

# Agreement between the Danish Government (the Social Democrats, the Social-Liberal Party and the Socialist People's Party), the Liberal Party of Denmark and the Danish People's Party on an improvement of standards in the Danish public school (primary and lower secondary education)

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7 June 2013

## 1. Introduction

Denmark has a good public school, the 'Folkeskole', but it needs improvement to become even better.

Our public school is among the best when it comes to developing students to become active citizens with fine social competences. Together with the parents, the public school shall further the students' many-sided development and education by giving them knowledge and skills to prepare them for further and higher education and to encourage their desire to keep learning.

The public school enhances students' ability to understand and take part in the democratic processes. The students are well prepared for their future lives as citizens of Denmark. The Danish students in their first years of school do well in Danish and Maths. Besides, they have fine interpersonal skills and the debate culture, the social climate in school and in the classroom is generally good.

But the Danish public school is also facing significant challenges. The academic standards – especially in reading and Maths – are not sufficiently high. Danish students perform on the average within the OECD in Danish, Maths and natural sciences when leaving the public school. At the same time we do not improve the potential of the academically weak or academically gifted students. Between 15 and 17 percent of the students leave the public school without sufficient skills in reading and Maths and many students are referred to special education. Besides, Denmark has a small number of academically gifted students relatively. If the students' academic level and the academic level in the public school are to be improved, then it is crucial for all students to get the opportunity to unfold their potential fully and for Denmark to be able to compete successfully on the increasingly international market.

Teacher training has been improved, which means that the foundation for an even better public school has already been laid.

The number of weekly lessons in the public school has been reduced. This means less time for learning. Since 2006/07 the number of scheduled hours has decreased with 94 hours corresponding to every student losing about an entire month of learning during his/her schooling.

The lower secondary school that consists of form level 7 - 9 in the public school is crucial for the students' chance to complete an upper secondary education later. But the lower secondary school does not manage to sufficiently develop the students' competences in order for them to be able to choose and complete an upper secondary education. Approximately 92 per cent of the students who finished the public school in 2011 are expected to complete an upper secondary education. Even so, a relatively large group still finds it difficult to choose and complete an upper secondary education.

The academic standards in the public school need improvement. This will be achieved by on the one hand building on the present strength of the public school, and on the other hand by taking up the challenges confronting the public school. Therefore, the parties to the agreement (the government, the Liberal Party of Denmark and Danish People's Party) will maintain and develop the public school's strengths and academic standards by working with the following three main goals:

- 1) The public school must challenge all students to reach their full potential.
- 2) The public school must lower the significance of social background on academic results.
- 3) Trust in the school and student well-being must be enhanced through respect for professional knowledge and practice in the public school.

These goals shall contribute to setting a clear direction and a high mutual level of ambition for the development of the public school, and furthermore, to ensure a clear framework for a systematic and continuous evaluation.

In order to fulfil these three goals, the parties to the agreement agreed upon a reform of the public school, based on three main areas of improvements, mutually supportive of one another, and which might contribute to the improvement of the students' academic standards:

- A longer and varied school day with more and improved teaching and learning.
- An enhanced professional development of teachers, pedagogical staff and school principals.
- Few and clear objectives and simplification of rules and regulations.

Working with various elements essential to the students and their academic skills, learning and well-being must be possible. In this case i.e. working with the students' many-sided development and relevant learning competences, with comprehensive learning strategies, knowledge acquisition and creativity, motivation and reflection, and working for a better teaching environment and students' well-being, cooperation between teachers and the pedagogical staff, physical activities and exercise, the link between theory and practice, and the possibility of homework assistance.

A wide range of initiatives must be carried out within the framework of the three areas. The amendments to the rules and regulations that are the consequences of these initiatives will be carried into effect by amendments to the existing Public School Act and derived amendments in other legislation. Rules and regulations that are not affected by the initiatives continue to apply, unamended.

## **2. A longer and more varied school day**

The parties to the agreement came to the understanding that all students shall have a longer and more varied school day with increased class hours and new and more diversified teaching methods.

This idea of a longer and more varied school day should make it possible for schools to allocate more time to teaching via more subject-divided lessons and new and extra time for assisted learning. This would also give the municipalities freedom to ensure that certain tasks in support of subject-divided teaching can be organised in new and better ways – both within every single subject and across subjects.

Altogether, this enhances the possibility of strengthening classroom teaching, for the students to devote themselves to in-depth study, and simultaneously the opportunity to work with a range of elements in the classroom that are essential to students' academic achievements, learning, motivation and well-being. This concerns varied and differentiated ways of learning, challenging strong and weak learners alike, practical and practice-oriented teaching methods that can open the school towards the world around it full of knowledge, innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity, enabling the students to transform knowledge into products of value, and supportive learning activities with an aim to develop the students' receptiveness to teaching by working with their social competences, diverse development, motivation and well-being.

The longer time spent in school makes it possible to ensure that all children are physically active and exercise every day. Furthermore, all children will be offered homework assistance.

The aim of strengthening the students' learning capacity and with that the academic standards in the public school will be reflected in an increased level of ambition when it comes to teaching and the students' academic standards on different form levels, especially Danish and Maths. In the long term and by means of more and improved teaching, the students will be expected to learn the same at form level 8 that they learn today at form level 9.

New and improved opportunities for involving pedagogical staff will be introduced in order for them to support and supplement the teachers with relevant qualifications during the school day, *see section 2.12*.

The law reform introduces a longer and more varied school day with 30 hours for form level 0 - 3, 33 hours for form level 4 - 6, and 35 hours for form level 7 - 9.

The teaching includes the subject-divided lessons and the new and extra time for assisted learning as a supplement to and support of the subject-divided lessons during the remaining part of the school day.

The former rules and regulations for the distribution of lessons will be changed as follows:

- A minimum distribution of lessons for each form level is to be laid down, corresponding in average to the length of a school week over one year, by 30 hours for form level 0 - 3, 33 hours for form level 4 - 6, and 35 hours for form level 7 - 9.
- A minimum distribution of lessons for the total number of subject-divided lessons within the respective subjects is to be laid down. The difference between the time that the school should need for subject-divided lessons, and the minimum distribution of lessons regarding the length of a school day, will be used for assisted learning. In this connection no minimum distribution of lessons is laid down.
- A minimum distribution of lessons regarding the number of lessons in Danish and Maths in a year is to be laid down on all form levels and for history from form level 3 to 9.
- In all other subjects and on every form level a guiding number of weekly lessons will be laid down.
- The upper limit for the number of lessons in the early school years (form level 0 - 3) of maximum seven hours a day will be replaced by a provision that stipulates that the number of weekly lessons does not exceed 35 hours on average during the academic year. It is indicated in the provision that the municipalities and the public schools can apply for an exemption from the rule for pedagogical reasons with the Ministry of Education.

*More subject-divided lessons and assisted learning*

With the introduction of longer and more varied school days the following changes in the distribution of lessons will be introduced:

- Increased no. of Danish lessons at form level 4 - 9 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Increased no. of Maths lessons at form level 4 - 9 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Introduction of English lessons at form level 1 and 2 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Increased no. of PE and sport lessons at form level 1 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Increased no. of music lessons at form level 1 and 5 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Increased no. of wood- and metalwork, and design at form level 4 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Introduction of the second foreign language at form level 5 by one extra weekly lesson, and at form level 6 by two extra weekly lessons.
- Increased no. of lessons in natural sciences/technology at form level 2 and 4 by one extra weekly lesson.
- Introduction of elective subjects from form level 7 by two extra weekly lessons.
- One weekly lesson in geography will be moved from form level 8 to 7 in order to level out the no. of lessons between the two form levels.

