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Education in the News brings together a range of recent education news items collected from European and international education websites, Ministry websites and other publications. The bulletin comprises two sections: Europe and International.

Direct links, correct at the time of going to press, have been given where possible. Otherwise the nearest point of entry to the source website is given. Sources are in English unless otherwise stated.

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Europe

France

Finance bill to support new Government priorities

Press release setting out planned expenditure on school education in France. The 2013 budget is the first instalment of a three-year budget which reveals how the new Government's priorities will be implemented. The budget allows for an increase in the number of students recruited for initial teacher training. It ensures that, for the first time in several years, there will be no reduction in teacher–student ratios in 2013. This allows for improved support for the most vulnerable children and disadvantaged schools. The budget increases the funds available for pupil support in lower and upper secondary school (*collège* and *lycée* scholarships) and for providing individual support for pupils with special educational needs.

Source	Ministry of Education, France http://www.education.gouv.fr
Title	Projet de loi de finances 2013
Located at/on	http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid61638/projet-de-loi-de-finances-2013.html (09/10/2012)
See also	http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid61645/budget-2013-donner-a-l-ecole-les-moyens-de-sa-refondation.html for further education budget information

Hungary

Daily physical education lessons

Pupils in Grades 1, 5 and 9 (ages 6–7, 10–11 and 14–15) will receive daily physical education classes. The requirement comes into effect from the beginning of the 2012/13 school year under a new Act of Public Education. In subsequent years, the provision will extend to all school grades. The change is most significant in lower secondary education, where twice as many classes will now be devoted to PE each week. Schools may offer alternative forms of physical activity, such as dance and horse-riding, in addition to the more traditional sports. To facilitate this initiative, 1 000 Grade 1 teachers have received government-financed in-service training, developed with input from the Hungarian Association of Athletics.

Source Eurypedia
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/>
Title Students will soon do sports on a daily basis in Hungarian schools, 11. 9. 2012
Located at/on <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/News>
(11/09/2012)

Ireland

Changes to Junior Certificate

Press release announcing a radical reform of the Junior Certificate, the examination taken at the end of compulsory education. Junior Certificate examinations will be replaced with a school-based model of assessment, with an emphasis on the quality of the students' learning experience. The changes will be phased in, beginning with English for first year students (ages 12–13) in 2014. The State Examinations Commission (SEC) will be involved in the assessment of English, Irish and mathematics in the initial years, in recognition of the central role these subjects play. The SEC and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment will also provide materials to schools to assist in ongoing assessment of students' progress and achievement.

This school-based model of assessment is just one element of the changes. From 2014, students in second year (ages 13–14) will sit standardised tests in English reading and maths, and Irish reading in Irish-medium schools. From 2016, standardised testing in science will also be included.

Source Department of Education and Skills, Ireland
<http://www.education.ie/>
Title Minister Quinn announces major reform of the Junior Certificate
Located at/on <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2012-Press-Releases/PR12-10-04.html> (16/10/2012)
See also <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus> for 'A Framework for Junior Cycle'

Italy

Revised curriculum guidelines issued

The Ministry of Education, Universities and Research has established new curriculum guidelines for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education, to be applied across all Italian schools from the school year 2012/13. The main differences include:

- a focus on key competences (as defined by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union) which must be taken into account when planning curricular activities
- reinforced references to the Italian Constitution
- using the Common European Reference Framework for Languages to measure student attainment in foreign language learning.

Source	Eurypedia https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/
Title	Italy: New 2012 curriculum guidelines for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education
Located at/on	https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/News (15/10/2012)
See also	http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/Linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp for the Common European Reference Framework for Languages

The Netherlands

Special education reform: appropriate education

The Senate of the Dutch Parliament has passed the Appropriate Education Bill to reform provision for additional support. The legislation will impose a duty of care on schools to provide every pupil with an education appropriate to his or her needs, regardless of the kind of support required. Collaboration within regional consortia will facilitate this provision. Parents of children with special needs will have the right to register their child at the school of their choice. The 'Appropriate Education' policy has been developed over recent years to streamline provision and funding arrangements and to avoid children getting 'lost in the system'.

Source	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Netherlands http://www.minocw.nl
Title	Passend onderwijs gaat definitief door
Located at/on	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ocw/nieuws/2012/10/09/passend-onderwijs-gaat-definitief-door.html (09/10/2012)

Norway

Educational spending priorities

The government has announced its spending plans for education in a press release on the 2013 national budget. Funding priorities include:

- recruitment, research and staff training for kindergartens
- the introduction, from autumn 2012, of a weekly voluntary cultural education lesson in primary school and after-school clubs for pupils in Years 1–4 (ages 6–9/10)
- making lower secondary school education (ages 13–16) more practical and varied, introducing optional subjects in Year 9 (ages 14–15) from autumn 2013
- investing in training teachers in classroom management, as well as in reading, writing and arithmetic
- a four-year trial of increasing teacher numbers to collect evidence on the impact of additional teachers
- the continuation of the *Ny GIV* (New Possibilities) programme, a national project to increase successful completion in upper secondary education and training (ages 16–19) from 70 to 75 per cent.

