

Ministry of Education and Science
National Centre for Education

Special Education in Latvia

March 7th, 2012

Law on Education

Section 1

24) **special education** – general and vocational education adapted for persons with special needs and health problems, or with special needs or health problems

Law on General Education

- **Special education is a specific type of general education**

Law on General Education

- Chapter 8 – Special Education
- Section 49
- (1) Special educational programmes ensure **the possibilities and circumstances** for learners with congenital or acquired functional disabilities to acquire general education according to their special needs.

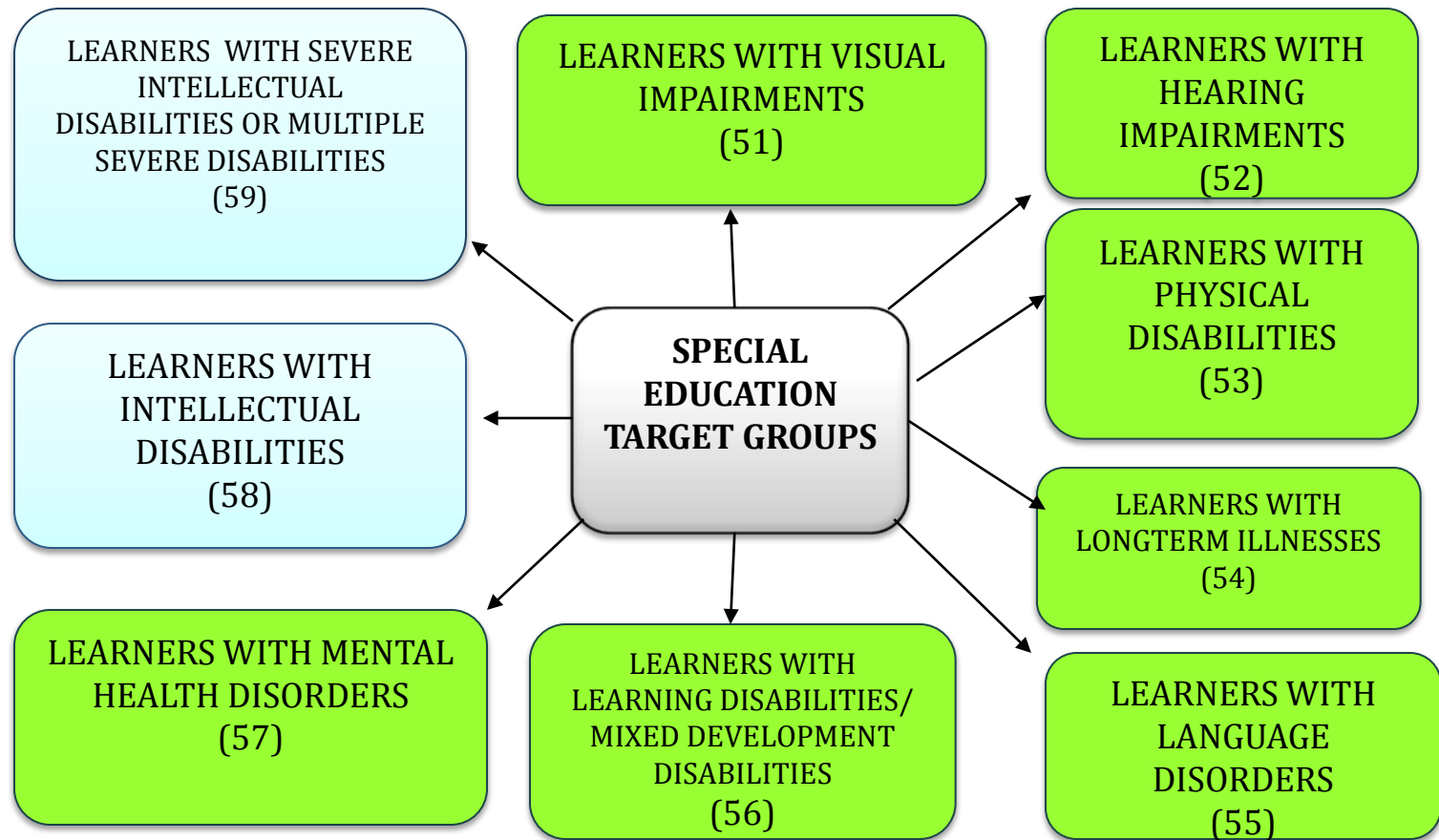
Law on General Education

- **Special needs** are the need for **appropriate support** and rehabilitation that give learners the opportunity to acquire educational programmes according to their health condition, abilities and level of development.
- Availability of adequate **support measures** for learners with special needs who are integrated/included into a general education institution shall be ensured by the educational institution. **Individual education plans** should be developed for every learner with special needs who are included in general education classroom.

