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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Proposal for a Council Recommendation

on Pathways to School Success

{SWD(2022) 176 final}

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ANNEX

A policy framework for school success

This policy framework is about improving success at schools for all learners, irrespective of their personal characteristics, family, cultural and socio-economic background. It sets out key conditions and measures aimed at reducing early school-leaving and underachievement in basic skills. It is based on a broad and inclusive approach to school success, which is not only about academic results, but also takes into account elements such as personal, social and emotional development and learners' well-being at school. It outlines some overarching conditions (points 1 and 2) and a set of actions to be implemented at school and at system level.

(1) Pursuing success at school for all learners, regardless of personal characteristics, family, cultural and socio-economic background, requires an **integrated and comprehensive strategy towards success at school** at the appropriate policy level (national, regional, local), according to the structure of the education and training system. Such a strategy entails notably:

   (a) Ensuring coordination with different policy areas (such as health, social services, employment, housing, justice, inclusion of refugees and other migrants, non-discrimination) and creating sustained cooperation between different levels of governance of the education and training system, as well as systematic dialogue with all relevant stakeholders (including learners, parents and families and those representing the views of more marginalised groups) from the design phase all the way through to implementation, and evaluation.

   (b) Having a balanced, coherent and coordinated set of policy measures, combining prevention, intervention and compensation, with a strong focus on preventive and intervention actions.

   (c) Integrating national, regional and local strategic approaches (as appropriate) to prevention of early leaving from education and training with those aiming at promoting basic skills, addressing bullying and cyber-bullying (including gender-based bullying and sexual harassment) and supporting well-being.

   (d) Systematically combining, in inclusive settings, universal school-wide for all learners measures with targeted measures for some learners or groups of learners sharing similar needs or at moderate risk, and more individualised ones for those with complex or chronic needs and at highest risk.

   (e) Paying specific attention to children and young people at risk of disadvantage or discrimination, ensuring an intersectional approach and including appropriate measures for groups at risk, such as children with a socio-economically disadvantaged, migrant or Roma background, refugees, learners with visible and non-visible disabilities including long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, those with special educational needs or mental health issues.

   (f) Paying attention to identifying gender disparities in education and training, including through reinforced monitoring of the performance of boys and girls, and putting in place specific actions as appropriate.

   (g) Being evidence-based, informed by solid data collection and monitoring systems (see point 2 below) and supported by the latest quantitative and qualitative research, considering the practices and tools which have

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demonstrable success in helping to achieve educational success for all learners. This includes taking inspiration from resources provided at European level, such as the European Toolkit for Schools[1], the Compendium of Inspiring Practices on Inclusive and Citizenship Education[2] and Cedefop's VET toolkit for tackling early leaving[3] and Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices[4].

(h) Allocating proportionate resources, including the use of national and EU funds, as well as other support for reforms and investment in educational tools, infrastructure, and pedagogy (in particular Erasmus+, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, European Social Fund+, European Regional Development Fund, Digital Europe Programme, Horizon Europe, the Technical Support Instrument, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the funding scheme Connecting European Facilities (CEF2)).

(i) Provide for an implementation plan with clear targets and milestones, a monitoring and evaluation plan and the creation of a coordination mechanism or structure, at the level appropriate to national circumstances, in order to facilitate cooperation, support implementation and allow monitoring, evaluation and policy review.

(2) To be effective, an integrated strategy should be based on robust **data collection and monitoring systems**, which should:

(a) Allow analysis, at all policy levels (national, regional and local) of the scope, incidence and possible reasons of underachievement and early leaving from education and training, including by collecting the views of marginalised learners and families.

(b) Be used to design and steer policy development, monitor implementation and evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of the measures adopted.

(c) Allow early detection and identification of learners at risk or those who have left education and training early, to provide timely and appropriate support, without labelling or stigmatising such learners.

(d) Provide the basis for developing effective guidance and support to schools.

Data and information should ideally cover all levels (early childhood education and care, primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary) and types of education and training, be available at different policy levels, and must comply with legislation on the protection of personal data. Quantitative and qualitative information should be collected, as appropriate, with a high level of disaggregation (for example, on gender, socio-economic background, migrant background, Roma and regional differences), as well as on a broad range of factors which have a negative or positive effect on learning outcomes (such as participation in early childhood education and care, attendance, engagement in learning processes, achievement in basic skills, well-being at school, mental health, sense of belonging, behavioural issues, experience of discrimination, etc.).

