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PROJECT
EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP :
FROM POLICY TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH QUALITY
ASSURANCE
(EDC-QA PROJECT)

*Stocktaking on quality assurance
in education and EDC*

Country report : Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Current interest in QA systems in education in Macedonia	4
3. Empowerment and devolved responsibility.....	5
4. “Self improving schools”	6
5. Training and consultancy support for schools	7
6. School development planning.....	9
7. National/international benchmarks and assessment processes	10
8. National Inspectorate	12
9. Curriculum and definitions of “Quality”	13
10. Accountability.....	14
11. The way forward.....	16

1. Introduction

This report is an attempt to describe the present state of affairs in the field of quality and quality assurance in the Republic of Macedonia. It is the result of team work. The team was composed of 6 experts, each responsible for one or two topics. Prof. Ilo Trajkovski acted as coordinator, writing the first part and consolidating the final report. He was responsible for the selection of the team members and for the division of labour among them. With logistical support from Prof. Blagorodna Lakinska, the Director of the State Educational Inspectorate, he conducted two focus group discussions (in Tetovo and Skopje). Prof. Blagorodna Lakinska, from the Department of Pedagogy, and presently Director of the SEI wrote part seven. Prof. Snezana Adamcevska, from the Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Philosophy, is responsible for part three. Mr. Vlado Mostrov, retired advisor of the Bureau of Development of Education, contributed parts 2 and 9. Mrs. Bojana Naceva (Head of the Assessment Unit of the BDE) and Mrs. Gorica Mickovska (advisor at the Assessment Unit of the BDE) wrote parts 4, 5, 6 and 8.

The differences in the presentation of the information and materials are not simply stylistic. They unveil deeper differences in the understanding of the main concepts of this report, such as quality, quality assurance, empowerment and responsibility, self improving schools, school development planning, benchmarking, educational audit and inspection, accountability etc.

The report and the activities envisaged as being initiated after its completion could contribute to the development of wider discussion concerning these concepts, which are of the utmost relevance for ongoing educational reforms in the country.

2. Current interest in QA systems in education in Macedonia

a) Evidence of government interest in QA systems can be found, at the earliest, in 2000. The first document that explicitly expresses government interest in QA systems is the Strategy for Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia, 2000.¹ One year after its formal adoption by the Government, the Strategy 2000 was replaced by a new strategic document, Education Development Strategy 2000-2010.² Today, after the political changes in 2002, the new Government is preparing its own policy documents in the field of education. The current efforts, directed at introducing a QA system, are again - as with the previous two - developed in cooperation with the World Bank. This continuity of cooperation with the World Bank may be seen as a guarantee that the previous two strategic documents will be used as framework documents.

The Strategy 2000 introduced the concept of quality and QA as one of the general principles of the development of education. It criticized the traditional understanding of quality and quality control in education and promoted the idea of QA.

The Education Development Strategy went further in prioritising policy measures. As a result, the Assessment Unit has been set up within the Bureau for Development of

¹ Adopted by the Government in June 2000.

² Adopted by the Government in March 2001.

Education (BDE), charged with responsibility for issues of quality. These developments were accompanied by legislative changes. The new Laws for primary and secondary education³ introduced the concepts of external assessments of student achievements as well as decentralization measures.

The present Government is in the process of developing its educational policy. In addition to the above mentioned normative and legislative frameworks, the new Government has the responsibility for, and is committed to, implementing the new Constitutional provisions adopted following the Ohrid Framework Agreement after the conflict, from 2001. They will all lead to further decentralization and the empowerment of local government and schools to take a stronger role and responsibility for quality and QA in education.

b) The Government has explicitly stated its interest in developing a QA system. In one of its working documents in progress, it is stated that it intends to develop a system that will allow 'continuing school development that would lead to quality assurance', and that, for this purpose, the Government and its BDE will 'establish a system of permanent monitoring and evaluation of the work of schools'.⁴

c) The above mentioned changes have provoked the interest of schools/school principals and teachers associations, yet so far this has not been publicly articulated.

d) Academic interest in the field of quality and quality assurance systems in education is at a promotional stage, and is primarily driven by the requirements of the policy development processes and projects of the Government or its partners. There is no developed fundamental research in QA.

e) There are no NGOs working in the field of QA.

3. Empowerment and devolved responsibility

a) There is an ongoing process of implementing a new Law on Local Self-Government aimed at transferring certain responsibilities and issues related to education from central government level to local communities. The Law on Local Self-management sets up provisions for schools to be considered as "public services". The communities are responsible for founding, financing and administering primary and secondary schools, in cooperation with central government, and in accordance with law, to organize transportation, meals and accommodation in dormitories for students. The Community Council is responsible for appointing members to the managing boards of institutions for public services, founded by the community. It approves the programmes of work, financial plans and yearly reports of public services founded by the community. The Mayor is entitled to appoint the directors

³ Law for primary education, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002, Law for secondary education, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002

⁴ Konstantin Petkovski, Vice director of the BDE, 'Sistem za poddrška i razvoj na obrazovaniето vo Republika Makedonija' (System of support and development of the education in the Republic of Macedonia), project document presented at the meeting with the experts of the World Bank, 03/06/2003. The author wants to thank to Mr. K. Petkovski for sharing his presentation for the needs of this report.