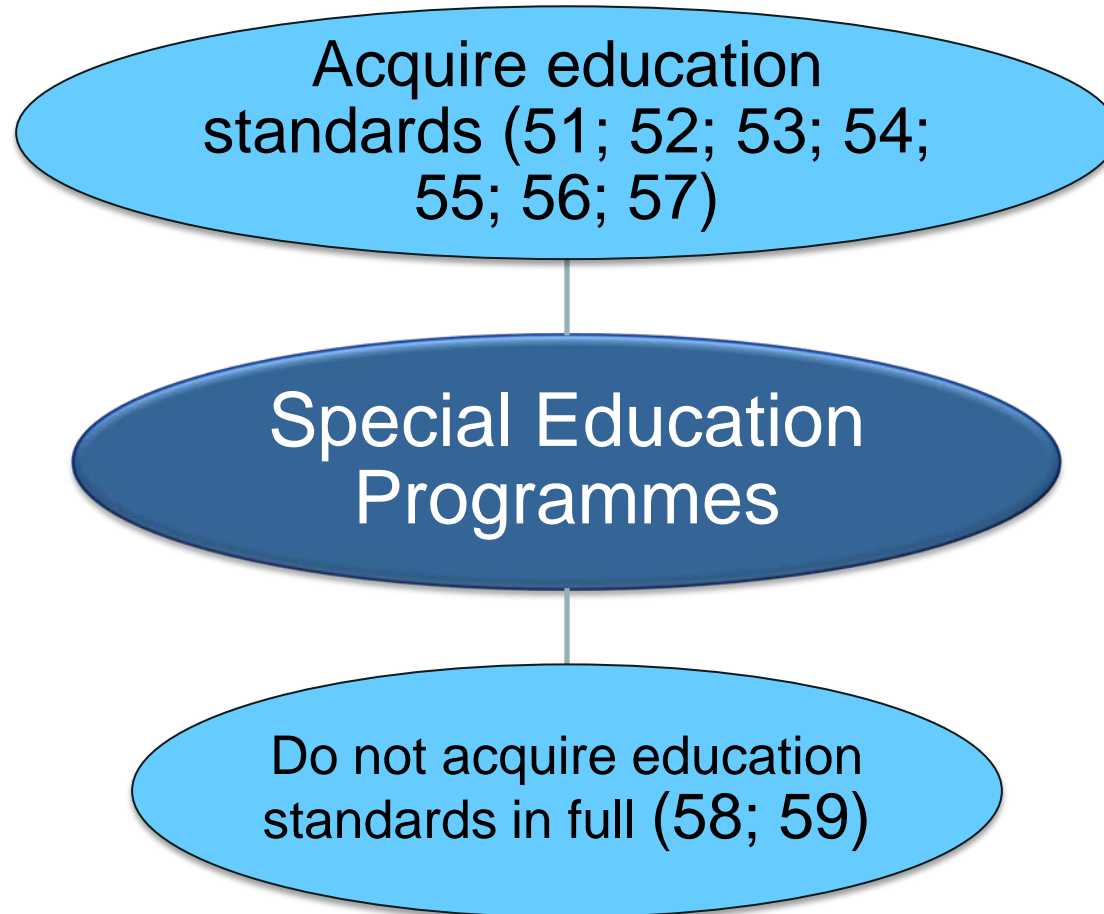
Classification of Educational System in Latvia

- According to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers (No.990; 02.12.2009)
- Each programme has a code, where every number reflects specific aspect of the programme
- e.g. 21015811 – 21 means basic education
 - » 01 means general education
 - » 5 means specific kind (special) education
 - » 8 kind of special education (intellectual disabilities)
 - » 11 language and type (day, evening, part time) – Latvian language, day.

