

# PISA 2012 and recent education policy in Finland

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# Principles of Finnish education: Equity as basis of the education policy

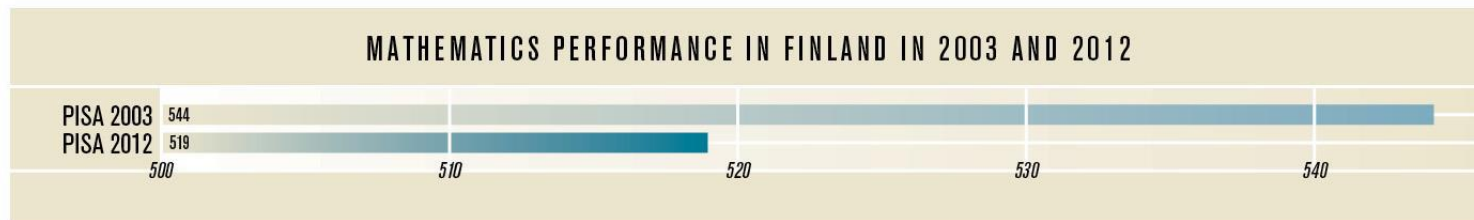
- Education is free at all levels.
- **Equal access** to high quality education and training for the whole age group
- Most education **publicly funded**. Basic and upper secondary level education are **maintained by local authorities or joint municipal boards**. Pre-primary and basic education is a part of municipal basic services, receiving statutory government transfers.
- **Potential of each pupil should be maximized:** educational guidance and right to educational support
- **Special needs education** provided primarily in the mainstream education

# More principles / characteristics

- **Local level autonomy is high:**
  - allocation of funding
  - national core curriculum leaves room for local curriculum variations
  - recruitment
  - decision on the level of autonomy of education providers
- **Teachers have Masters Degrees and a strong pedagogical autonomy on**
  - teaching methods
  - textbooks and materials
- **Quality assurance based steering instead of controlling**
  - steering through information, support, funding
  - self-evaluation of schools
  - no national tests for pupils in basic education
  - first national examination at the end of general upper secondary education
  - national evaluations of learning outcomes: regular but SAMPLE based
  - education provider receives own results for development purposes

# PISA 2012: Proficiency of Finnish youth declining

- Average mathematical literacy among Finnish school students ranked in twelfth place among the 65 participating countries in the PISA 2012 assessment. 2003, when mathematics was previously the focus of study, Finland came in second place.
- Finland is still among the best, but the national average score in mathematics has decreased significantly since the 2003 assessment.



- Reading and science literacy have also deteriorated markedly.

