

Issue 69

June 2012

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.

Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. Eurydice at NFER is the national Eurydice unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For more information about Eurydice publications and our enquiry service for education policy makers in local and central government, please contact us:

eurydice@nfer.ac.uk
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/eurydice>

France

Priorities of the new French Government

Newspaper article outlining some of the key education priorities following the election of a socialist Government in France. The new Government has announced plans to:

- overturn, from 2013, the changes to the *rythmes scolaires* (organisation of the school week) introduced in 2008 which reduced the number of hours of schooling and provided extra time for catch-up classes
- create 60 000 jobs in schools over five years
- implement changes to teacher training.

Further decisions about education priorities will be announced in July after national consultation.

Source	Le Progrès http://www.leprogres.fr/
Title	Education. Réforme de l'école primaire: Peillon se prononcera fin juillet
Located at/on	http://www.leprogres.fr/france-monde/2012/05/23/reforme-de-l-ecole-primaire-peillon-se-proncera-fin-juillet (29/05/2012)

Germany

Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications

The Law of Recognition entered into effect on 1 April 2012. For the first time, this legislation gives those with vocational/job-specific qualifications acquired in another country the right to the recognition of their qualifications in Germany. This applies to everyone, regardless of country of origin and, within three months of presentation of the required papers.

The law aims to ensure, for example, that qualified doctors from overseas can work as doctors in Germany and do not have to seek alternative means of employment. It is estimated that around 300 000 people will benefit from the new law. An internet portal has been developed to guide applicants to the authority responsible for the recognition procedure in each trade or profession.

Source	Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany http://www.bmbf.de/
Title	Recognition Act comes into force
Located at/on	http://www.bmbf.de/press/3253.php (in German) (23/05/2012)
See also	http://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/ for Recognition in Germany (the internet portal mentioned above)

Hungary

Religious education to be introduced in all schools

From the beginning of September 2013, pupils in primary schools (including those not run by the state) must attend either an ethics class or a religious education class each week. The content of ethics classes will be set out in the new National Core Curriculum which comes into force on that date and classes will be taught by school teachers who will have received 60 hours of training. Religious education classes will be provided by church teachers from outside the school and parents will be able to choose from classes offered by several churches registered in Hungary. The churches will be responsible for the content of the religious education curriculum and are currently discussing the organisation of religious education with the Government.

Source	Politics.hu - Hungary's non-partisan international political daily http://www.politics.hu
Title	Government pressing ahead with religion classes at all schools, support for Hungarian-language nurseries in neighbouring countries
Located at/on	http://www.politics.hu/20120423/government-pressing-ahead-with-religion-classes-at-all-schools-support-for-hungarian-language-nurseries-in-neighboring-countries/ (24/04/2012)
See also	http://www.kormany.hu/download/c/c3/90000/MK_12_066_NAT.pdf for official information on the new curriculum (in Hungarian)

Iceland

Values a key component of new curriculum

New national curriculum guides for pre-primary, compulsory and upper secondary education have been devised, in accordance with the principles of the 2008 legislation which is remodelling the school education system. They also reflect changes in society resulting from the economic crisis. Six 'fundamentals of education' have been introduced to ensure that individual and social values in public education are integrated at all levels of schooling. They are as follows:

- literacy
- sustainability
- democracy
- equality
- health and welfare
- creativity.

The 'fundamentals' are integrated into curriculum guides. In addition, during school inspections, an assessment must be made of the impact the 'fundamentals' have had on teaching, play and study, and the management of the school.

Source	Eurypedia – the European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php?title=Home
Title	Iceland: The National Curriculum Guide – Six Fundamentals
Located at/on	https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/News (25/06/12)
See also	https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Iceland:Overview for further information in Eurypedia on these reforms and the education system in Iceland

Ireland

New scholarship scheme for higher education students from disadvantaged backgrounds