Special Education Target Groups



Special Education Programmes



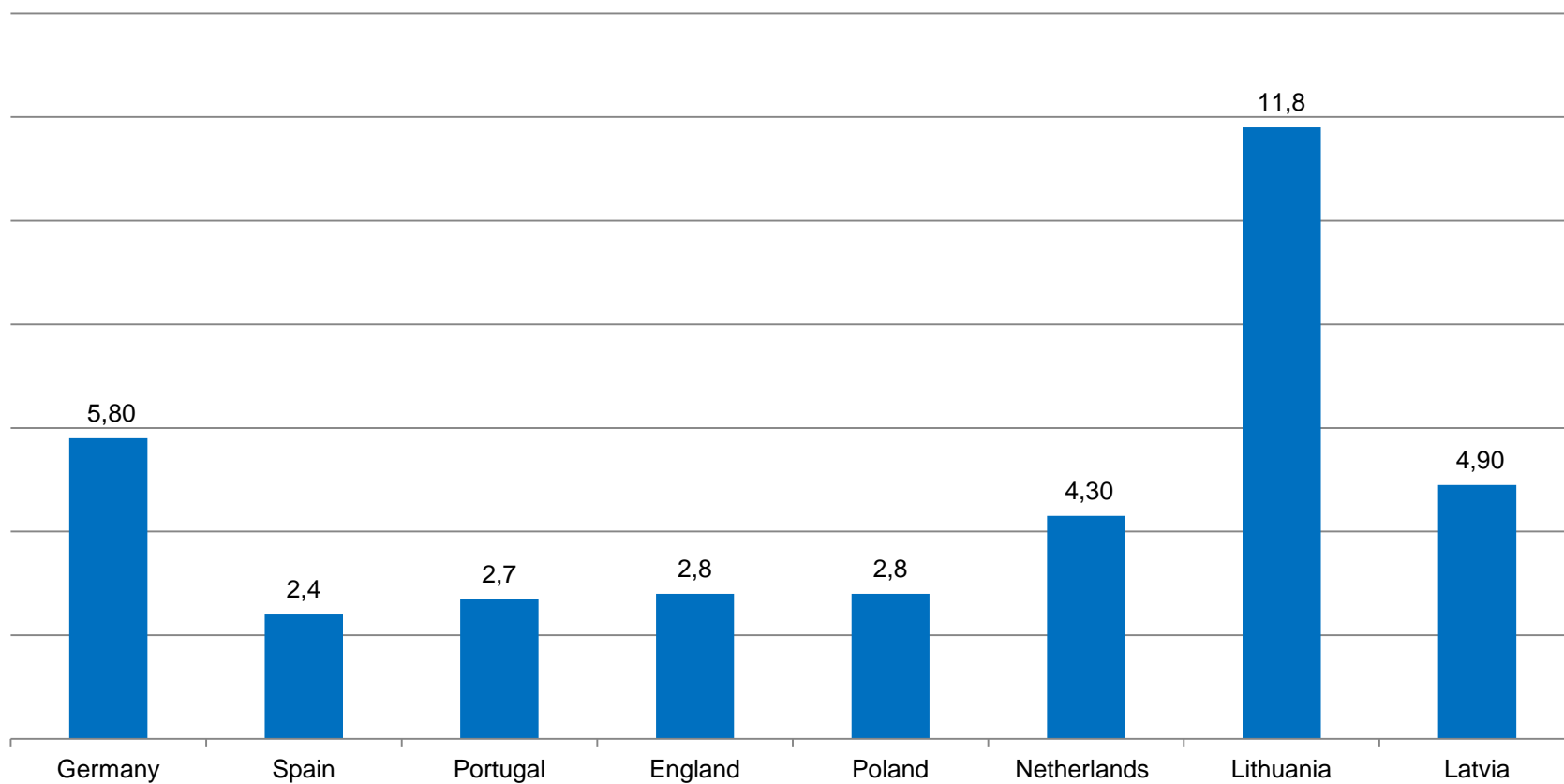
Areas of activity of special education (1)

- both types of special education provision have always been equal in Latvia
 - special education institutions
 - special support to children in general mainstream education institutions