Table of the proposal for a revised school week

Subject	Improvement	Form level 1	Form level 2	Form level 3	Form level 4	Form level 5	Form level 6	Form level 7	Form level 8	Form level 9
<b>Extra lessons</b>	<b>After</b>		<b>+2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Danish	Before		10	9	6	6	6	6	6	6
	After		10	9	7	7	7	7	7	7
English	Before			2	2	3	3	3	3	3
	After		1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Second foreign language	Before							3	4	4
	After					1	2	3	3	3
History	Before			1	2	2	2	2	2	1
	After			1	2	2	2	2	2	1
Christian studies	Before		1	1	1	1	2		1	1
	After		1	1	1	1	2		1	1
Social studies	Before								2	2
	After								2	2
Maths	Before		5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
	After		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Natural sciences/Technology	Before		1	2	2	2	2	-	-	-
	After		2	2	3	2	2	-	-	-
Geography	Before							1	2	1
	After							2	1	1
Biology	Before							2	2	1
	After							2	2	1
Physics/Chemistry	Before							2	2	3
	After							2	2	3
PE and sports	Before		2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
	After		2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
Music	Before		2	2	2	1	1			
	After		2	2	2	2	1			
Visual arts	Before		2	2	2	1				
	After		2	2	2	1				
Design, wood and metalwork, home economics	Before				2	4	4	3		
	After				3	4	4	2		
Elective subjects	Before								2	2
	After							2	2	2
Subject-divided lessons	Before		23	26	26	27	27	28	32	30
	After		25	26	30	31	31	32	32	31
Free class discussion hours	Before		0,75	0,75	0,75	0,75	1	1	1	1
	After		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assisted learning, i.e. physical activities/exercise	Before									
	After		7,7	6,75	6,0	5,0	5,0	6,2	6,2	7,2
Length of a school week - in full hours, including breaks	Before		21,8	24,5	24,5	25,4	25,7	26,6	30,2	28,4
	After		30	30	33	33	33	35	35	35

The integrated school day is meant for teaching and learning to ensure that the students reach the high academic ambitions in the Common Objectives (“Fælles Mål”).

The teaching consists of subject-divided lessons as well as other lessons that support the subject-divided lessons during the remaining part of the school day.

The longer and more varied school day shall provide the schools with more time for teaching by means of more subject-divided lessons and the new and extra time for assisted learning.

It is the principal’s responsibility to create coherence between the subject-divided lessons and the extra time for assisted learning. It is the duty of the teachers to ensure continuity and that the academic objectives for each subject and on each form level are met.

The time provided for assisted learning is organised by the municipalities, and it is the municipality’s duty to constitute the staff, *see section 2.12*. The time set aside for assisted learning is not covered by the class formation rules.

The municipalities and each school may decide to convert the extra time for assisted learning into subject-divided lessons. Furthermore, the municipalities can grant the schools exemption to reduce the weekly teaching time that exceeds the minimum number of weekly lessons for the subject-divided teaching in up to one year for specific form levels, if they simultaneously increase the number of subject-divided lessons with two staff members, especially in Danish and Maths. Generally, this exemption is granted to form levels 0 - 3 – and form level 4 - 9 for classes with special needs.

#### *PE and sports, exercise and physical activities every day*

A daily 45 minutes’ exercise and physical activity must be part of the integrated school day at all form levels of the public school in order to further the children’s and young persons’ state of health and to support their motivation and learning in all subjects. Exercise and physical activity might be part of both the subject-divided lessons, among other things PE and sports, and of the assisted learning. This may happen i.e. by brief physical activities such as a morning run, ball games etc., and by more time-consuming activities i.e. in cooperation with local sports clubs, cultural centres, or simply by using the physical activity as a pedagogical tool for working with the contents of the subjects.

It is the duty of the principal to ensure that the students, during the school day, participate in physical activities corresponding to 45 minutes daily on average.

#### *In-depth study and homework assistance*

Time for in-depth study and the proposed homework assistance etc. must focus on strengthening the students' academic standards by, among other things, offering academic challenges and coaching or educational turbo-programmes, adjusted to the students' levels and needs. It will become mandatory for the schools to offer homework assistance and time for in-depth study as part of the integrated school day for the academically gifted as well as for the academically weak students.

### **2.1. More lessons in Danish and Maths**

Increasing the number of lessons in both subjects at form level 4 - 9 with one extra weekly lesson compared to the current guiding number of weekly lessons will strengthen Danish and Maths. Stipulating a binding minimum of weekly lessons for each subject on each form level 4 - 9 with 210 lessons of 60 minutes for the subject Danish and 150 lessons of 60 minutes for the subject Maths will lead to the increase of the number of weekly lessons in all public schools. The purpose of increasing the number of weekly lessons in these two basic subjects is to get more time for in-depth study and for the use of a variety of teaching methods. All of this, in order for all students – slow as well as fast learners – to benefit as much as possible from the teaching.

In order to improve the quality of teaching in Danish and Maths, funds are allocated to a three-year pilot project with the aim of developing new teaching methods in Danish and Maths that challenge all students and make the classroom teaching more relevant - i.e. by using ICT as an integrated part of the teaching and at the lower secondary form levels using Maths to solve practical tasks such as personal finance issues in order for the teaching to become more meaningful to the students.

#### *Efforts targeted at students with dyslexia and dyscalculia.*

Too many students with dyslexia and dyscalculia do not receive the necessary assistance because often, their problems are not spotted early enough. In order to help these students, diagnostic tests and tools for early identification of students with dyslexia and dyscalculia will be available. This can be accomplished by the development of a dyscalculia test to be used in schools. A dyslexia test for students at form level 0 - 3 will be introduced in 2015. Together with professional guidance and methods the tests will be placed at the schools' disposal without charge.

### **2.2. Strengthening foreign languages teaching**

The teaching of foreign languages must be strengthened. The increasing internationalisation and the children's early meeting with other countries demand increased knowledge of languages – especially English. Therefore, the students will receive more lessons in foreign languages.

It is of utmost importance to master the English language to get on in a global world. Most of the children meet the English language at an early age and they are eager to learn. Therefore, English will be introduced at form level 1. This will be done by an overall net increase of the weekly lessons at all form levels and with one weekly lesson at form level 1 and 2.

Fine language competences shall prepare the Danish students for life in a globalised world, where new and higher demands necessitate better language skills, so as to be able to compete successfully on the labour market – in Denmark and abroad.

In order to strengthen the learning of a second foreign language, the teaching of German or French will be moved from form level 6 to form level 5 and made compulsory. This means that one weekly lesson in German or French is set aside for form level 5 and two weekly lessons for form level 6 according to the guiding distribution of lessons. Simultaneously, it will be possible for the students to be exempted from the second foreign language from form level 7 to form level 9. The present rule is that a decision of exemption is made by consultation with the parents and the student's teachers, and perhaps by involving "Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning" (the educational youth guidance).

The subject offered in German/French will at the same time be renamed "second foreign language".

Furthermore, it will in general be possible for the students to choose a third foreign language as an elective subject. This could either be German, French, Spanish or another foreign language subject that schools choose to offer.

### **2.3. More lessons in natural sciences/technology**

Natural sciences/technology is an important field of education for all students and a subject that will create the foundation for further and higher education within various fields. Therefore, the guiding number of lessons in natural sciences/technology will be increased by one weekly lesson at form level 2 and form level 4.

