003

Source: Moberg, S. & Savolainen, H. 2006. Reading literacy and special education – The particular case of Finland.

Osaamisen ja sivistyksen parhaaksi



New Strategy for Special Needs Education in Comprehensive Education

On 14.3.2006 the Ministry of Education appointed a steering group to prepare a proposal for a long-term strategy for the development of pre-primary and basic special education.

Strategy paper published in November 2007.

Changes in Basic Education Act, passed in June 2010

Changes in National Curricula for Pre-primary and Basic Education

Large development program - KELPO



Act Amending the Basic Education Act

The amendment **supplements** provisions on basic education and support given to pupils.

Shift of focus to **early support**

Planned support – more efficient use of existing forms of support

The aim is to strengthen **the pupil's right to early, preventive support** in learning and growth (*intensified support*) and *special support*, if needed

The support is intended to be intensified by stages

- general support **integrated into mainstream teaching** (*remedial teaching and part-time special-needs education, pupil welfare services etc.*)
- *intensified support*
- *special support*

Amendments to the provision on pupil welfare services



Finnish model NEW APPROACH IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Support for studies and pupil welfare is shaped into three categories in the national core curriculum:

- General support
 - > everyone has a subjective right to this (by law)
- Intensified support
 - > if general support is not enough, pedagogical appraisal of the situation must be done and a plan for the intensified support must be handled in school's welfare group
 - > after that, an individual learning plan (ILP) must be drawn up for the pupil



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Finnish model

NEW APPROACH IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- Special support
 - > if intensified support is not enough, new appraisal must be done
 - > official decision concerning the special support must be made by the local education authority
 - > individual education plan (IEP) must be drawn up for the pupil; this plan must be evaluated at least twice during the basic school years





IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM

Legislation and curriculum are not enough, there must be national support for the implementation of the curriculum

The goal of this support is to enhance teacher autonomy and professionalism

1. in-service education for teachers
2. nationally organized and local networks, peer learning, benchmarking
3. supporting materials for teachers
4. good learning materials for students, supporting differentiation of teaching





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KEYS TO INCLUSION AND SUCCESS

Learning culture

Education system
-comprehensive 6-16
-inclusive
-coherent

Trust and support

Valued teachers,
good teaching,
high level of
teacher education

Individual support
Early intervention
Active role of student
Good student – teacher relationship

Irmeli Halinen 2010



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Links:

www.edu.fi/english

www.oph.fi/english



Osaamisen ja sivistyksen parhaaksi