The Minister for Education and Skills has announced the establishment of a new scholarship scheme for higher education aimed solely at students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The new scheme replaces all existing scholarship schemes. Fixed bursary awards of 2 000 Euros will be awarded to recognise high achievement of students from disadvantaged families who attend schools which are part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. The DEIS programme provides a comprehensive support package to the most disadvantaged schools and supports other schools in line with the level of disadvantage among their pupils. These bursaries will be augmented by a small number of bursaries focussed on students who undertake studies in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Source	Department of Education and Skills, Ireland http://www.education.ie/
Title	11 April, 2012 - Minister Quinn announces new scholarship scheme
Located at/on	http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=10861&pcategory=10861&ecategory=10876&sectionpage=12251&language=EN&link=link001&page=1&doc=57022 (23/05/2012)

United Kingdom

England

Vision for cultural education

In 2011, the Government asked Darren Henley, the managing director of a national classical music radio station, to carry out a review of cultural education. This followed the review of music education he undertook during 2010 and addresses the Government's ambition for every child to have the chance to experience a wide variety of high-quality cultural experiences. The recommendations of the review have now been published alongside the Government's response, which will develop into a National Plan for Cultural Education setting out priorities and aspirations in this area. Measures already announced following the review include a new joint Ministerial Board between the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), a new National Youth Dance Company, and national art and design Saturday clubs.

Source	Department for Education (DfE), England http://www.education.gov.uk
Title	Vision for cultural education will inspire all children and enrich lives
Located at/on	http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00204075/vision-for-cultural-education-will-inspire-all-children-and-enrich-lives (08/03/2012)
See also	http://www.dcms.gov.uk/publications/8875.aspx for the review and Government response

Reforms to special educational needs provision outlined in Queen's Speech

The Queen's Speech at the recent State Opening of Parliament announced the Children and Families Bill, which will introduce a range of reforms relating to adoption, parental rights and family justice. It also provides the legislative basis for taking forward the Government's plans for special education. The reforms for special education include:

- introducing a streamlined and quicker single assessment process which will better involve children and young people and their families
- introducing education, health and care plans for 0- to 25-year-olds which will replace 'statements of special educational needs' in compulsory education and 'learning difficulty assessments' for 16- to 25-year-olds
- giving parents or young people with education, health and care plans the right to a personal budget to buy in the services they choose
- requiring education, health and social care services to plan services together
- requiring local authorities to publish a 'local offer' showing the support available to disabled children and young people and those with SEN, and their families.

The Children and Families Bill is expected to be introduced in 2013 and the reforms will take effect in 2014, subject to parliamentary approval.

Source	Department for Education (DfE), England www.education.gov.uk
Title	Families to be given personal budgets for special educational needs support
Located at/on	http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00209040/changes-to-sen-support-for-2014 (16/05/2012)
See also	https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027 for Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability – the Green Paper in which these plans were first discussed and http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/queens-speech-2012 for the Queen's Speech 2012

New National Council for Careers

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has established a National Council for Careers. The Council provides a forum in which experts from business and the careers sector can review the progress and impact of the National Careers Service, launched in April 2012. The Council is intended to be a driving force for excellence in careers guidance and will provide independent, expert advice to the Government on the future development of the National Careers Service. The National Careers Service provides information and advice for approximately 370 000 young people through the use of a helpline and website, offers face to face advice to 700 000 adults each year and provides detailed sector by sector labour market information, so that people can discover which industries are growing in their area.

Source	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), England http://www.bis.gov.uk/
Title	New National Council to raise standards of careers advice
Located at/on	http://news.bis.gov.uk/Press-Releases/New-National-Council-to-raise-standards-of-careers-advice-679d9.aspx (23/05/2012)
See also	http://news.bis.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=424017&NewsAreaID=2 for the BIS press release

New framework for the early years

A slimmed down and more focused Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 0-5 has been published. The new EYFS, which will take effect from the beginning of September 2012, focuses on getting children ready for education and increasing the attainment of all children, particularly those from deprived backgrounds.

The revised curriculum reduces the number of early learning goals from 69 to 17, gives more focus to the main areas of learning that are most essential for children's healthy development and simplifies assessment at age five. It also provides earlier intervention for children who need extra help through a progress check at age two.