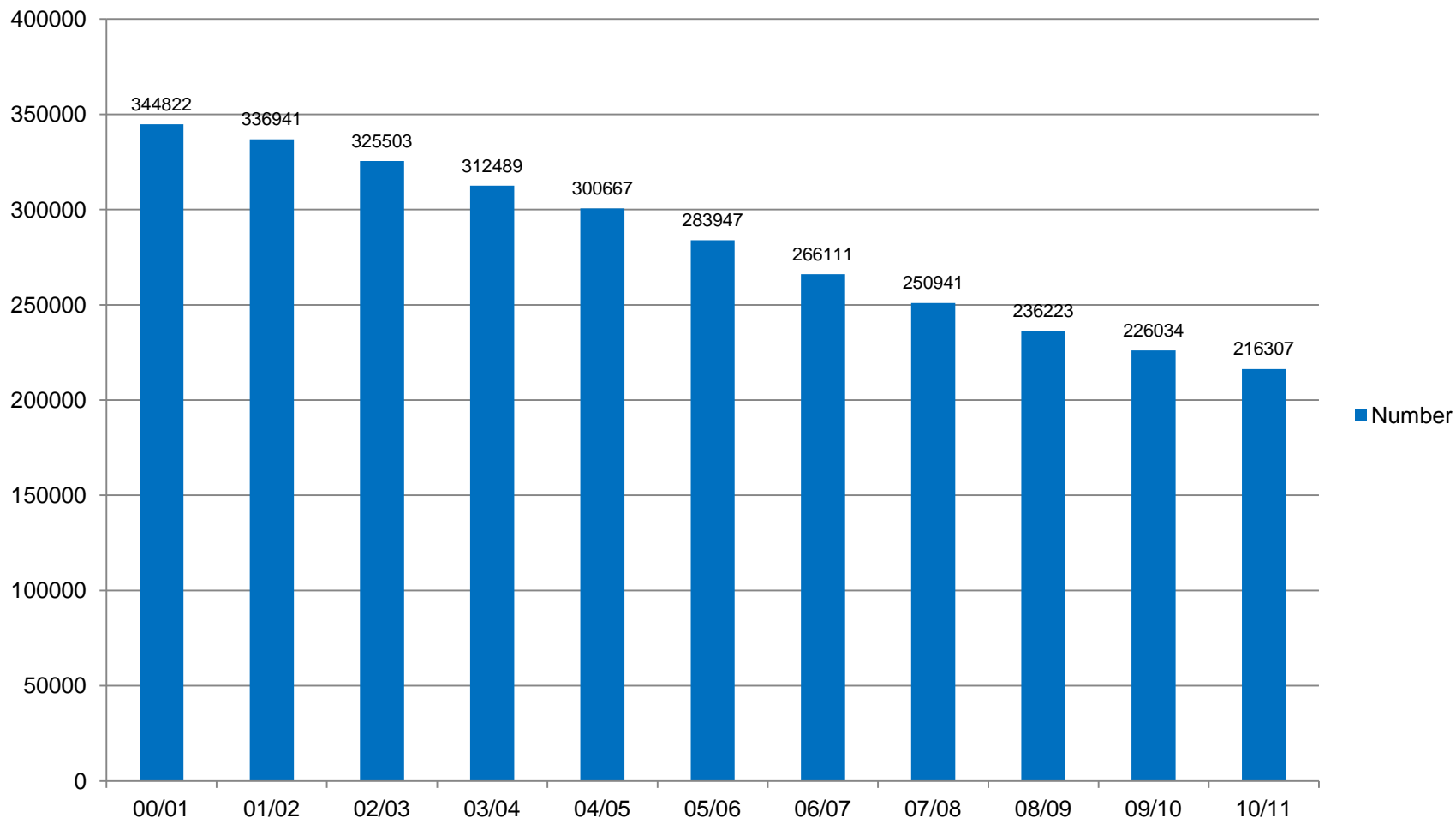
Areas of activity of special education (2)

- the possibility to receive education in the most appropriate education institution is provided for each child with special needs by ensuring
 - the help of qualified specialists
 - acquisition of knowledge
 - development of social skills and practical skills
 - practical orientation in education
 - preparation for employment and integration into society
 - special correction and rehabilitation