### **2.4. Practical subjects/art subjects**

The practical subjects/art subjects shall contribute to the development of the academic standards and the standards of the other subjects in the public school, especially Danish and Maths. A new subject, craft and design will therefore be introduced to replace wood- and metalwork and needlecraft. It will also be one of the elective subjects.

Simultaneously, the number of music lessons will be increased by one weekly lesson for form level 1 and form level 5 and for craft and design by one weekly lesson for form level 4.

The contents of the subject home economics will be specified more precisely and renamed “Madkundskab” (food knowledge).

## **2.5. The open school**

The schools must to a higher degree open up to the surrounding community. This will be done by involving the local sports clubs, cultural centres and by getting in contact with various associations. In this case it is the municipalities’ duty to ensure that this cooperation will take place. In addition to this, the public school and the art- and musical schools in the municipalities commit themselves to collaboration. However, it is up to each school management to decide how these collaborations are to be put into practice.

Besides the subjects and objectives of the public school, the intention of this form of collaboration is to further local cohesion and to contribute to the students becoming better acquainted with the associations’ activities and with the opportunities, offered by the associations.

In certain cases, the principal might permit a student to fulfil his/her compulsory education by music lessons at the municipality’s music school or by exercising their elitist sports in a sports club – instead of i.e. choosing electives. The school board can lay down principles for having fewer lessons at school in order to be able to pursue elitist sports training. Furthermore, the principal can permit a student to fulfil his/her compulsory education by taking lessons at the Ungdomsskole (youth school) – in subjects that also exist within the public school.

## **2.6. Focus on improvement of teaching and learning**

The academic standards for all children need improvement. In connection with the introduction of more lessons in school, a focused effort will be carried out in order to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure measurable improvements.

### *Clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives*

The clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives support the continuous improvement of the students’ academic standards, and ensure that students achieve higher academic levels than previously before leaving the public school.

The Common Objectives will be clarified and simplified with the intention of ensuring the learning objectives, while focusing on the students’ learning outcome. Altogether this shall support the public school’s work with action-oriented teach-

ing. Clear objectives for students' learning will contribute to an increase of academic standards for the academically gifted students as well as for the academically weak.

Among other things, the clarification of the Common Objectives must succeed in supporting the principals' work with action-oriented teaching and the teachers' daily work with planning, execution and evaluation of the teaching. The size and number of the Common Objectives will be reduced and simplified considerably. The clarification will help the principals, the parents, among them the parental representatives of the school board, and the students to better understand the objectives in order for them to become active partners in relation to the students' learning.

The Common Objectives must to a higher degree support the methods of working in the public school of tomorrow, among these, varied teaching and the use of alternative learning environments, practice- and action-oriented teaching and increased implementation of ICT based teaching. The objectives will be digitised and supported by guidelines and tools, i.e. by specific examples of how to organise the teaching and how to ensure coherence with the day care pedagogical teaching programmes and the academic objectives for upper secondary education.

The Common Objectives for Danish and Maths need clarification and simplification in order for the teachers to be able to use the objectives more constructively in class, and for teachers, pedagogical staff, principals, parents and students to get a clear indication of what skills, competences and methods the students need to acquire. Based on the experiences with the modification of the Common Objectives for Danish and Maths, the Common Objectives for the majority of the remaining subjects will also be simplified.

To ensure simplicity and homogeneity across the subjects, a master for the presentation of the specified Common Objectives will be drawn up. The master will act as a template for the description of the objectives for each subject.

The canons will continue to exist. In connection with the clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives, the existing canons will be revisited and possibly revised.

A master template for the clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives and the final objectives will be presented to and approved by the parties to this agreement.

#### *Developing the subjects*

Besides the clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives, the subjects need systematic and dynamic improvement. The latest knowledge will form

the basis when teachers plan their teaching and be fundamental in the professional development of the subjects. A task force has already been appointed to examine the subject Maths. It may be worth considering whether similar, systematic efforts with regards to other subjects in connection with or in continuation of the work with clarifying and simplifying the Common Objectives are to be initiated.

#### *Innovation and entrepreneurship*

In the drafting of the Common Objectives for the subject craft and design it is specified that this subject must work with innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition to the work with clarifying and simplifying the Common Objectives the focus is on how innovation and entrepreneurship can be elucidated in other subjects of the public school.

#### *ICT*

An amount of 500 million DKK has been set aside during the period 2012 to 2015 in order to further the use of ICT in the public school. Among other things, the funds shall help to promote the use of ICT in the classroom and to develop digitised educational materials in support of further use of these materials. Likewise, a pilot project with so-called digitised demonstration schools will be initiated. The experiments will contribute to the creation of generalised and practice-oriented knowledge of how ICT proficiency can be improved by additional use of ICT in the classroom, including methods to develop teachers' knowledge of ICT integration in class. To support the digitised reorganisation of the public school, a management network for digitised transformation of the public school has been established in cooperation with KL (Local Government Denmark)<sup>1</sup> and Skolelederforeningen (Danish Union of Headmasters).

An additional and qualified use of ICT in the classroom presupposes ICT not to be viewed in isolation, but as an integrated part of the teaching and as a pedagogical and didactic tool to increase the outcome of teaching. A number of initiatives with the aim to increase the use of ICT in the public school will be initiated as part of the reform.

Digitised competences and digitised teaching support must be considered in all subjects and in assisted learning activities in connection with the clarification of the Common Objectives.

Throughout the coming years, the use of ICT in connection with the final examinations will be increased. This will be done by – among other things – digitisation of the written examinations and by increased use of self-correcting examinations in selected subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> In Danish "Kommunernes Landsforening".

Furthermore, a joint user portal for the public school will be developed to support closer collaboration with parents about students' academic progress, strengthened student involvement, student to student activities plus the teachers' pedagogical work with learning and on-going academic progress in relation to the Common Objectives and a longer and varied school day. An improved digitised support of the student plan will be part of the work with the user portal.

The existing EMU (Denmark's educational portal) will be modernised with a view to create a single joint portal as well as easy access for teachers, pedagogical staff, school principals, etc. This new portal will provide an overview of knowledge, methods and tools with a proven track record.

Finally, by establishing this joint management toll, and by digitising the Quality Report, version 2 the basis for managing and monitoring will be strengthened in the public schools as well as at the municipal level, *see section 4.2.*

#### *National Centre of History and Cultural Heritage*

In order to support the teaching of - among other things - history, a national Centre of excellence for the dissemination of History and Cultural Heritage will be founded.

The purpose of this centre of excellence is, primarily, to further children's and young people's understanding of history and cultural heritage as important to the development of society, everyday life and values, and that this understanding can serve as a means to take stock of their future prospects.

The centre of excellence's location will be in Jelling in Jutland.

## **2.7. Improved final years of compulsory schooling and transition to post compulsory education**

### *Elective subjects*

In order to meet the various interests and conditions of the students in lower secondary education in the public school and to further their motivation, the elective subjects – in this case two weekly lessons - are moved from form level 8 to level 7. Simultaneously, the elective subjects become compulsory. In this way the students at form level 7 get the opportunity to choose the same elective subjects as the students at form level 8 today. This will also improve the municipalities' options to work with alternatives to traditional lower secondary schooling, e.g. themed or focused programmes.

The municipal councils will be authorized to approve teaching of subjects outside those found in the Common Objectives – subjects not necessarily practical- or artistic-oriented. Thus, the students can choose i.e. elective subjects such as astronomy, metal/technology workshop and homepage design or choose elective ob-

jects from so-called subject parcels within the area of i.e. innovation or natural sciences.