Source Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research
<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kd.html?id=586>

Title Education given high priority: NOK 1.9 billion in extra funding

Located at/on <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kd/press-contacts/Press-releases/2012/education-given-high-priority-nok-19-bil.html?id=701282>
(09/10/2012)

Poland

Poland introduces charter of students' rights

Poland has introduced a 'Charter of Students' Rights' as part of higher education reforms which took effect on 1 October 2012. The Charter sets out 10 points to protect the interests of students in higher education. All students who have passed the end-of-upper-secondary *Matura* examination, have equal opportunities to access higher education courses (which are free of tuition fees). Students must be the key focus of higher education institutions' activities and are protected by a legal agreement between themselves and the higher education institution.

Source Eurypedia
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/>

Title Poland introduces charter of student rights

Located at/on <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/News>
(15/10/2012)

Sweden

Two new teaching positions introduced

The Ministry of Education is introducing two new developmental career steps for Swedish teachers.

- 'First teachers' will lead teaching in their subject, coach colleagues and take responsibility for student teachers in their school.
- 'Lecturers' will develop wider pedagogical knowledge among their colleagues and undertake educational research.

Grants will be made to school principals who employ teachers on these grades and the teachers themselves will receive increased salaries. It is intended to begin implementing the reform in July 2013 and complete it by 2016.

Source	Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2063/
Title	Karriärtjänster för lärare och statsbidrag för höjda lärarlöner
Located at/on	http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/15615/a/200035 (09/10/2012)
See also	http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/20/00/56/a03004b2.pdf for a memorandum (in Swedish) setting out proposals for career steps for teachers

United Kingdom

England

Changes to qualifications at age 16 announced

The Government announced to Parliament that the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) - the single subject qualification gained at the end of compulsory education (currently 16) - is to be abolished. New qualifications in core academic subjects called 'English baccalaureate certificates' will be introduced. Success in English, mathematics, the sciences, a humanities subject and a language will mean that the student obtains the full 'English baccalaureate'. It is proposed that the first teaching of the certificates in English, maths and the sciences will begin in September 2015 with other subjects following.

Source	Department for Education (DfE), England http://www.education.gov.uk/
Title	Education Secretary Michael Gove's oral statement about the reform of Key Stage 4 exams
Located at/on	http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00213908/oral-statement-ks4-exam-reform (16/10/2012)

Northern Ireland

Bill to reform administration of education introduced

Press release announcing that the Education Bill, which will reform education administration in Northern Ireland, has been introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Bill makes provision for the five Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Staff Commission for the Education and Library Boards to be merged into a single Education and Skills Authority (ESA). ESA will come into being in 2013.

Source	Northern Ireland Executive http://www.northernireland.gov.uk
Title	Education Bill introduced to Assembly
Located at/on	http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-de/news-de-021012-education-bill-introduced.htm (09/10/2012)
See also	https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-Northern-Ireland:Administration_and_Governance_at_Local_and/or_Institutional_Level for information on the current administration arrangements at local level in Northern Ireland

Wales

Review of curriculum and assessment arrangements

Statutory national curriculum frameworks and annual testing for literacy and numeracy will come into force in September 2013. In view of these significant changes, the Minister for Education and Skills has announced a review of wider assessment arrangements, including the reliability of teacher assessment and how assessment data is used and reported. In addition, the 'subject orders' of each National Curriculum subject will be reviewed to ensure that the expectations of what pupils should know and be able to do are sufficiently demanding and in line with those of the new frameworks.

Source	Department for Education and Skills (DFES) Wales http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en
Title	Review of assessment and the National Curriculum in Wales
Located at/on	http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2012/curriculumreview/?lang=en (09/10/2012)

National Numeracy Programme published

A National Numeracy Programme (NNP) has been launched by the Minister for Education and Skills, setting out the actions that will be taken by the Government to improve numeracy standards over the next five years. The actions are focused around the following four themes:

- raising the numeracy standards of all pupils
- breaking the cycle of underachievement in numeracy in Wales
- raising the competence and confidence of teachers in teaching numeracy
- improving social attitudes and behaviours around numeracy.

Improving standards will be achieved through: targeted support and intervention for pupils; support for teachers' professional development; the sharing and consistent use of best practice; a statutory National Literacy and Numeracy Framework; and national numeracy tests for all learners in Years 2 to 9 (ages 6–14), giving teachers, parents and carers a more accurate picture of a pupil's ability.