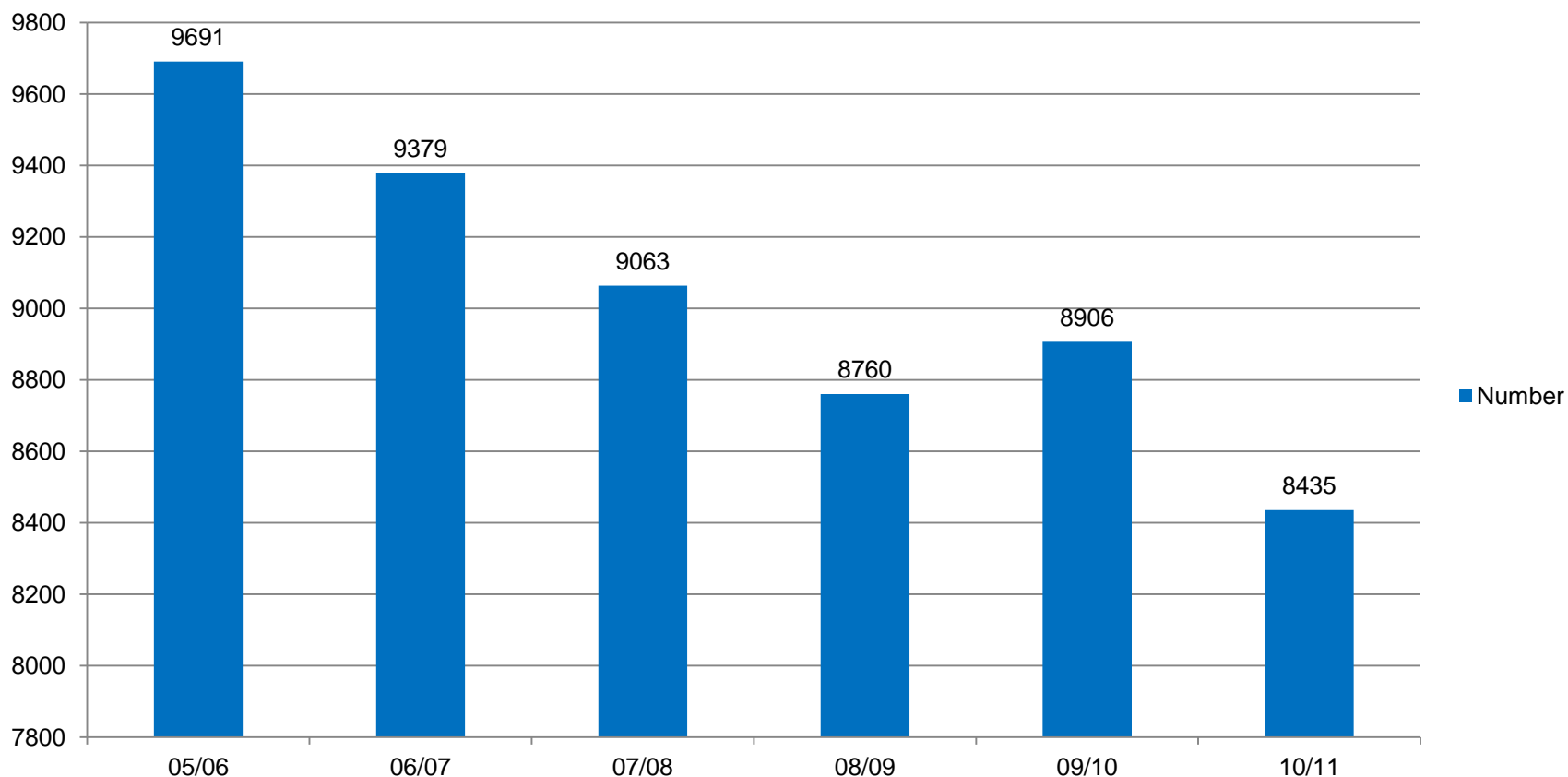
Data of pupils with SEN in compulsory education



Total number of learners in day schools (-128 515)



Number of learners in special schools and special classes (-1256)



