

The Icelandic Education System



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A topographic map of Iceland, showing the island's rugged terrain with various mountain ranges and valleys. The map uses a color gradient from green to brown to indicate elevation. The text is overlaid on the map in a bold, black font.

Number of compulsory schools are ca. 173

The largest school has aprox. 800 pupils

The smallest has less than 10 pupils

Fundamental principle

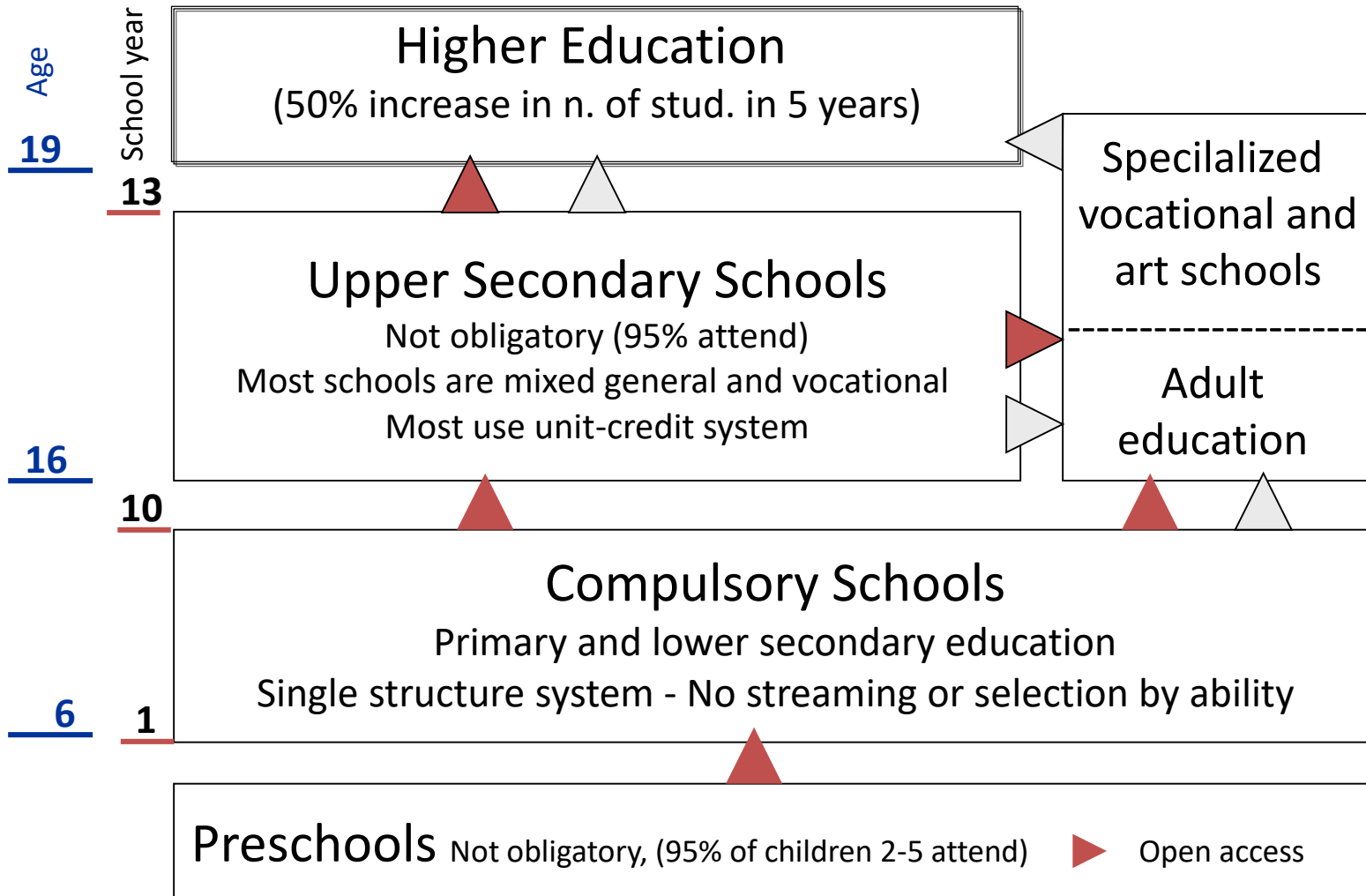
A fundamental principle of the Icelandic education system is that everyone should have equal opportunity to acquire an education, irrespective of sex, economic status, residential location, possible handicap, and cultural or social background