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[1] https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools.htm
[2] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2edab132-7fbe-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1
[3] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving
[4] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices

(3) To support **learners**, the following good practices have been identified, whose successful implementation depends crucially on the commitment of all relevant actors (be it school leaders, teachers, trainers or other relevant staff), at national, regional, local and school level, in accordance with the structure of the education and training system:

Prevention measures

(a) Ensure an early identification of development problems, language competences and special education needs, including social and emotional difficulties, as well as early detection of learners at risk of underachievement and drop out, whilst avoiding labelling and stigmatisation.

(b) Develop curricula that are learner-centred and based on inclusive and relational pedagogies, and allow for diversified and personalised forms of teaching and learning. Co-creation of learning materials with children and young people should be considered, as appropriate, in particular as regards resources for bullying prevention, social and emotional education, conflict resolution and overcoming prejudice.

(c) Include social and emotional education, bullying prevention, mental and physical health in curricula, from early childhood education and care to upper secondary education and training.

(d) Strengthen competence in the language(s) of schooling, while valuing and supporting the linguistic diversity of learners as a pedagogical resource for further learning and educational achievement. This may include, for example, assessment of prior language knowledge; strong support in the learner's mother tongue and language of schooling; access to home language instruction; mechanisms to support transition between reception and mainstream classes at different levels of education.

(e) In particular, support the acquisition of the language of schooling of refugees and newly arrived migrants through early immersion within mainstream classes and curricula, with additional one-to-one support provided at an appropriate level to accelerate social and academic learning. Continued access to linguistic and academic support and career guidance, along with parental engagement and intercultural education, can also play a key role.

(f) Promote pedagogical approaches that are interactive and experiential in order to build learners' autonomy and responsibility in their learning and to empower them to actively engage in their competence development. Such approaches may include opportunities for blended learning (including digital resources, access to libraries, laboratories, museums, community centres, and nature) taking into consideration the needs of learners with disabilities, flexible and heterogeneous organisation of learning time and environments, transdisciplinary teaching and learning, cooperative learning and peer support, as well as the use of assistive technologies for learners with disabilities.

(g) Promote assessment practices that reflect and support personal learning needs and paths, in particular by making extensive use of formative and continuous assessment, and by combining multiple digital and non-digital forms and tools (e.g. portfolios, peer assessment and self-assessment) that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and participatory.

Intervention measures

(h)   Provide frameworks in schools offering targeted support to all learners facing learning difficulties or at risk of underachievement, through a multi-disciplinary and team-based approach (e.g. mentoring schemes, including peer mentoring; mobilisation of support staff, extra learning time during the school year and/or holiday period; access to additional learning environments).

(i)   Within inclusive and accessible settings, offer enhanced individualised support for learners with multifaceted complex needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs (e.g. personal tutoring, individual learning plans, interventions by specialist emotional counselling, psychotherapeutic interventions, multidisciplinary teams, family support).

(j)   Provide solutions at school level or in partnership with other actors for learners who have difficulties in satisfying basic needs due to their socio-economic background (e.g. lack of educational material, difficulties in transportation, hunger, nutrition and sleep deficits).

(k)   Provide targeted financial support schemes for disadvantaged learners to facilitate their progression to secondary and tertiary levels of education and training and their successful completion of upper-secondary level studies leading to relevant qualifications.

(l)   Provide funding arrangements for refugees and newly arrived migrant learners to ensure access to tuition or preparatory classes, where needed, and a smooth entry in the education and training system at all levels.

Combined intervention / compensation measures:

(m)   Provide social and emotional support to learners, especially those experiencing adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and serious social or emotional distress hindering their school engagement. This could include strengthening the role of advisor and mentor figures among staff, facilitating pupils' access to mental-health professionals and services in and around schools, as well as early intervention for victims and perpetrators of bullying. Create peer and community support to prevent bullying/cyberbullying and address any forms of discrimination.

(n)   Ensure access to equitable, responsive and adequate support to refugees and newly arrived migrants, including social and emotional support, helping them overcome challenges related to post-traumatic stress, the migration or integration experience. In particular, social and emotional support should be embedded in a broader and cross-sectorial scheme to take into account all their specific needs, in collaboration with social and health services, mental health agencies and all other relevant services and agencies, and closely involving learners and families.

(o)   Facilitate access to extracurricular and out-of-school activities (sport, the arts, volunteering or youth work, etc.) and improve the documentation and validation of their learning outcomes.