Source	Department for Education (DfE), England http://www.education.gov.uk/
Title	New early years framework published
Located at/on	http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00205838/eyfsframework (23/05/2012)
See also	http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/eyfs%20statutory%20framework%20march%202012.pdf for the framework

Scotland

New National Qualifications announced

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has published the final assessment specifications for new National Qualifications for students from age 14 plus. The new qualifications, which are known as 'Nationals', have been developed to support Curriculum for Excellence. Changes are also being made to Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications and a number of new awards are being introduced. These will be phased in from the 2013-14 academic year, with full adoption by 2015-16.

Teachers and lecturers will assess the new courses and units at National 1 to National 4 (for 14- to 16-year-olds). SQA will check the assessments to make sure they meet national standards. Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels (taken by 16- to 18-year olds) will still include work that is assessed by teachers and lecturers, but learners will also have to pass a Course assessment for these qualifications – usually a question paper and/or coursework which will be marked by SQA. Only the higher level qualifications will be graded; the others will be assessed as pass or fail.

The new awards will provide young people with more ways to demonstrate their achievement at school and college. Some of the new Awards cover work from different subject areas, are shorter than traditional Courses, and recognise success across different levels of difficulty. The new awards, which will be available for schools and colleges in August 2012, will be marked and assessed by teachers and lecturers, and adhere to national standards. They will not have external assessment or exams.

Source	Scottish Government http://www.scotland.gov.uk
Title	Final documents
Located at/on	http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/57094.3346.html (08/05/2012)
See also	http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/57230.html for guides to the qualifications for different audiences (teachers, parents etc) and www.sqa.org.uk/scqf for the Scottish Qualifications Framework, showing the differences between the new and existing qualifications

Wales

Bill to strengthen school standards laid by Minister

A Bill to strengthen schools standards and reduce complexity and bureaucracy has been introduced in Wales. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Bill:

- provides a clearer process for school intervention and drives up school improvement through the introduction of statutory guidance
- reforms the statutory process for school organisation, so that decisions are taken locally wherever possible
- removes the requirement for school governing bodies to hold annual parents' meetings and introduces a new right for parents to call meetings with school governing bodies
- gives local authorities and schools greater flexibility over the pricing of school meals
- mainstreams several grant-funded programmes to help streamline current processes
- makes local authorities accountable for planning Welsh-medium provision by making Welsh in education strategic plans statutory.

Source	Department for Education and Skills (DFES) Wales http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en
Title	Bill to strengthen school standards laid by Minister
Located at/on	http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/educationandskills/2012/120423edbill/?lang=en (17/05/2012)
See also	http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=3633 to follow the progress of the Bill

National literacy programme published

In June 2011, the Welsh Education Minister announced that a National Literacy and Numeracy Framework for learners aged 5 to 14 was to be introduced in schools. It will be on a non-statutory basis from September 2012, becoming a statutory part of the National Curriculum in Wales in September 2013.

An overarching National Literacy Programme was published in May 2012 setting out the Welsh Government's plans to improve literacy over the next five years. Actions within the programme are grouped around the following four themes:

- setting national expectations and standards
- greater support and development
- stronger targeted interventions
- greater accountability and challenge.

Other measures include the introduction of statutory annual reading tests for 5- to 14-year-olds and a national approach to teachers' professional development in literacy, through initial teacher training, induction and continuing professional development. The National Numeracy Programme is currently in development and will be published in September 2012.

Source	Welsh Government http://www.wales.gov.uk
Title	Wales' National Literacy Programme
Located at/on	http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/articles/educationandskills/120510nlp/?lang=en (23/05/2012)
See also	http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/160512nlprogrammeen.pdf for the National Literacy Framework



International Supplement June 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

Outline of civics and citizenship curriculum released

Press release announcing the publication of the 'Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship' paper. Within the process of developing a National Curriculum for Australia, a shape paper provides broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of a curriculum subject. It will guide the writing of the Foundation to Year 12 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship. The paper envisages that civics and citizenship will be compulsory for students in years 3 to 8 (ages 8 to 14), and optional for students in years 9 and 10 (ages 14 to 16) and be built around three themes: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, sustainability, and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. Underpinning these is a commitment to liberal democratic values, civic duty and a multicultural and multi-faith society. The final version will be published by the end of 2013. Currently, citizenship is not a standalone subject but is covered in other subjects.