School for all - Continuity - Individualized education

The pupil in focus



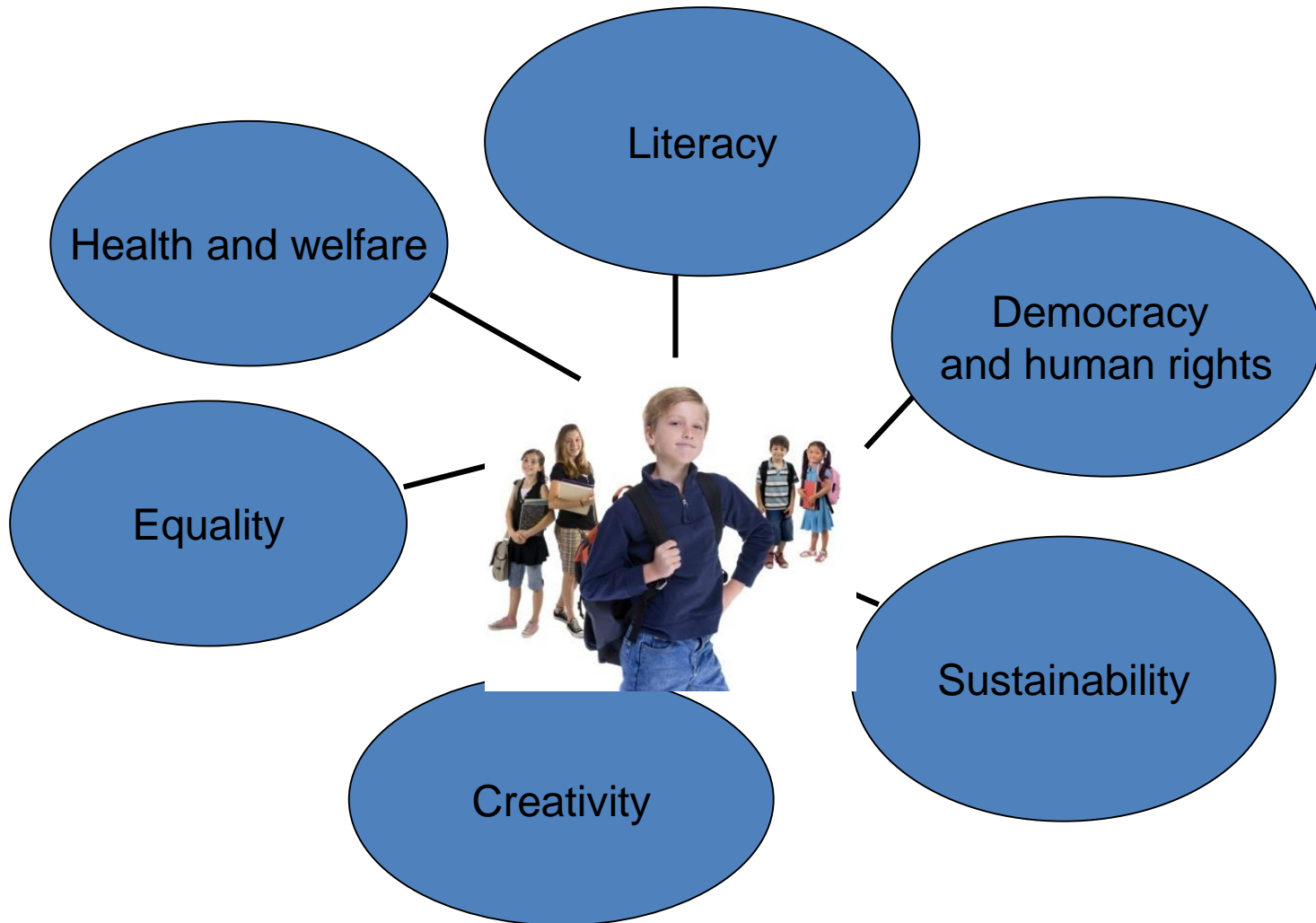
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Compulsory school