(p)   Strengthen education guidance, career guidance and counselling, as well as career education to support acquisition of career management skills and competences. This should include curricular and non-curricular activities such

as work-based learning, workplace visits, job shadowing, career games or taster courses.

(4) **School leaders, teachers, trainers and other staff** play a pivotal role in the strategy. For this challenging responsibility, they need support and be equipped for understanding and tackling educational inequality, underachievement and disengagement. Together with providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences, this also requires appropriate working conditions, in terms of time, space and means. The following good practices have been identified:

Prevention measures:

(a) Embed inclusion, equity and diversity, understanding underachievement and disengagement as well as addressing well-being, mental health and bullying, in all statutory initial teacher education (ITE) programmes.

(b) Make sure that high quality and research-based initial teacher education and continuous professional development (CPD) prepare school leaders, teachers, trainers and other educational staff to:

- understand risk and protective factors that might have an impact on academic performance, disengagement or early leaving from education and training, as well as social emotional and behaviour difficulties;

- understand well-being, disability and mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress, and support the development of social and emotional competences of learners;

- develop competences to teach in multilingual and multicultural settings;

- recognise and challenge gender stereotypes in teaching and learning (including low expectations on boys' achievement) and develop gender-sensitive teaching practices that are more conducive to motivating and engaging boys and girls;

- recognise and address different types of learning difficulties;

- use collaborative practices and work in multi-disciplinary teams inside school as well as with external partners;

- use a variety of learning approaches, tools and environments, as appropriate, and actively implement blended learning, combining indoor and outdoor activities, individualised and group teaching and learning, digital and non-digital resources, etc.;

- use formative assessment methods and tools in teaching and learning;

- promote a positive learning climate, using class management, bullying-prevention and conflict resolution strategies, and build trustful relationships with learners, parents, families and carers, in particular those from more disadvantaged background;

(c) Provide incentives to teachers, trainers, school leaders and other educational staff to work in schools with a high share of pupils with a socio-economic disadvantage. Encourage student teachers to do work placements in such schools.

(d) Ensure that all staff engaged in career education and in learning or career guidance are trained and qualified and have access to initial and continuing training.

(e) Support the well-being of teachers, trainers, school leaders and other school staff, including through ensuring adequate working conditions, high quality initial education and continuous professional development, access to support and mental health professionals and services, collaboration and peer support.

Intervention measures:

(f) Facilitate staff exchanges, peer learning, and peer support among teachers, trainers, and other educational staff and professionals, through networking, seminars and multi-professional learning communities, as well as access to centres of expertise, and to appropriate resources that can help adjust teaching and learning to the specific needs of all learners. Ensure in particular access to specialist resource centers or advisory teams, that can provide the necessary tools and pedagogies for supporting refugees and newly arrived migrant learners and working across multiple localities and schools.

(g) Explore how alternative pathways to the teaching profession can favour a greater diversity among the educational staff and open up the teaching profession to individuals of different backgrounds, including candidates who have themselves experienced socio-economical disadvantage.

(5) To promote educational success for all learners, '**whole school approache**s', in which all members of the school community (school leaders, teachers, trainers and other educational staff, learners, parents and families) as well as a wide range of stakeholders (social and health services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, specialist emotional counsellors/therapists, nurses, speech and language therapists, guidance specialists, local authorities, NGOs, business, unions, volunteers, etc.) and the community at large, engage actively and in a collaborative way, have shown to be particularly effective. Successful policies may include:

Prevention measures:

(a) Allow a sufficient level of autonomy for decision-making by school leaders and governance boards, coupled with strong accountability.

(b) Ensure that school success for all and well-being (including bullying prevention, anti-discrimination, gender sensitivity and health issues) are embedded in school planning and governance processes (school development plans, mission statements, annual or multi-annual pedagogical plans, etc.) and encourage schools to design, monitor and evaluate specific inclusion plans.

(c) Ensure that internal and external quality assurance mechanisms address school success for all learners and well-being at school and include targets and indicators also on issues such as learning climate, bullying and well-being. Ensure that external evaluation/inspection provide advice and support to inspected schools, support school self-evaluation and promote a culture of self-reflection and improvement on inclusion and well-being strategies and practices.

(d) Provide professional development opportunities and guidance to support school leaders in managing organisational change and promoting inclusive practices.

(e) Encourage a participatory and democratic school environment that involves learners in school and classroom decision making and makes use of participatory methods adapted to children and young people, including those from marginalised backgrounds.