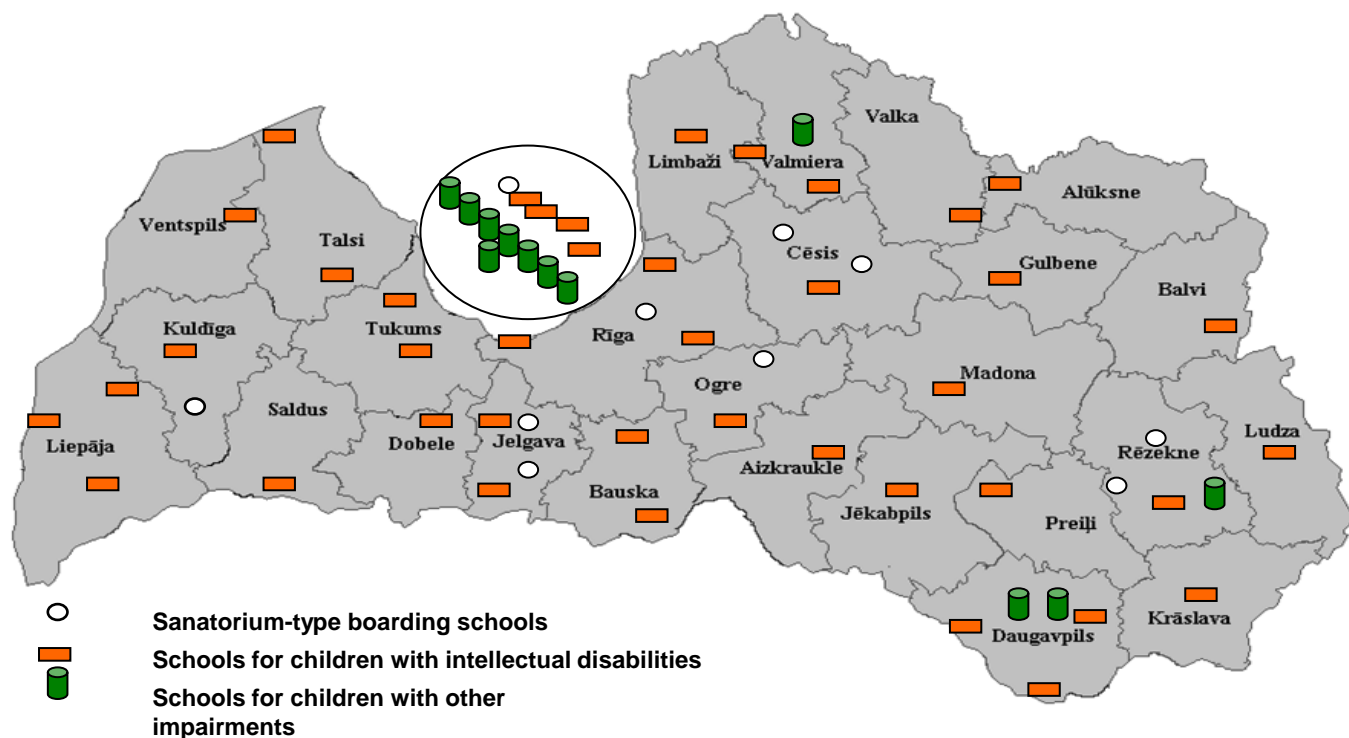
From the school year 2005/2006 the number of pupils has decreased

- in mainstream schools by **24%**
- in special schools and classes by **13%**

Network of special education institutions (1)

- programmes of special education may be provided by state, municipal and private special education institutions or general education institutions
- in the school year of 2010/11 there were 62 special education institutions founded by the state and municipalities, out of them
 - in Riga – 12
 - in the regions and towns of Latvia – 50

Network of special education institutions in 2011



Network of special education institutions (2)

- it is encouraged
 - to open special education classes in general education institutions that are close to the place of residence of children
 - to integrate/include learners with special needs in mainstream education institutions (if they have the required equipment and provision)
 - technical adaptation of education institutions to the needs of children with serious physical disabilities

To promote integration/inclusion of learners with special needs:

- Support measures and accommodations are allowed in state tests and examinations (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers)
- Financing that follows learners with special needs is higher (1,6)

State guarantees for special education (1)

The state guarantees and ensures

- the acquisition of general education appropriate to the health condition and type of disability of the student with special needs
- the possibility that children with special needs can be involved in the programmes of special education following a statement from Pedagogical Medical Commission

State guarantees for special education (2)

The state guarantees and ensures

- the financing from national budget for the education of all children with special needs, benchmarking funding for the institutions of special education
- the financing of teacher salaries and maintenance costs of special education institutions from national budget
- gradual integration/inclusion of students with special needs into mainstream education institutions

Development tendencies of special education (1)

In order to facilitate that all students with special needs can access education at the place of their residence or close to it, the main future tasks are the following:

- establishment of national and regional support system for special education
- extended functions of municipal Pedagogical Medical Commissions, providing methodological and practical support to teachers and parents of children with special needs, as well as other stakeholders

Development tendencies of special education (2)

- facilitating the establishment of special education classes in general mainstream education institutions
- activities promoting the establishment of psychologically, socially (transport network) and technically suitable environment

Issues to be solved for including the children with special needs in mainstream education institutions (1)

- psychological readiness of the teaching staff, students and their parents in mainstream education institutions to welcome children with special needs
- technical suitability of mainstream education institutions for children with special needs
- professional readiness of teachers to work with children with special needs

Issues to be solved for including the children with special needs in general mainstream education institutions (2)

- financial provision for the implementation of support measures required for children with special needs
- provision of transport services for children with special needs
- acquiring a vocation or profession within the system of vocational education and training

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