As part of the work with clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives, a draft paper for the establishment of new elective subjects in the municipalities will be prepared. This will be in the form of standards for the description of aims and contents of the subjects, which must be followed by the municipalities when introducing the new elective subjects. This way, the municipalities get to examine various considerations when they establish new elective subjects, among them, aim, academic progression and practical implementation, etc. The municipal council must approve the new electives.

The model must be approved by the parties to the agreement.

Furthermore, municipalities and public schools will be authorized to offer subjects that are at present only offered at form level 10, cf. the Public School Act, section 19 d, subsection 4, no 5 to 12. In this case the Common Objectives already exist, i.e. concerning the subjects product development and design, entrepreneurship and technology and communication.

The present compulsory project assignment at form level 9 will be modified so that electives, not included in the tests, must be included as part of the project assignment.

#### *Elitist sports classes*

The Public school must challenge and develop all students – also students with a talent for sports. Therefore, it will be made possible to set up elitist classes in which the teaching will be arranged in such a way as to support the students' talents with the best possible conditions for training. The students will be accepted into these classes based on their athletic merit.

#### *Talent classes in music*

Municipalities can apply to the Ministry of Education for an authorisation to establish talent classes in music as pilot projects.

#### *Increased focus on preparing the students for further education*

The ambition is that at least 95 per cent of a youth cohort must complete at least one post-compulsory education. Therefore, it is crucial for the public school to be able to provide students with exact guidelines and the right competences for them to choose and later complete the post-compulsory education, which suits them best.

In order to ensure that the final years of compulsory schooling have an increased focus on preparing the students for further education, the student plan and the

education plan will be integrated into one document, covering the time from form level 0 to level 9. Simultaneously, the follow-up part of the student plan may already from form level 7 to a higher degree form the basis of organising a coherent programme for the final years of compulsory schooling with increased focus on challenging and clarifying the students' choice of education and on preparing them to complete a post-compulsory education.

The parties to the agreement note the fact that the government plans to move a motion to advance the evaluation of the student's educational readiness to form level 8, based on objective criteria. The future student plan must be viewed in connection with and perhaps be conceptually integrated into the government's proposal to advance the evaluation of the students' educational readiness to form level 8. The parties to the agreement of FL13 (Finance Act for 2013) about improved vocational education and training (VET) and educational guarantee, among other things, the Youth Parcel II (Ungepakke II), will be invited to discuss this separately.

As part of the effort to strengthen the students' educational readiness and their knowledge of the labour market, it is furthermore the plan to use the longer and varied school day in the final years of compulsory schooling to work more systematically with the students' educational readiness, e.g. by the compulsory subject Uddannelses-, Erhvervs- og Arbejdsmarkedsorientering (UEA) (educational, vocational and labour market guidance).

In the UEA class the students' educational choices will be challenged and they must acquire a general knowledge of society and an understanding of the labour market. Furthermore, UEA must ensure that students have some knowledge of the post-compulsory education system and what the various types of education may lead to.

In connection with the general clarification of the Common Objectives the aim of UEA will be tightened. Within "The Resource Centre for the Public School" examples of practice-oriented educational programmes for UEA will be developed. This material will be placed at the public schools' disposal by the corps of learning consultants and the new joint portal of knowledge (previously EMU) and other resources.

#### *The public school's Leaving Examination*

Today, approx. 12,000 students or about 17 per cent of a year group at form level 9 do not achieve the mark 2 in Danish and Maths or even take examinations in these two subjects.

The aim of the reform is to improve the academic standards of the public school by giving all students the skills and competences needed to complete a post-

compulsory education. Basic skills in Danish and Maths are crucial for the students' ability to eventually complete a post-compulsory education. Therefore, it is also a clear goal with the reform of the public school that all students leave the school with at least the mark 2 in Danish and Maths.

The Public School's Leaving Examination must have a greater influence on the students' admission to post-compulsory education. This shall contribute to sharpening the focus on the importance of being able to master the skills needed to complete a vocational education and training programme or an upper secondary education.

Consequently, research will be conducted in order to uncover how the Public school's Leaving Examination may gain greater importance and thus significance to the students' admission to post-compulsory education. In addition, such research will include an assessment of introducing admission interviews and specific mark standards. The analysis will emphasise and thus investigate the following topics:

- Existing admission requirements for post-compulsory education.
- Existing alternative propositions for young people that do not fulfil the existing admission requirements.
- Description and analysis of the number of young people who will be excluded from post-compulsory education (especially vocational education) if the Leaving Examination gains greater influence.
- Analysis of the consequences of different approaches to an increase in the significance and influence of the Leaving Examination.
- Creation of tangible approaches for the future organisation of the final student evaluation in the public school as well as for the admission into post-secondary education.

At the latest, the analysis must be completed by the end of autumn 2013.

Moreover, mapping and analysis of the status and scope for further development of existing digitised solutions will be initiated. E.g. an increase in the use of digitised tests such as self-correcting tests and written exams that include access to the Internet is considered.

The Public School's Leaving Examination will be renamed the Form Level 9 Test and in addition to that, the school-leaving certificate will also include completed courses offered in the local municipal youth school.

A final examination will be introduced in the subject *physical education and sport* to increase focus on exercise and movement and simultaneously raise the subject's status and prominence and thus increase the learning outcomes. Therefore, *physical*

*education and sport* will at form level 9 become one of the examinable subjects that students may be examined in, in the Form Level 9 Tests.

Investigative work on the tests in the Leaving Examination will be conducted in order to reach a better and more efficient system for examinations. This will include targeted marking to ensure that teachers and students can spend more time together. The status and development potential of existing digital solutions will be mapped and analysed. The use of digital tests such as self-correcting tests and written examinations with access to the Internet will be considered.

Based on the results of the analyses and the experiences from the on-going experiments with new test forms, a proposal for the development of new leaving examinations with focus on cross-curricular, project- and product-oriented tests and tests with the use of ICT will have main focus. This proposal will be presented to the parties to this agreement. The tests must motivate and support modern and contemporary learning, also directed towards a world outside the public school.

In relation to the examinations, it shall also be possible to test the student's competences through actual and practical tasks embedded in a partnership for instance between the school and local businesses.

## **2.8. Inclusion**

It is a fundamental value in the public school that there will always be room for all kinds of children.

Unfortunately, in the past years the public school has separated too many students from the ordinary classroom teaching. The number of students referred to special education has increased drastically. In addition, the expense to special education has increased too and now constitutes approximately 30 per cent of the public school's total expenditure. At the same time however, there is no documentation to substantiate that students enrolled at special schools and attending special classes perform better academically compared to the expected performance in the public school with ordinary classroom teaching.

To meet this challenge, more students need to be included in the public school. Consequently, the government has agreed on a range of initiatives together with the member association of Danish municipalities Local Government Denmark (KL) that will support the local municipalities in the coming changes. Among other things, these initiatives include a new legislation on inclusive education in the public school, continuous monitoring of the change moving towards greater inclusion, establishment of the National Inclusion Counseling Unit, which is an outgoing consulting unit, aiming to support improved inclusion in preschool, school and leisure time facilities by collaboration with municipalities on meeting local needs, establishment of the Centre for Inclusive Education and Special Needs Education, information campaigns as well as the establishment of the Ex-

per Monitoring Group for Inclusive Education. These initiatives shall ensure support and dialogue among the central stakeholders of the objective on increased inclusion in the public school.

These initiatives shall also contribute to the improvement of every child's skills through inclusion by strengthening general teaching at the same time as the individual receives support together with his or her classmates. Also, the longer and more varied school day will create the conditions that ensure room for every child in the public school.