Source Department for Education and Skills (DFES) Wales
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

Title New national programme to drive up numeracy standards in our schools

Located at/on <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/educationandskills/2012/120926nnp/?lang=en>
(15/10/2012)

See also <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/120921nnpguideen.pdf>
for the National Numeracy Programme

Improving schools

The Minister for Education and Skills has launched a new national implementation plan for education for 3- to 16-year-olds. The plan, 'Improving schools', describes the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in improving standards of education. In his 'Teaching Makes a Difference' speech in 2011, the Minister outlined a twenty-point plan of action to drive up standards and performance in education in Wales. The actions set out in this new plan build on that speech and the School Effectiveness Framework and aim to improve levels of literacy and numeracy, and reduce the impact of deprivation.

Source Department for Education and Skills (DFES) Wales
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

Title Plan sets course for education reform until 2015

Located at/on <http://new.wales.gov.uk/newsroom/educationandskills/2012/planeducationreform/?lang=en> (10/10/2012)

See also <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/news/sitenews/improvingschools/?lang=en>
for the 'Improving schools' plan



International Supplement October 2012

The articles in this supplement have been collected in the process of the NFER's work in maintaining and developing the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks (INCA) Internet archive (<http://www.inca.org.uk>). INCA, which is supported by the Department for Education, provides regularly updated descriptions of government policy on education in Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and Wales. It makes particular reference to the curriculum, assessment and initial teacher training frameworks in place.

Australia

National plan for school improvement launched

'Better Schools', the National Plan for School Improvement, is intended to ensure that every Australian child receives a world-class education, regardless of where they live, the school they attend, or their family background. It aims to make sure that Australia is among the top five countries in the world in reading, writing and maths by 2025. Phased in over six years from 2014, it includes:

- a new school funding model
- more training for teachers and principals and ongoing professional development and support for them throughout their careers
- help for schools to improve results
- extra support for the students who need it most, such as children with disabilities and children from low income families
- more information for parents and the community about school performance, including success stories and updates.

Source Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Australia

<http://www.deewr.gov.au>

Title The National Plan for School Improvement

Located at/on <http://www.betterschools.gov.au/> (09/10/2012)

See also factsheets for the plan and its five key areas, available at <http://www.betterschools.gov.au/fact-sheets>

Queensland

New child safety curriculum developed

The Department of Education, Training and Employment has developed the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum for Queensland students. The curriculum is available to all Queensland schools and aims to teach children about personal safety and awareness, including cyber-safety and phone safety, by focusing on three key messages:

- Recognise - students should be aware of their surroundings and recognise warning clues
- React - students are helped to consider choices that may keep them safe or make them safe again
- Report - students are encouraged to report unsafe incidents to an adult.

Source Queensland Education Department
<http://education.qld.gov.au/>
Title Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum
Located at/on <http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/school-life/child-safety-curriculum.html>
(09/10/2012)

New category of school to increase school autonomy

Press release announcing the names of the first 26 (of 120) Independent Public Schools. These will open at the beginning of the next academic year in January 2013. The Queensland Government has decided to introduce independent public schools to give schools greater autonomy in decision making, cut red tape and remove layers of management to improve outcomes for students. Such schools will have more opportunities to cater to the needs and expectations of their local community by working closely with their school council and have greater freedom, including more flexibility over the curriculum. They will have access to the same support as other Queensland state schools and be expected to maintain the same core values. The Government will provide a one-off \$50 000 grant to assist schools in becoming Independent Public Schools and in the establishment of their school council.

Source Queensland Education Department
<http://education.qld.gov.au/>
Title Independent Public Schools
Located at/on <http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/independent-public-schools/index.html>
(09/10/2012)

Tasmania

Relationships and sexuality education strategy for government schools

The Relationships and Sexuality Education strategy, launched in September 2012, aims to provide a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate programme which encourages young people to adopt responsible and healthy sexual behaviours. It forms part of a long term strategy to improve health outcomes in the State. The Department of Education intends that the strategy will be implemented in all government schools for children and students from kindergarten to Year 12 (age 5 to 18) within two years.

Source Department of Education, Tasmania
<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/>
Title Relationships and sexuality education in Tasmanian government schools
Located at/on <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Relationships-and-Sexuality-Education-in-Tasmanian-Government-Schools.pdf> (09/10/2012)

Canada

Ontario

Making schools safe, inclusive and accepting

New legislation to make schools safe, inclusive and accepting places to learn was passed in June in Ontario. Under the 'Accepting Schools Act', school boards must take preventative measures against bullying, ensure that there are tougher consequences for bullying and promote a positive school climate which is inclusive and accepting of all pupils. The legislation forms part of a wider action plan which also includes placing mental health workers in schools and the creation of an 'Accepting Schools Expert Panel' to provide advice on evidence-informed resources and practices that focus on a whole school approach, including bullying prevention and intervention.