**This was already shown in earlier (national) assessments – actions already ongoing**

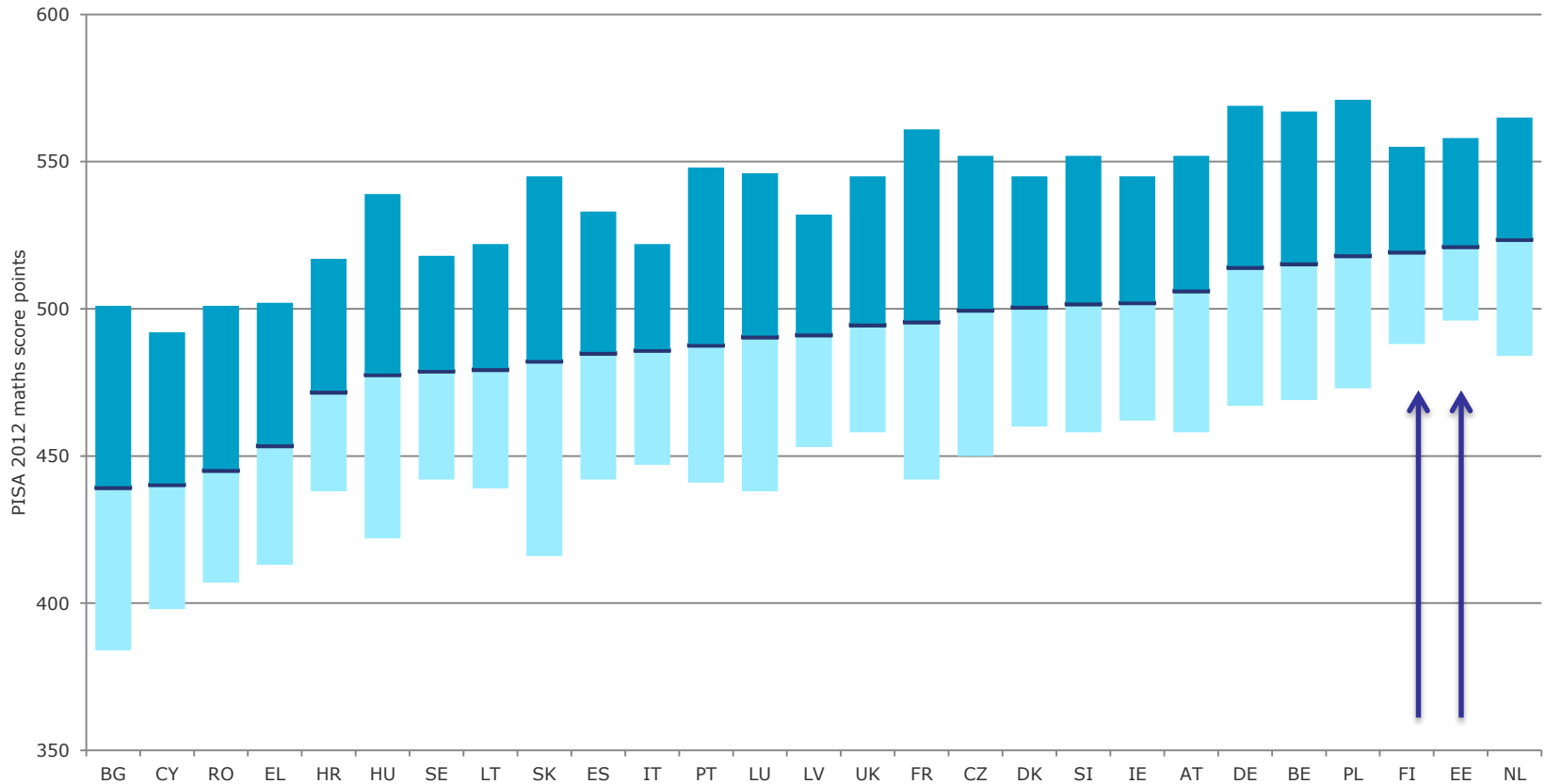
# Equity at risk

- Finnish strength earlier: equity of learning outcomes
- New trend: differences of learning outcome levels between pupils are growing
- Differences growing especially in:
  - socio-economical background: intergenerational transmission of education
  - gender (boys!)
  - differences between schools
  - migrant population
  - regional differences: Northern and Eastern Finland
  - signs of "school-shopping"

**The most vulnerable groups declining the most**

# Impact of socio-economic background in Mathematics

Source: OECD/PISA 2012



# Policy level actions for strengthening equity in education

The current Government Programme 2011-2015:

*Objective of the Finnish education policy is to guarantee all people – irrespective of their ethnic origin, background or wealth – equal opportunities and rights to culture, free quality education, and prerequisites for full citizenship.*

*The government aims to narrow the differences between the genders in learning outcomes, participation and completion of education and to reduce the intergenerational transmission of education.*

# Government funding reform

**A reform of the system of central government transfers to local government 2015 -**

**The funding provided to municipalities for the organisation of general education**

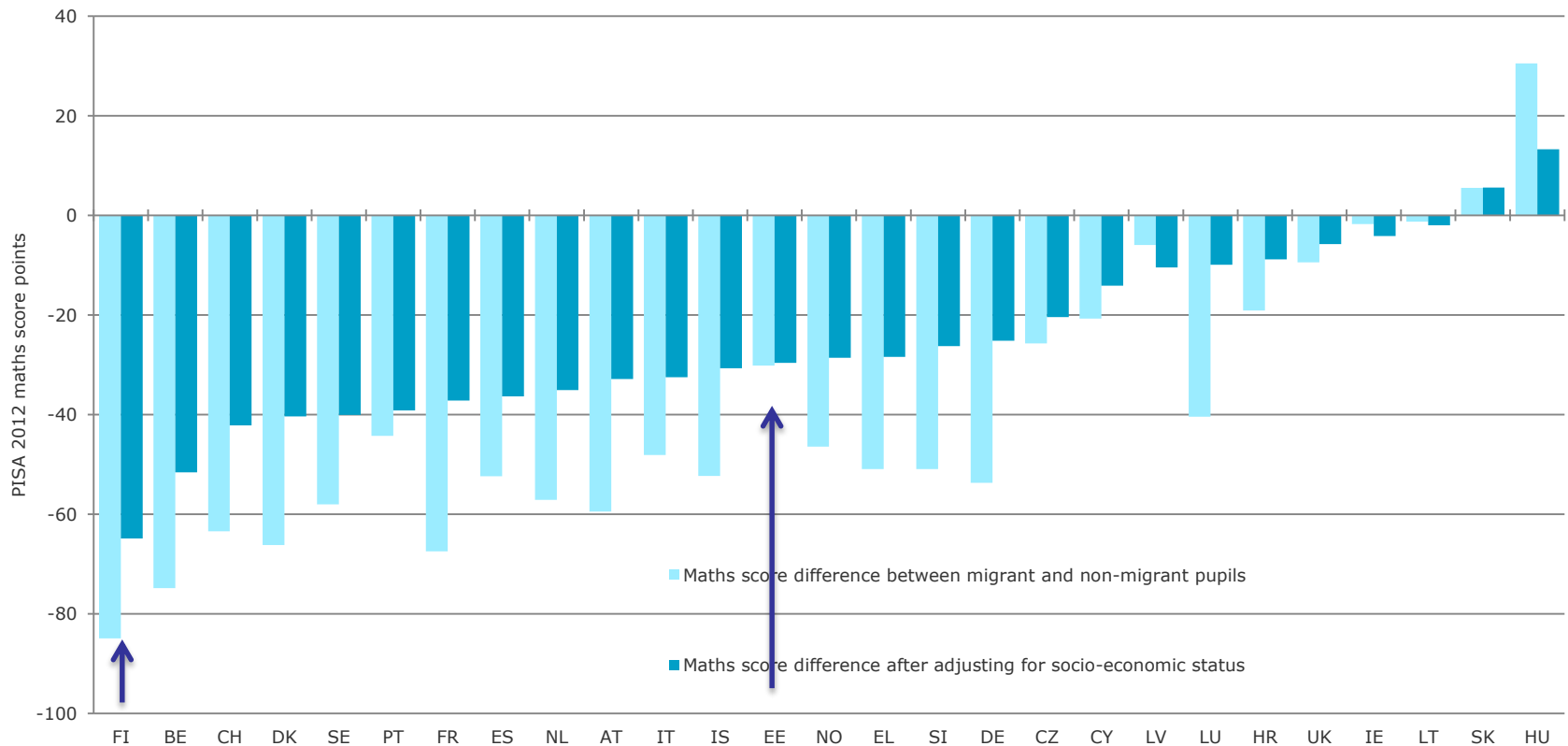
- To be based on indicators describing the operating environment of general education, such as the proportion of immigrants in the population of the area, education level of adult population and employment level.
- The renewal of the funding system aims to guarantee equal opportunities for access to education in different areas and to reduce the impact of segregation.