To support the efforts made in regards to inclusive education, it will be possible to provide some dispensations in order for some schools to offer classes with shorter school days. Yet, such dispensation will only be granted when the shorter school days are being compensated for with lessons including two staff members rather than only one in the subject-divided teaching, e.g. in Danish and Maths.

The longer and varied school day will also encompass the segregated special education offers. However, in the legislative realisation of the longer and varied school day, the need for flexibility will be taken into account in order to create a good and safe environment for students with special needs.

## **2.9. Parental cooperation and student involvement**

To create a better foundation for parental involvement, the cooperation with parents and their involvement in the public school will be strengthened. This will be initiated by the corps of learning consultants.

The parents are a resource and must contribute to the school's work. Consequently, it will be specified in the Public School Act that the school board's principles for collaboration between the school and the student's home shall also include principles on the parents' responsibility for the collaboration. These principles will describe the school's expectations in regards to the parents' participation in parent-teacher meetings, parent-teacher-student meetings<sup>2</sup> as well as academic and social activities taking place at school. In this way, the parents may contribute to the approach to and the handling of the collaboration in which the parents play a crucial role. Moreover, this will ensure ownership of the principles in the parent group and as a result, make it possible to clearly define the school's expectations to parents.

At the same time, an effort within competence development for the members of the school boards will be initiated in collaboration with the National Association of School Parents<sup>3</sup>. The objective is to prepare the members for the actual work within the school board.

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<sup>2</sup> Skole-hjem-samtaler

<sup>3</sup> In Danish: Skole og Forældre

To ensure local democracy at schools with a divisional structure, it is suggested that parents from all divisions are secured representation on the school board. In addition to this, parents are free to establish parent councils for separate divisions.

Student involvement and student democracy are important factors in the development of a future school. Therefore, a project is being conducted in collaboration with Danish Public School Students' Association about the involvement of students, which will create further knowledge about the effects of involving students in the planning and evaluation of the teaching. To strengthen the students' engagement and participation in the public school, an effort under the auspices of the corps of learning consultants, targeted towards more student involvement, is launched. Furthermore, a number of steps are taken to increase the number of student-to-student activities.

### **2.10. Better learning environment**

Quiet in class, good friendships, good classroom management and a good school environment are the premises that will enable students to want to learn and to be able to learn. At the same time, they constitute necessary prerequisites for serene teaching. The school principals, the teachers and the pedagogues must therefore be better prepared for working with teaching environments and general well-being, so the disturbing unrest can be diminished and the students' social and academic development supported.

With the Danish Centre for Learning Environment's thermometer as a starting point, clear and obligatory indicators for learning environment, well-being, quiet and discipline will be developed as a base for the municipalities and schools to work systematically and targeted, in an effort to strengthen the students' well-being together with their academic development. The indicators will form the base of new target figures for well-being in the public school where on-going digital measurements will create openness about well-being, quiet and discipline, which will again contribute to support the schools' and the municipalities' work and dialogue about locally improving the learning environment.

Furthermore, good practice and exemplary procedures will be mapped and collected and form the base for the development of methods and tools to heighten the quality of the learning environment at schools. This work will also further each schools' own ability to undertake such a development process.

### **2.11. Quiet and classroom management**

There is too much disturbance in the Danish public school today. It is a problem, because good learning- and working environments are prerequisites for carrying out the public school's purpose.

A national effort to strengthen classroom management and diminish the disturbing unrest in the public school will be undertaken. The effort will strengthen the schools' work with the establishment of routines, norms and rules in support of a good learning environment and ensure that there is a focus on classroom management in the development of teaching and teachers' competences.

An expert group with practitioners from municipalities and schools and knowledge persons from vocational schools and research institutions will be appointed to describe the existing research and knowledge about classroom management and to collect tools and methods to the development of class management. Materials and tools will be created to support municipalities', schools' and teachers' work with learning environments, disturbing unrest and classroom management.

Knowledge, tools and methods on classroom management must be an element of the learning consultant corps' advice for municipalities and schools.

These initiatives will be anchored with the Resource Centre for the Public School and the corps of learning consultants, who will ensure the initiation and cohesion of initiatives. The Resource Centre for the Public School and the corps of learning consultants must also involve relevant players such as The Danish Union of Teachers, The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL), The Danish Union of Headmasters, The Association of Youth Club- and Culture Club Managers, Local Government Denmark (KL), etc.

The government will, as part of the expenditure of the allocated one billion DKK to continuation training for teachers and pedagogues, emphasise that classroom management is viewed as a strategic pointer for the coming prioritisation of the collected efforts on the continuation training in the municipalities. In connection with the skill development of school principals, focus will be on school principals' pedagogical management, including the creation of a good teaching and learning environment with quiet and discipline.

Municipalities and schools must follow the development in disruptive unrest, e.g. via the new well-being measurement.

## **2.12. Teachers, pedagogues and other employees with relevant competences**

Different groups of employees can handle different tasks during the longer and more varied school day. This is in continuation of the possibilities already in existence today:

1) The teacher has the general teaching competence. The teachers can handle all tasks in the public school related to the subject-divided lessons and the allocated time for assisted learning. This can happen in collaboration with other employee

groups, such as pedagogues or staff members with other relevant competences for students' academic development. The teachers must ensure cohesion in their teaching and that the academic objectives for subjects and level are met.

2) At all form levels, pedagogues and other staff members with relevant backgrounds can be included in the teaching in a supportive role by solving tasks within their competence and qualifications. They will e.g. be able to support and supplement the teacher in the subject-divided lessons and can also carry out assisted learning alone with students. In the latter case, it will be assignments, which do not require a teacher's professional competences. Pedagogues and employees with other relevant competences will not acquire official teaching competence by performing these tasks.

3) In the early primary years, pedagogues can handle certain well defined teaching assignments within their competence and qualifications. (Permanency and demarcation of school start experiments in relation to the pedagogues' competences.)

### **3. Competence development for teachers, pedagogues and principals**

It is crucial that teachers and pedagogues have high professional standards and that principals have strong pedagogical – and general management competences.

Therefore, initiatives are set in motion to ensure that teachers, pedagogues and school principals all have the best qualifications and competences to teach and manage the public school.

#### **3.1. An objective of full competence cover and continuation training**

To realise the target of strengthening the common public school in the best possible way, the current efforts in continuation training of teachers and pedagogues must be strengthened.

Teachers must have teaching competence on the level of their main subject in the subjects they teach. Teachers with a professional immersion in their subject will ensure that students encounter teaching of even better academic and pedagogical quality.

The target is that, by 2020, all students in the public school will be taught by teachers who have either obtained main subject qualifications from their teacher education, or who have obtained similar qualifications from relevant professional development education, etc. The target of full competence cover must be written into the Public School Act. The target encompasses all subjects and all levels and must be applied on municipality level.

The government will discuss the specific operationalisation and implementation of the competence cover with KL in the negotiations about the municipalities'

economy for 2014. Included in the government's discussions with KL about the competence cover target will be how the government and KL together can follow up on this target and how the municipalities can plan a targeted skill development effort, including on-going academic updating.

The competence development effort must be targeted and focused strategically on areas where there is the greatest correlation with the public school's targets and needs. The competence development effort must therefore both support the target of full competence cover in all subjects in the public school by 2020 and be used to support other prioritised areas and targets in the public school reform, such as the use of ICT in teaching, classroom management, inclusion, Danish and Maths, etc. The competence development effort must be organised both as continuation training at the university colleges and as action learning and collegial sparring at the schools, etc.

The government will allocate one billion DKK for the period 2014-2020 to the strengthening of continuation training of teachers and pedagogues in the public school.