(f) Promote a school culture which values diversity, fosters the well-being of learners, promotes their sense of belonging, and creates a safe environment for a dialogue on controversial issues.

Combined prevention and intervention measures:

(g) Encourage collaborative and multi-disciplinary practices in school and partnerships with local services, social and health professionals, businesses and the community at large.

(h) Promote schools as community lifelong learning centres where education and social life are closely intertwined with the neighbourhood and where the community takes joint responsibility for the school as a learning space.

(i) Promote networking between schools, as well as multi-professional learning communities at local, regional, national and international levels to promote mutual learning. Encourage schools to use the resources available in the European Toolkit for Schools, in the Compendium of Inspiring Practices on Inclusive and Citizenship Education and in Cedefop's VET toolkit for tackling early leaving.

(j) Promote 'language awareness' in and around school, encouraging them to reflect on norms, values and attitudes towards language and cultural diversity, including by discovering all the languages spoken within the school community, involving parents and families, carers and the wider community in language education, creating libraries with resources in different languages or facilitate after-school language activities.

(k) Support schools to embed effective practices at each stage of the 'language learning process' of newly arrived migrants (including refugees), including reception and assessment (e.g. through a comprehensive and multi-dimensional assessment of literacy, language and other key competences), placement and admission (e.g. by ensuring time limited initial preparatory classes, where necessary, and setting in place welfare and academic supports to facilitate a smooth transition into mainstream education), and monitoring (to prevent the geographical segregation of migrant learners through school entry and admissions criteria).

(l) Encourage effective communication and cooperation with parents, legal guardians and families on their children's educational progress and well-being, including with the help of cultural mediators from the local community. Involve parents, families and legal guardians in curricular and non-curricular activities (such as volunteering in the classroom, reading and homework clubs, school tutored library and after-school programmes, as well as job clubs, job fairs, workplace exposure, visits to career centres, etc.).

(m) Promote active engagement of parents and families in school decision making, including on the curriculum, planning and evaluation, well-being and mental health programmes, social and emotional education, career guidance, promote and support participation of parents from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds.

(n) Support parents' involvement in their children's early reading and maths skills, such as through home books schemes provision, family literacy initiatives, etc. Increase opportunities for family learning and parents' education, in particular for those with low levels of education and at risk of poverty, in partnership with local services and NGOs.

(o) Provide additional support for schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with high numbers of pupils from marginalised backgrounds. This could include reduced pupil-teacher ratios for such schools, where needed, as well as targeted resourcing of materials, equipment and infrastructure.

(6) To promote educational success for all learners it is essential to intervene on system-level features that can affect equity and inclusion in education and training in different ways. The following structural measures can be considered when developing an integrated and comprehensive strategy:

(a) Ensure generalised, equitable access to affordable, high quality and adequately staffed early childhood education and care, which can enhance children's' well-being and cognitive and wider social and emotional development, providing children with the necessary foundations to thrive in education and in life.

(b) Strengthen high-quality, attractive and flexible vocational education and training, which combines the acquisition of vocational skills with with and key competences.

(c) Promote active anti-segregation policies, in particular by adopting admission rules that allow for a heteregenous school composition and policies focused on the quality of learning, and raise awareness on the benefits of diversity in the classroom for enhancing educational outcomes fo all learners.

(d) Support the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools, with effective support provided by trained educators and other educational staff/counsellors, or health professionals. This should be accompanied by the removal of physical obstacles in the school environment, ensuring the provision of learning materials in appropriate formats, offering diversified teaching and learning approaches.

(e) Avoid grade repetition to the maximum extent and replace it with instruments that monitor and flag, at an early stage, the learning needs and difficulties of children and young people and by offering targeted and more individualised support, as appropriate.

(f) Find alternatives to early tracking in order to promote positive interactions between learners of different ability levels in heteronenous groups and reduce the impact of socio-economic background on learners' performance through academic segregation.

(g) Increase the flexibility and permeability of educational pathways, for example by modularising courses, offering vocationally oriented courses or promoting flexibility in duration and entry points. Facilitate transitions between levels and types of education and between school and future employment, including through recognition and validation arrangements, career guidance delivered by qualified practitioners, and active collaboration with stakeholders, including businesses.

(h)	Offer routes back into mainstream education and training and ensure free access to quality second chance programmes for all those who have left education and training prematurely, which could also be proposed as part of the Youth Guarantee.