- mixed classes with pupils with different abilities in the same classes
 - primary and lower secondary education is usually in the same school
 - 180 school days a year
- Upper secondary school
 - most are mixed general and vocational
 - 175 – 180 school days a year

Fundamental pillars in education



Responsibility for schools

- Municipalities are responsible for the preschools and compulsory schools (primary and lower secondary schools)
 - administration and financing
 - general teaching and substitute teaching
 - specialist services
 - special education
- The state is responsible for the upper secondary schools

Icelandic Qualification Framework (ISQF)

- European Qualification Framework introduced in 2008
- ISQF introduced in the curriculum for the Upper-secondary school in 2011
 - Upper secondary education levels 1 - 4
 - All qualifications/ lines of study on a level
 - all courses on levels

Icelandic Qualification Framework

Icelandic Qualification Framework (ISQF)	Descriptors of the Icelandic Qualification Framework	European Qualification Framework (EQF)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has advanced knowledge of theories, research and the latest developments in a scientific field. Can conduct and manage research with confidence in order to develop new knowledge. Can work independently, show initiative and be responsible for complex theoretical tasks and pass on knowledge to others. 	8
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has obtained knowledge through research and has a good understanding of theoretical challenges and arguments and is able to contextualise the latest knowledge. Can understand complex problems and use appropriate methods to conduct smaller research projects. Can initiate and lead new projects, evaluate the most suitable approaches, and be responsible for their own work and that of a team. 	7
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has knowledge and understanding of theoretical challenges and arguments and is able to contextualise the latest knowledge. Can apply the methods of the relevant field/profession to formulate, develop and solve problems. Can initiate and lead new projects and be responsible for their own work and that of a team. 	
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has an understanding of and insight into major theoretical concepts and theories and is familiar with the latest knowledge within a specific field. Can apply critical theoretical and/or professional analysis when solving problems and evaluate the results independently. Can work independently in an organised manner, make and carry out plans and supervise teamwork. 	6
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has knowledge of selected theories and theoretical concepts and has insights into the relevant field in a broader context. Can develop and manage projects using the techniques relevant to the field/profession. Can show initiative and work independently in addition to solving problems as part of a team. 	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has specialised knowledge useful for supervision and management in a specific field of work and/or further studies. Can organise work procedures, apply the appropriate techniques and develop working methods in a responsible way. Can give guidance and professional training, review own and others' performance and be responsible for the utilisation of the relevant occupation in cross-disciplinary cooperation. 	5
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has specialised knowledge in a specific field of work and/or as a preparation for further studies. Can demonstrate professionalism, show initiative, organise tasks and evaluate own work. Can make use of specialised knowledge for improvements, give professional advice and co-operate in cross-disciplinary activities. 	4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has basic knowledge of work procedures and concepts useful in work and/or study. Can solve problems by applying the appropriate work methods, tools and information. Can work as a part of a team, initiate interaction and be responsible for well-defined tasks. 	3
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the basic knowledge for work and/or as a preparation for further studies. Has the basic skills required to carry out simple tasks during studies and/or at work. Can work under guidance with some independence on well-defined tasks. 	1-2

Current emphasis

- Stronger focus on the needs and abilities (reduce drop-out)
- Education more attractive (esp. VET), more relevant and effective
- Quality assurance strengthened with focus on learning outcomes
- Equal status of academic and vocational education
- Guarantee of education for 16 - 18 years old
- Secondary schools get more freedom and responsibility in planning the education
- The involvement of parents more formal
- Lifelong learning perspective
- Shift to learning outcomes with a focus on student activity
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning (validation...)

Times of changes

- Multi-cultural society
- Information- and computer science
- Challenges in times of changes
- Life-long learning
- Teachers
 - professional learning and development to improve the quality of teaching