The parties to the public school must all take a greater responsibility to strengthen continuation training, e.g. by using and planning it more efficiently. This will ensure that the latest evidence based knowledge is used in the daily teaching and time together with the children.

In continuation of Act no. 409 of 26 April 2013 about the prolongation and renewal of collective agreements for some groups of employees in the public sector, a binding collaboration on competence development between the parties will be established. Within the public school the parties are invited to participate in a committee, which will draw up indicators to the implementation of the one billion DKK, allocated for the period 2014-2020 to continuation training of teachers and pedagogues in the public school.

### **3.2. Competence development of principals**

The high level of ambition for the public school puts new and enhanced demands on the school principal's role. To give the principals the necessary tools to take on this role, it is necessary to strengthen the continuation training.

A national programme for the training and development of principals will be put into action. This will contain tools in relation to manage, plan and organise a school day, which is not controlled by centrally determined rules for working hours. Herein a challenge for school principals lies, who must use the resources and plan the school year in a completely new way. The national programme is carried out in collaboration with KL and others.

School principals' and administrators' competences must also be enhanced in relation to the implementation and work with the content and new management tools in the new public school as a part of a strengthened pedagogical management. Under this management, principals and administrators must be equipped to steer through targets and evaluations and use continuation training of teachers and pedagogues strategically to obtain the school's targets.

As part of this effort, a state financed pool of DKK 60 million has been set aside for continuation training of principals in 2013-15.

### **3.3. School development and knowledge- and evidence based teaching**

The effort to targeted develop knowledge, counsel, communicate and convert knowledge to a change of practice at schools and in classrooms must be strengthened. The Ministry of Education, municipalities, research institutions and university colleges must work together to systematically collect and communicate knowledge about what works to the teachers, so that teachers can draw on professional resources directly in their teaching.

A national corps of approximately 40 learning consultants will be formed, which will offer individual municipalities and schools advice on quality development.

The corps will consist of expert teachers and school principals. The learning consultants will partake in the support of local competence development through advice to administrations and schools about the local development of school practices and the students' academic results. This could e.g. happen through sparring with management about best practice in school management and school culture and advice about good methods, tools and knowledge in order to inspire teachers in the schools to develop the quality of their teaching, including advice about the contents and use of the Common Objectives in subjects and in differentiated teaching.

The learning consultants will provide advice, specifically aimed at each school's needs. Schools with bigger challenges might need special advisory procedures and help to restore quality, while better functioning schools might need an effort in special areas such as strengthened teacher collaboration. In relation to this advice, it is important to also focus on the involvement of the municipality, so that it becomes a cohesive and strategic effort, in which the consultants' advice is closely connected to activities and processes, already established by the municipality.

The corps of learning consultants will be established by an amalgamation and expansion of the present subject consultant arrangement, the bilingualism-taskforce and the inclusion-development under the Ministry of Education. The learning consultants must be closely connected to and have a deep understanding of the present challenges to public school practices. At the same time, the arrangement

must be dynamic, so that the learning consultants will return to their jobs at schools and municipalities after a limited period as member of the corps.

A public school resource centre will be established to support and supplement the corps of learning consultants and contribute to an overview over and ensure utilisation of existing knowledge, so that the professional and pedagogical development and practice and political decisions on a state- and municipal level are built on the best accessible knowledge.

Among the resource centre's tasks will be:

- Support of learning consultants in their tasks to disseminate good methods and tools to individual schools – and as such, contributing to the utilisation of the existing knowledge and research.
- Gather best practice, exemplary teaching programmes, knowledge from trial- and development programmes, etc.

The resource centre will be established by expanding the national Resource Centre for Inclusion and Special Needs Education, and the resource centre will, like the present, be placed in the Ministry of Education.

To ensure easy access to knowledge for teachers, pedagogues and school principals et al, the existing education portal, the EMU, will be established as one single entry point providing an overview over knowledge, methods and tools based on the best-known research. The portal must, together with the corps of learning consultants, ensure, that the knowledge, collected and developed by the resource centre to improve the academic level in the public school, at the vocational schools and at university, is communicated in a sensible and applicable fashion to teachers, pedagogues and principals.

These efforts will support the schools' and the teachers' on-going work with creating a decentralised evaluation culture.

Furthermore, a new forum will be established to ensure a better effect and coordination of research activities in relation to education, including for the public school. The Forum for Coordination of Educational Research will be established in the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education in a close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and with the participation of relevant players in the field such as Department of Education at Aarhus University, other universities with research- and educational activities in the field, university colleges, The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA), KL, etc.

#### **4. Few clear targets and simplification of rules**

The Danish public school faces a number of management issues, which makes it difficult for school management, municipalities and governmental authorities to ensure the best possible conditions for high quality teaching.

To counter these challenges, a number of initiatives will be taken to replace management by rules and processes with management by few, clear targets and knowledge of results and thus support the municipalities' responsibility to head the development of the quality in the public school. Three specific initiatives to counter the described challenges will be taken.

#### **4.1. Few, clear objectives**

Today, no clear targets for the development of the public school exist on a national level or on municipal or school level. The three political targets for the reform will be operationalised in few, quantifiable national objectives, which can be measured and supplemented on municipal- and school level and which will become the starting point for the government's dialogue with the municipalities and the other parties to the development of the public school.

The Public School Reform must, year by year, improve the academic standards in the public school for all students. The national objectives point in one direction and set a high level of ambition for the development of the public school.

Operative result targets are set up for the national objectives, which will make it possible to follow up on the development continuously. The result targets are clear, simple and measurable:

- At least 80 per cent of the students must be good at reading and Maths in the national tests.
- The number of high performance students in Danish and Maths must increase year by year.
- The number of students with poor results in the national tests for reading and Maths must be reduced year by year.
- The well-being of students must increase.

See attachment 1 for the current status and follow-up on national objectives.

The objectives for the students' academic development will be estimated based on the students' results in national tests. This will make it possible to follow the progression of the academic level at the form level 2, 4, 6 and form level 8 and in Maths at form level 3 and form level 6.

The objectives will be estimated on a national level, a municipal level, on school level, on class level and for the individual student, and it will be a starting point for the follow-up, which must happen at all levels in relation to the development of the students' academic standards.

The national tests will be changed technically, so that teachers can use them as a pedagogical tool to estimate the students' competence level and progression in relation to the already established academic criteria for Danish and Maths. In connection with this, it will be defined, based on academic criteria, when a student is good at reading and Maths and when a student belongs in the group of the highest achievers. In establishing these criteria, the aim will be to set levels that correspond with the PISA categories.

Based on Danish Centre for Teaching Environment's well-being thermometer, a tool enabling schools to perform electronic surveys of the teaching environment, clear and obligatory indicators for the students' learning environment, well-being, quiet and discipline will be developed. These indicators will form the base for the new targets for well-being in the public school. Furthermore, good practice and exemplary courses will be mapped and collected, *see section 2.10*.

In support of the municipalities' and the school principals' work with following up on the target- and quality development, additional indicators are put at the disposal of the municipalities, including the percentage of students at a given school, who start and complete a higher secondary education and how big a percentage of the students, who do not obtain the mark 2 at the Leaving Examinations.

With more lessons and clear objectives, the reform will ensure that all students' academic standards will constantly be improved, including obtaining a higher academic level by the time they leave the public school. Based on the efforts of later years, it has been established that students today read as well at form level 3 as they used to at form level 4. With the reform and general boost of the academic level, it is the plan that the students at form level 8 will have the same competences as they have today at form level 9.

Based on the national objectives, the government, the municipalities and the other parties in the public school must follow up on the results every year and assess whether the effort should be adjusted. This will take place based on a yearly status account from the Ministry of Education.

