

# Reykjavik City – Education and Youth

The educational system in Iceland has, to a large extent, been decentralised both with regard to responsibilities, finance and decision-making. In 1996 a new legislation concerning compulsory schools took effect and the municipalities took over the operation of schools at the compulsory level.

The law concerning compulsory education stipulates that education shall be mandatory for all children from 6 to 16 years, incl. special education. Municipalities are responsible for the establishment and the running of compulsory schools and preschools, including the provision of special education. They pay for instruction, general teaching, substitute teaching, administration and specialists' service.

## Reykjavik City Division of Education and Youth:\*

- 61 pre-schools with 5.900 children from 18 months to 5 years of age and 17 independent pre-schools with 1.040 children. Around 700 children from 6-18 months of age stay with 200 home-daycare individuals.
- 31 elementary schools with 14.000 students from 6-15 years of age, and 7 independent elementary schools with 616 students.
- 5 schools where pre-school, elementary school and/or after-school programs are combined.
- 34 after-school centers and 5 leisure clubs for around 4.250 children.
- 21 youth centers with 98.000 attendances yearly.
- 4 school bands where 450 students learn to play an instrument
- Adult Education Center where around 250 individuals over 16 years of age receive education and 1.500 seek guidance counseling every year.
- We support 2.500 students in 20 music schools.
- We have about 1.745 full-time preschool and compulsory school teachers positions, out of total 3.850 full-time positions. 80% of our staff are women.

\* As of October 2015

## We serve a diverse community

- Our children speak 70 languages and come from over 97 different nationalities.
- About 400 elementary students learn Icelandic as a second language.
- About 8% of pre-school children and 25% of elementary students receive some special education support. Around 7% of children in after-school program receive special support. In addition we have after school centres for children with disabilities.



Reykjavik City  
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## OUR MISSION

*To ensure the well-being and education of every child and student, encouraging creativity and initiative based on individual strength, interests and abilities.*

## Children and Youth in Reykjavik achieve success

- Students in final year of elementary school are over national average in Icelandic, mathematics and English in annual standardized tests 2014.
- PISA 2012 results in Reykjavik for reading, mathematics and science were above nation average.
- 90% of parents of pre-school children feel that the pre-school works well with social skills and 97% say that their children are happy at the pre-school.
- Around 90% of parents say that after-school programs and youth centers have positive influence on their children social competence and the activities are interesting.
- Over 90% of youth aged 13-15 take part in some form of leisure activities.
- We have good results in our schools where monitoring methods and prevention policy has significantly decreased student use of alcohol, drugs and smoking.
- Around 80% of students 12-15 years of age say they always do their best to learn the skills and knowledge presented in their studies.
- Over 90% of elementary school parents think their children are happy at school.

# We are focusing on capacity building such as training and projects on the following topics

## **Integration of School and Leisure for children**

### **2-12 years**

Projects developing an integrated school/workday for children are currently running in our schools

## **Student Democracy – Active Citizenship**

Increase student influence on their learning environment, prepare students to take action on school boards and take part in decision-making processes

## **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

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

## **Sustainability and outdoor teaching**

Introducing methods of teaching and working for sustainable development at all school levels and leisure work.

## **School evaluation**

Self-evaluation at all school levels and leisure work. External evaluation methods and measurements for school effectiveness.

## **Schools and Health**

Good health and wellbeing of children and staff through healthy habits involving food intake, exercise, safety and mental health.

## **Substance Prevention Among Young People**

We have good results in our schools where monitoring methods and prevention policy has significantly decreased student use of alcohol, drugs and smoking.

## **Parent Involvement**

New methods regarding cooperation with parents. Parents' involvement through transparent information, discussions and mutual decision making emphasizing the child's well-being.

## **Preschools**

Preschool education is intended to bridge the gap between caring for children and educating them, supporting their all-round development and thus preparing them for primary school and life itself.

## **Adult Education**

The city offers adults a second chance for learning. It operates counseling service to guide and assist people to choose the right courses and jobs with respect to their needs



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