Source	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority http://www.acara.edu.au
Title	Curriculum development process for the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship
Located at/on	http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/civics_and_citizenship_1.html (06/06/2012)
See also	http://www.acara.edu.au/development_of_the_australian_curriculum.html for further information about the development of the National Curriculum for Australia

Queensland

Priorities of the newly elected Queensland Government

A new Government was elected in Queensland earlier this year. The Premier has set out his priorities for the Minister for Education, Training and Employment in a remit letter. They include the following:

- establishing a Skills and Training Taskforce to reform skills and training and ensure accountability, value for money, and increased completion rates

- establishing a framework for the Queensland Schools Plan Commission and the Building our Future Schools Program
- changing the Board of Skills Queensland to an industry led body
- ensuring the successful move of Year 7 (children aged 12 to13) from primary schools to high school.

Source Queensland Government
<http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/>
Title Minister for Education, Training and Employment - Charter letter
Located at/on <http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/ministers.aspx> (31/05/2012)

Canada

Alberta

New Parent Advisory Council New Education Act passed

The Albertan Government has announced the establishment a Parent Advisory Council. It will be composed of 20 parents of different backgrounds and perspectives and enable parents to feed their ideas and perspectives into provincial education policy making. Council members will share information with other parents and seek their views on education priorities. They will also meet with the Education Minister a few times each year to provide local feedback and insight. The new council complements the Alberta School Councils' Association which is regarded as the official voice for parents in the public education system.

Source Ministry of Education, Alberta
<http://education.alberta.ca/>
Title Minister's Parent Advisory Council provides another opportunity for parents to be involved in education
Located at/on <http://alberta.ca/NewsFrame.cfm?ReleaseID=%2F201203%2F321372C17F0DF-0D8D-C7B0-46CD845B8618D07B.html#.T7kSGaY3duc.email> (23/05/2012)

British Columbia

New Education Act passed

The School Amendment Act 2012 introduces increased flexibility and greater scope for personalised learning into the education system in British Columbia. The Act extends the option of taking a mixture of online and traditional school courses to students from kindergarten through to Grade 9 (ages 5 to 15). Currently, only students in grades 10 to 12 (ages 15 to 18) have this option.

The Standard School Calendar is abolished, freeing boards of education and education authorities to be more creative in their timetabling, although the Ministry of Education will continue to set a minimum number of instructional hours. The changes reflect the drive for flexibility and choice set out in the Education Plan for British Columbia.

Source Ministry of Education, British Columbia
<http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/>
Title More choice, flexibility for B.C.'s education system
Located at/on http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2012EDUC0044-000548.htm (23/05/2012)
See also http://www.bcedplan.ca/assets/pdf/bc_edu_plan.pdf for British Columbia's Education Plan

Japan

Reforms to school education law to make it possible to complete high school in less time

The Japanese press has reported that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is considering introducing a system which will allow high-achieving high school students to graduate in two years rather than three and thus enrol earlier in universities. The academic year in Japan starts in April, rather than in the autumn, which can present an obstacle to Japanese students who wish to go to universities overseas and to overseas students who wish to study at Japanese universities. Early admission to universities is currently possible, although in practice it is a rarity, because students who opt to enter university early cannot obtain their high school graduation certificates.

Source The Daily Yomiuri
<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp>
Title High school students may get 2-yr graduation option
Located at/on <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120602003015.htm> (07/06/2012)

New Zealand

New priority areas for Ministry of Education

The Government has announced the next phase in the public sector reform programme, focused on reducing costs and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of government expenditure. Over the next five years, the Ministry of Education will lead on three of the 10 targets which are to:

- increase the participation of vulnerable children in early childhood education
- increase the proportion of 18-year-olds with national certificate of education achievement (NCEA) Level 2 or an equivalent qualification
- increase the proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds with advanced trade qualifications, diplomas and degrees (level 4 or above on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework).