# Special government aids for promoting equity in education

- Two different forms of special aid granted by the Ministry:
  - 1) **Reducing group sizes in pre-primary and basic education**
    - to promote the quality of education and learning outcomes by ensuring sufficiently small group sizes.
    - the proportion of large groups since 2008: -50%
  - 2) **Special discretionary government transfers for measures to improve equality in education**
    - to minimize the differences between schools,
    - areas with poor education level or employment situation and a high share of immigrants in the population

# Difference in maths achievement between migrant and non-migrant students with and without adjustment for socio-economic status. Source: OECD/PISA 2012



# Special measures to support the immigrants' learning abilities

- **New forms of preparatory education for migrant population:**
  - Immigrant children of nursery or school age can receive pre-elementary instruction designed for all pupils from an immigrant background who are not proficient in the Finnish or Swedish language.
  - Pupils aged between 6 and 10 years may receive 900 hours and older pupils 1 000 hours of preparatory instruction over the school year.
  - To support the pupil's balanced development and integration into Finnish society
  - To give them the necessary skills to enable them to attend general education.

# BROAD-BASED PROJECT TO DEVELOP FUTURE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

- The aim is to **assess the current situation, examine the reasons for the drop in learning outcomes (national and international surveys)**, narrow down the gap in learning outcomes between **boys and girls** and find ways **to make students feel more motivated and enjoy school.**
- The project will be kept as transparent and interactive as possible, and the project results **will be broadly exploited in educational reforms in primary and secondary education.**

# Tomorrow's comprehensive school

*New horizons!*

## Broad-based steering group

Chaired by the Minister of Education, Krista Kiuru

### Working group 1. Competence and learning in society

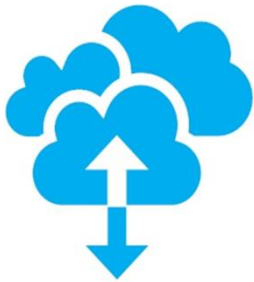
- enhanced learning outcomes
- educational parity and equality
- economic growth and competitiveness
- status of minorities in education

### Working group 2. Motivation and teaching

- student motivation, school satisfaction and wellbeing
- learning environments and learning methods
- developing teaching arrangements
- enhancing teacher training

Working methods: expertise in research and in practice together, broad collaboration with different actors, interaction

Schedule: opening seminar in March, proposals by end 2014, decisions on follow-up in spring 2015



## EduCloud Alliance In Brief

- Project initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture in fall 2013
- Current situation: Some schools use modern digital learning resources extensively, but by large, Finnish pupils use less digital resources for learning than their European peers, e.g. [1]
- Aim: To ease acquisition, deployment and development of digital (cloud) learning resources
- Desired outcome: Ecosystem of digital learning resources which is easy for schools to use

[1] European Commission (2013): Survey of schools: ICT in education. Final study report benchmarking access, use and attitudes to technology in Europe's schools, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg



## EduCloud Alliance In Practice

- Facilitate cooperation between service providers in order to agree on standards and interoperability
- Develop an open source reference marketplace of these standards for service providers and consumers
- Pilot the use of public ICT infrastructure and services (Finnish X-road, identity management, identification)

Thank you for your attention