#### **4.2. Strengthened basis for follow-up**

A continuous focus on improvement requires a systematic and qualified dialogue about the public school's evaluation and quality development at all levels.

A written status account will be published every year, which will form the basis for the on-going dialogue between the government, the municipalities and the other parties to the public school about its development. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education will develop its existing result-based quality oversight of the schools, so that it will be based on the nationally established target numbers and quality indicators. Thus, the supervision will primarily focus on creating a basis for

quality development at schools and must be viewed in connection with the learning consultants' work.

On municipal level, a quality report, version 2.0, will be developed, which the municipalities can draw up based on the new management information tool, *see section 4.3*. The quality report can be the base for a dialogue on the municipal council and with the municipal administration, between the municipal administration and the individual school principal about quality development and between school principals and individual teachers about the academic development of students. The quality report also forms part of the base for the school boards' supervision of the schools' activities.

At school level, the student plans must be evolved and simplified, so that these can become relevant and useful tools in the on-going support of systematic, on-going evaluation, follow-up and improvement of the students' benefit from teaching, *see section 4.3*.

The overall demands for documentation will not grow, but the access to existing data will be sanitised and targeted to users.

#### **4.3. Simplification of rules**

The municipalities will be given freer hands to plan the work in the public school. The public school will be managed according to few, clear objectives and less to rules and procedural demands. These rule simplifications will contribute to schools and municipalities giving higher priority to students' learning.

By changing the Public School Act, the following rule simplifications will be implemented:

##### *Precision and simplification of Common Objectives*

The Common Objectives for Danish and Maths will be clarified and simplified before the end of 2013 to ease their use for teachers and to make it clear to teachers, principals, parents (including parent representatives on school boards) and students, which abilities, competences and methods the students need to learn, *see section 2.6*.

##### *Simplification of the time management model*

A simplification of the time management model will be implemented, *see section 2*.

##### *The school library function*

The demand that only teachers at the school can run the library is repealed.

*Common management*

The legal limitations to the establishment of common management of several schools and common management across schools and after-school clubs are changed, so that smaller schools in the future will be defined as schools in rural areas or schools with, normally, less than 300 students.

It will be legal to establish common management for providers of after school classes (ungdomsskoler) and schools (public school).

The requirement that a transition to common management can only happen based on a recommendation from the school- and parent boards in so far as schools and after-school clubs are concerned, is repealed. The school- and parent boards must still be heard prior to a decision of common management.

*School boards – more flexible rules*

The municipal council will be authorised to set the rules for election of school boards.

The municipal council will also be given freer hands to decide the composition of the school boards. This means that it will be possible to offer two places on the school boards to representatives for the local business community or from associations or maybe from local higher secondary schools. This way the public school will become rooted in the community and the collaboration on students' transition to higher secondary schooling will be strengthened. Furthermore, it will become possible for the principals of after-school clubs to participate in school board meetings without voting rights. The proposition does not change the fact that parents must be in the majority and possess the chairmanship in the school board and that both students and employees must be represented, just as it is today.

Finally, the municipal council is given the authority to decide that the function period for board members elected by the parent group at lower secondary schools with less than four form levels should be two years instead of four.

*Electives – the municipalities will be able to develop and approve electives*

It will now be possible for the municipal council to approve teaching in other subjects, not only practical or artistic subjects. This will make it possible to offer profiled courses based on chosen electives, such as innovation courses and natural science courses. As part of the work with clarification and simplification of the Common Objectives, a concept for the establishment of new electives on the municipalities will be created, *see section 2.7*.

*Pedagogical councils will become optional*

The regulation will be repealed, so that pedagogical councils will become optional for the municipalities, and they can limit or even abolish meetings and preparing of meetings in pedagogical councils.

This will ensure a larger degree of freedom in the organisation of the core task, which the on-going pedagogical development is for schools. This gives the municipalities freedom to judge, which forms of collaboration such as year-teams, subject groups or divisional meetings will give the best pedagogical and academic result. This does not change the fact that a school principal must still perform his job in collaboration with employees.

*Simplification and development of student plans*

The student plan must be developed, so that it feels more like a relevant and useful tool in relation to the support of systematic on-going evaluation, follow-up and improvement of the students' benefit from teaching. The student plan of the future must contribute to challenging all students to achieve as highly as individually possible, and it must support a professional and open dialogue about the students' academic standards and diverse development between student, teacher and parents. A development- and simplification effort is set in motion, which shall lead to a student plan, more relevant and useful to teachers, students and parents and more simple to work with, digitally supportable, with larger focus on forward-looking development- and learning goals rather than being exclusively retrospective and which will connect better to the Common Objectives.

The experience from the on-going experiments with student plans under the auspices of the Right to be Challenged will be part of the work, including models, that will still demand descriptions of e.g. Danish, Maths, English and other core subjects and where the school decides what else is important to include in the student plan, based on an overall valuation of the individual student.

The relevant parties, among them Danish School Children, National Association of School Parents and the Danish Union of Teachers will be included in the development work.

A specific proposal for the renewal of the student plan will be discussed with the parties to this agreement in the autumn of 2013 with a view to a future amendment to the Act.

*Quality reports in new version*

A Quality report version 2.0 will be developed, which will be more of a target- and objective regulation tool to support a systematic evaluation and follow-up on results at a municipal level and can work as a foundation for local dialogue and quality development.

The quality reports must be devised in such a way that the municipalities can use them as management information and as a foundation for e.g. the development of result contracts with school principals. The future education data warehouse can be used to automatically feed relevant result- and management data, selected in collaboration with municipalities and school principals, into the new quality reports.

Experience from the on-going experiments with quality reports under the auspices of the Right to be Challenged will be included in the work with the quality report version 2.0.

KL, the Children- and Culture Managers' Association and the Danish Union of Headmasters will be included in the development of the Quality Report version 2.0 to ensure ownership and relevance.

The parties to this agreement will during the autumn of 2013 be presented with a specific draft for the Quality Report version 2.0.

#### *More flexibility in the class teacher function*

Each class will have a class teacher as always. The schools will, however, be given the freedom to decide how the organisation and responsibility for addressing the job as class teacher shall be dealt with. It will be written into the Act that it is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that the job as class teacher is held by a teacher or delegated to several of the class' teachers or attached pedagogues, so that teaching and the overall academic and social development of the class and the individual student, and making the class function as a whole, will be handled in collaboration with the students.

Extra yearly hours to handle the job as class teacher will no longer be allocated.

#### *Simplification and improvement of leaving examinations*

Work to ensure a better and more efficient test system with better censorship and thus more time for teachers to spend with students, is set in motion, *see section 2.7.*

#### *Ease of class formation rules*

The rule that students must be taught in their class for the majority of the school time (the 50 per cent rule) will be repealed for form level 4 to form level 10. A decree will be added to stipulate that the students on form level 4 to 10 must primarily be taught in their classes and that the demand of teaching with the class as starting point encompasses all subjects except where the use of groups is practical (e.g. for sports or where the subject classrooms' layout and size necessitates the division of classes). The class formation rule will be an extension of the current rule that the students must be taught with the class as starting point, but with the

change that there will no longer be a stipulated quantitative limitation to 50 per cent of the school time. The rule does not change that the class formation rule must be viewed based on the total learning time – not subject by subject. In the notes to the motion, directions for what it means in detail that the tuition must take place mainly with the class as starting point will be included, also the fact that it must cover all subjects.