Source Ministry of Education, Ontario
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>
Title Safe and Accepting Schools
Located at/on <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/safeschools.html> (25/10/2012)

Japan

Dealing with school bullies

The Education Ministry has published guidelines for a more comprehensive approach to dealing with school bullying. The Ministry plans to start designating experts such as lawyers, former police officers and psychiatrists as special advisers. The advisers will offer opinions on how to prevent and handle bullying incidents. Local boards of education will launch similar initiatives.

Source Daily Yomiuri
<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp>
Title Antibullying guidelines released/Designated special advisers to provide expert advice on handling incidents
Located at/on <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120906004559.htm> (10/09/2012)

New Zealand

Review of home-based early childhood education

The New Zealand Government has announced a review of home-based early childhood education. The review seeks to ensure that home-based early childhood education (ECE) aligns with the Government's broader goals and priorities for ECE. If it does not, changes in regulations, licensing practices and funding may be required. The review is in response to recommendations made in reports by the ECE Taskforce and two Sector Advisory Groups, which were established to focus on improving the quality of ECE services. Their reports found that a review of home-based services has the potential to raise overall quality and improve the accountability of home-based networks. The review is expected to be completed in April 2013.

Source Beehive.govt.nz - Official website of the New Zealand Government
<http://www.beehive.govt.nz>

Title Review of home-based early childhood education

Located at/on <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/review-home-based-early-childhood-education> (09/10/2012)

First national standards data published

National Standards achievement data for individual schools has been published for the first time. National standards, which began in 2008, aim to show children's abilities in reading, writing and maths and to help identify children who may be struggling. The data will be used to promote discussion of how schools are performing in targeting the children at primary and intermediate schools who need additional support.

Source Beehive.govt.nz - Official website of the New Zealand Government
<http://www.beehive.govt.nz>

Title National Standards data now online

Located at/on <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/national-standards-data-now-online> (09/10/2012)

See also <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/find-a-school> where National Standards data is available on the Education Counts website

Bill will help improve education success for young New Zealanders

The Ministry of Education introduced the Education Amendment Bill on the 15 October. One of the key provisions of the Bill is to set out the legal framework for the introduction of a new type of school, Partnership Schools (*Kura Hourua*). They will be accountable to the Crown for raising student achievement through a contract to deliver a range of specified school-level targets. The contract will be with a sponsor who can run the school not for profit or for profit.

Amongst other provisions the Bill

- aims to safeguard learners by establishing clear surrender and retention policies for schools (including allowing principals and teachers to search students and confiscate students' mobile phones and other electronic devices)
- supports the provision of early childhood education by enabling the Ministry of Education to assign a National Student Number to children under 6 years of age
- requires schools to publish annual financial statements online.

The Bill is currently passing through parliament and is due to report in April 2013.

Source Ministry of Education, New Zealand
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz>
Title Education Amendment Bill 2012
Located at/on <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInNewZealand/EducationLegislation/EducationAmendmentBills/EducationAmendmentBill2012.aspx>
(22/10/2012)

South Africa

Study guides to help learners prepare for school leaving examinations

The Department of Basic Education has released the 'Mind the Gap' series of study guides for learners preparing for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) taken at age 18. The series, available in both English and Afrikaans, aims to assist learners who have been underperforming due to lack of exposure to the content requirements of the curriculum. Each of the 'Mind the Gap' study guides provide explanations of key terminology and simple explanations and examples of the types of questions that learners can expect to be asked in an exam. Model answers are included to assist learners in building their understanding. The first study guides published cover life sciences, accounting, economics and geography.

Source Department of Basic Education, South Africa
<http://www.education.gov.za/>
Title Department of Basic Education releases Grade 12 study guides
Located at/on <http://www.education.gov.za/Newsroom/MediaReleases/tabid/347/ctl/Details/mid/1930/ItemID/3456/Default.aspx> (09/10/2012)

USA

Wisconsin

Wisconsin college and career readiness tests

Press release announcing that ACT college admissions tests will be introduced in Wisconsin public high schools. (ACT tests are a standardized test of high school achievement and college admissions in the United States produced by ACT, Inc.) All students in Grade 9 (ages 14–15), Grade 10 (ages 15–16) and Grade 11 (ages 16–17) will be required to take the test. The ACT will measure a student's college and career readiness and aims to be implemented in the 2014/15 school year. It will also replace the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) in Grade 10 for mathematics, reading and English language arts. This proposal forms part of the 2013-15 education budget for Wisconsin.

Source Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us>
Title Evers to request ACT suite for high school accountability and career planning
Located at/on http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_98.pdf (19/09/2012)