Source Ministry of Education, New Zealand
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz>
Title The Ministry of Education's Statement of Intent 2012 - 2017
Located at/on <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/PublicationsAndResources/StatementOfIntent/SOI2012.aspx> (29/05/2012)
See also <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/> for the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

Singapore

Pilot project to improve outcomes for dyslexic children

Press release announcing plans to provide more specialised support for children with dyslexia in mainstream schools. In 2012 and 2013, 20 primary schools will participate in a pilot project which will provide children in Primary 3 (aged 8 to 9) with targeted support to help them read at the same levels as their peers by the end of Primary 4 (aged 9 to 10). The support (aligned to regular English language lessons) will be provided for small groups of students by specially training teachers. The specialist teachers will also help parents understand their child's needs and how specialised support could support these needs.

The press release also outlines measures which have been taken since 2005, to increase schools' capacity to identify and support students with mild special needs (including dyslexia, mild autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) through the deployment of specially trained teachers (Allied Educators (Learning & Behavioural Support) or AEDs (LBS)) and Teachers in Special Needs (TSNs). There are further plans to increase the capacity of special educational needs schools (SPED) and to streamline the applications and admissions process.

Source Ministry of Education, Singapore
<http://www.moe.gov.sg>

Title More Specialised Support for Students with Special Needs

Located at/on <http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2012/03/more-specialised-support-for-students-with-special-needs.php> (23/05/2012)

USA

First Green Ribbon Schools are announced

The Green Ribbon Schools award was announced by the U.S. Department of Education last year, to recognise schools achievement in the areas of environmental impact and health and education. The awards are intended to recognise high schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement. The first 78 Green Ribbon schools have been named and more will be named in the coming year. Initiatives implemented by these schools include;

- purchasing renewable energy and generating it on school premises
- use of green roofs, pervious pavement, rain gardens, rain barrels, rain cisterns, low-flow water equipment of all types
- running school buses on ultra-low sulphur diesel, compressed natural gas or the discarded cooking oils of local restaurants.

Source United States Department of Education
<http://www.ed.gov>

Title Presenting the First Green Ribbon Schools

Located at/on <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/04/presenting-the-first-green-ribbon-schools/> (26/04/2012)

Draft of new national science standards is released

The first public draft of the Next Generation Science Standards has been released for comment. The science standards have been developed by educators and experts in 26 states and are aimed at providing students across the United States with essential science knowledge, whilst also ensuring that they apply that learning through scientific inquiry and the engineering-design process to deepen their understanding. Adoption of the science standards is voluntary, but organisers hope they will be adopted by most, if not all, states. The second draft for consultation is due in autumn 2012. Major funding for developing the standards comes from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Source Education Week
<http://www.edweek.org>

Title Draft of new national science standards is released

Located at/on <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/05/11/31science.h31.html?tkn=XPMFRfENoub92vdelxs6gQ16FmK9UhiLPSP2&cmp=clp-sb-ascd> (16/05/2012)

Maryland

Maryland set to raise school attendance age to 18

Maryland is set to raise the compulsory participation age for students from 16 years to 18 years. The legislation necessary to enact this change has cleared both chambers in the Maryland General Assembly and just needs final approval by the Senate, which is expected imminently. Under the legislation, students would have to stay in school until turning 17, starting in July 2015. They would have to remain until their 18th birthday, starting in July 2017.

Source The Baltimore Sun
<http://articles.baltimoresun.com>
Title Maryland set to raise school attendance age to 18
Located at/on http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-04-06/news/bs-md-compulsory-20120406_1_attendance-age-state-students-maryland-state-department
(07/06/2012)

Social studies returns as a graduation requirement

The press reports that under new legislation, high school seniors (aged 17-18 years) will have to pass an assessment in social studies to be able to graduate. The test will be reinstated for the Class of 2017, having been discontinued in 2011. In addition to requiring reinstatement of the high school test, the legislation will require the state school board to adopt middle school assessments in core subjects, including social studies, starting with the 2014/15 school year. Social studies includes such topics as geography and basic financial literacy in elementary school, as well as government, and U.S. and world history in high school.

Source The Baltimore Sun
<http://www.baltimoresun.com>
Title Law puts social studies back in the limelight
Located at/on <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/breaking/bs-md-social-studies-signing-20120522,0,462323.story> (30/05/2012)