Furthermore, the rules for the use of class formation at form level 8 to 10 will be supplemented with demands that class formation based on the on-going evaluation of the students' academic level can only be formed after the beginning of the school year and that there frequently (at least every 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> month) be made a specifically pedagogically founded valuation of the use of class formation based on academic level seen in relation to the teaching of the whole class as well as the individual student. This to make sure that a permanent ability grouping will not be introduced and that the use of class formation is regularly challenged.

Specific decisions about class formation, including class formation based on academic level every 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> month, happen with responsibility of the school's principal and must be within the principles on forming of classes laid down by the school board.

The rules for form level 8 to 10 will be expanded to also cover form level 7, so that all form levels in lower secondary will be covered by the same rules.

The 50 per cent rule, which from here on only applies to primary form levels, will be supplemented with a rule stipulating that class formation made for practical reasons (e.g. for sports or where the subject classrooms' layout and size necessitates the division of classes), will not be counted in when the extension of class forming on primary form levels is measured.

The current rules for the use of class formation at form level 0 to 6 are not changed except for the repeal of the 50 per cent rule from form level 4 and up and the possibility to exempt practicality based class formation from the 50 per cent rule.

Central rules about class formation not obtaining permanency for a whole school year still prevail.

Altogether, this constitutes both a tightening and a relaxation – a relaxation in relation to the amount of class forming at form level 4 to 10 and a tightening in relation to the conditions for use of class forming at form level 8 to 10, in respect to ability class formation. Looking at form level 7, the possibilities are modified regarding ability class formation. Furthermore, the 50 per cent rule is modified in relation to the early primary years.

With an eye on estimating the effect of various initiatives included in the reform, a number of evaluations will be executed, *see section 5.1*. As part of this, the schools' use of class formation will be evaluated, including looking at the schools' use of ability class formation and the influence this has for the students' attachment to their class. The evaluation will specifically look at whether the requirement for students to be taught with their class as a starting point is upheld, and that the modification of the group rules would not entail larger classes.

The not-subject-divided teaching (assisted learning) will not be part of the rules for class formation.

#### **4.4. Youth Education Guidance and Counseling 5. The parties to the agreement and the further development of the framework for the public school**

There is a need to see children's learning from the ages 0 - 16 in connection. The day care centres must stimulate children's urge to learn and there must be a more smooth transition between day-care and school.

It is therefore agreed that the present school councils are expanded with representatives of the day-care field and renamed Youth Education Guidance and Counseling. Thus, all the institutions for children under the responsibility of the municipalities will be in one place.

Youth Education Guidance and Counseling must still be independent and led by a chairmanship of 5-7 persons, representing a special insight in relation to day-care and school.

### **5. The parties to the agreement and the further development of the framework for the public school**

#### **5.1. The law process and the parties to the agreement**

A draft bill based on this agreement will be sent to hearing with the purpose of introduction later. Prior to that, the bill will have been sent to the parties to the agreement for acceptance.

The parties to the agreement agree that the public school after this strengthening of the academic level must be left alone to focus on implementing the many new and comprehensive changes to the strengthening of the public school's academic level. This means that the parties to the agreement will ensure, as well as possible, that the public school will experience a break from large reforms, so that it will not, year after year, continue to experience new and comprehensive rule changes.

The parties to the agreement will continuously follow up on the implementation of the agreement and may, as a consequence, change the Act. A plan for the im-

plementation of the Act and a directory of the changes will be developed and sent to municipalities, schools, etc.

Evaluations that will facilitate the assessment of the effects of various initiatives will be presented to the parties of the agreement. The Ministry of Education will continuously follow the implementation of the agreement and present the results to the parties of the agreement.

The Minister for Education will present the Folketinget (Parliament) with a report on the Act's effects and possible needs for alterations no later than five years after the Act's effective date.

The Minister for Education will carry on the already established partnership for the public school.

## **Attachment 1. The National Objectives and follow-up on the national objectives**

The parties to the agreement wish to maintain and develop the strengths and the professionalism of the public school by working on accomplishing the following three national objectives:

1. The public school must challenge all students to reach their full potential.
2. The public school must lower the significance of social background on academic results.
3. Trust in the school and student well-being must be enhanced through respect for professional knowledge and practice in the public school.

The three national objectives for the development of the public school are operationalised in the following clear, simple and measurable objectives.

### **Objective 1. The public school must challenge all students to reach their full potential.**

Target 1.1. for objective 1: At least 80 per cent of the students must be good at reading and Maths at national tests.

Status: Below is shown how many students who, in 2012, achieved the mark 3 or more in each test in Danish, reading and Maths:

Danish, reading, form level 2, sublevel 3, 4 and 5: 76 per cent  
 Danish, reading, form level 4, sublevel 3, 4 and 5: 73 per cent  
 Danish, reading, form level 6, sublevel 3, 4 and 5: 75 per cent  
 Danish, reading, form level 8, sublevel 3, 4 and 5: 77 per cent  
 Maths, form level 3, sublevel 3, 4 and 5: 70 per cent  
 Maths, form level 6, sublevel 3, 4 and 5: 76 per cent

The baseline will be determined in connection with the setting of criteria for the national tests.

Target 1.2. for objective 1: The number of high achievers in Danish and Maths must increase year by year.

Status: In 2012, 7 per cent of students at form level 8 received the top score 5 in the national tests in reading, 9 per cent of the students at form level 6 received the top score 5 in the national tests in Maths. The baseline will be determined in connection with the setting of criteria for the national tests. The objective is to set levels that correspond with the PISA categories.

### **Objective 2. The public school must lower the significance of social background on academic results.**

Targets: The percentage of students with bad results in the national tests for reading and Maths, independently of social background, must be reduced year by year.

Status: With a distribution based on social backgrounds (parents' education) the number of students who score 1 (data for exempted students not prepared and thus not included) in the national tests, is more than 20 per cent for students with parents with only compulsory or unknown education, whereas the number is below 5 per cent for students with parents with a longer education on all tests. The baseline will be determined in connection with the setting of criteria for the national tests. The objective is to set levels that correspond with the PISA categories.

**Objective 3. Trust in the school and student well-being must be enhanced through respect for professional knowledge and practice in the public school.**

Targets: The well-being of students must improve.

Status: 80 per cent of the participating students at form level 0 to 3 answer "yes" to the question: "Do you like your after-school club?" and 76 per cent answer "yes" to the question: "Do you like your school?", whereas 65 per cent of the students answer "yes, most of the time". The results are from the report "Students' view of the learning environment in primary- and lower secondary school, thermometer figures for the school year 2010-2011", which was published by DCUM. An obligatory and robust indicator for well-being will have to be developed, based on DCUM's thermometer figures and other sources.

The targets for the students' academic development originate in the national test results. This makes it possible to shed light on the academic levels on both primary and secondary levels.

The targets will be measurable on national, municipal, school and class levels and will thus become a core point for the dialogue and follow-up that must happen at all levels regarding the development of students' academic standard and well-being.

The objectives will not lead to any further publishing of test results, as access to this data will be targeted to individual user groups and access will be limited to the indicators necessary to support the quality development at the given level.

In support of the municipalities' and the schools' work with following up on objectives and quality development, supplementary indicators will be put at the disposal of the municipalities, e.g. on how big a percentage of a school's students start and complete a non-compulsory higher secondary education and how big a percentage of the students do not exceed the mark 2 at the Leaving Examinations.

The use of the national tests as targets will lead to a technical change of the tests within the framework of the existing test system, so that the tests will become criteria-based and can be used to estimate the students' competence levels and progression in relation to pre-established criteria for reading and Maths. The target for well-being entails that existing well-being measurement methods will be developed and made obligatory.