(school principals) of public services founded by the community, on the basis of open competition. This requires corresponding updating of legislature which is due to take place by the end of 2003. One of the main initiatives is to devolve the responsibility of nominating and recalling school directors from the Ministry of Education to the School Board. The two versions of the national strategy for development of education until 2010 set out certain priorities related to training and empowering schools to be responsible for school effectiveness, school improvement and development planning. This also implies dealing with issues related to effectiveness and quality of education, characteristics of good schools, use of modern instruments and methods of monitoring students' progress and attainment, collaborative planning and implementation curriculum design and school development plans, standards of teaching and academic achievement and links with the local community.

b) The Government, i.e. the Ministry of Education, is still taking responsibility for setting goals, targets, developing new curricula and monitoring the system in the name of quality. Schools are expected to improve, although the resources are not always provided, making this transition problematic. Having some experience in taking part in international projects, such as TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA +, many schools are becoming aware of the emphasis on quality issues and school improvement. Teachers are beginning to think in terms of school based improvement initiatives and development plans. With regard to this, they expect some new mechanisms to monitor their performance. It is evident that there are weak incentives operating to encourage teachers to change their practice in their daily work routines. There is a growing sense of urgency about the need for large scale reforms, and more appreciation of the complexity of achieving it.

4. "Self improving schools"

a) In the Republic of Macedonia, QA still falls within the responsibility of the schools. They make constant efforts to establish their public image as good schools. Public opinion concerning the quality of a particular school is usually formed on the basis of the achievements of distinguished teachers whose students win special contest prizes and awards, achieve higher entrance rates to subsequent educational levels, or continue their education in foreign prestigious educational institutions.

Besides this, as additional criteria, public opinion observes the level of technical equipment and the general infrastructure of the school, with particular emphasis on the technological support for the teaching process.

In general it could be argued that the principle of 'self-improving schools' has not been adopted and implemented as a consciously introduced strategy for independent development, but that schools practice self-improvement as part of their traditional mission. There is no single form that defines the conditions under which an individual school should accept and develop the self-improving approach. The only exception to this are the schools that are involved in projects directed toward changing the style of work, reorganization of management or toward establishing new and higher standards in the professional development of the teaching staff.

The absence of a systematic introduction of the 'school self-improvement' approach is a consequence of the low and unsatisfactory sustainability of the different projects. Most of them lack sustainability and mainstreaming capacities and effects.

The initiatives of individual schools to adopt the self improving approach are isolated, short term and limited. Yet, the Government (the responsible Ministry) supports all initiatives directed towards improving the quality of schools. Its participation is usually expressed in the form of support for initiatives, the appointment of responsible personnel to coordinate cooperation with the schools and in mobilizing its advisory Unit within the BDE to participate in the projects.

b) All previous educational reforms were directed toward establishing parameters for achieving higher quality in education in general. Until the 1990s, the primary goal of educational reforms was centralization and they were initiated by the Communist party forums and documents. The changes in education in the previous period were basically 'external reforms' (dealing with issues such as the duration of the particular educational circles/levels, the structure of the VET schools; changes of curricula, the school network etc). From this perspective the reforms were popularly understood as fundamental restructuring of the educational system.

After independence, reform efforts have a more operative and visible character and are related to components of the school process; to improving the technological support for schools (equipment provision); content intervention; promotion of team work; and in particular, to teacher training within the numerous projects that have been introduced in primary and secondary schools.

The responsible Ministry demonstrates permanent interest in quality issues, and attempts to contribute to the development of the school ethos, as one of the key aspects of this. Yet, in spite of such attempts, the Ministry is more focused on the global transformation of the system than with the school as an organizational unit of the system. It could be concluded that the work of the Ministry of Education is directed toward providing the conditions for the global development of education, within which each individual school can find the preconditions for its own public image and rating. In contrast to this, it seems that the professional interest of the teaching staff is directed toward the development of 'their' own school.

The development of school ethos/culture is only beginning and moves slowly. This is the consequence of the traditional understanding of the school, above all, as simply a place for learning, without taking into account the other aspects of the school's activity and mission. The typical characteristic of this understanding is the dominance of lecturing, to the detriment of other forms of activity in schools. There are only a few schools that have developed their own style of work, and they are recognizable because of their activity. Such schools are located in urban areas.

5. Training and consultancy support for schools

a) By law, in-service training for teachers and school directors is organized by BDE, the Universities – teacher training faculties - and other institutions which are registered for teacher training. In practice only the BDE provides in-service training on a regular basis, mostly for implementing new curricula and new teaching methods. Teacher training faculties conduct in-service training occasionally within the framework of projects which are based in the University.

The content of in-service training is decided by providers, based on their knowledge and understanding of teachers' needs and the current curriculum reforms. As BDE is

responsible for analyzing schools' and teachers' work quality, it can be assumed that it is effective in determining school needs for in-service training.

There are no current surveys of school needs for in-service training (the last was conducted more than 10 years ago).

b) There is no formal system allowing schools to make specific requests for help from a particular institution. Informally, schools can request help from BDE – as the institution which is responsible for supporting schools. Schools rarely request any kind of help. If they do, it is when a school is involved in a new project or when a school director is newly appointed. Up till now, BDE has been able to respond to such requests. Even more rarely, some schools request professional support from individual experts, from universities or former advisers in BDE.

c) During the last 10 years, the role of non institutional providers⁵ of in-service training for teachers was very important. Mainly they provide foreign consultants or financial resources for teacher training (seminars and workshops) conducted by country consultants from universities or from BDE.⁶ They provide support for teacher training in their fields of interest (interactive learning/teaching, health promotion, conflict resolution, civic education, civic rights)

d) In 1995, financed by the Open Society Institute, seminars and workshops (4 weeks) were organized for 100 school principals. These were conducted by international consultants from the USA, the UK and Holland and most of the content was connected with the quality assurance approach. In almost all other projects workshops were conducted for school principals in project schools and most of them were about quality assurance in the particular projects.⁷ The BDE, in 1998, with financial support from UNICEF, organized seminars and workshops for newly appointed principals and in 1999/2000 they organised 10 seminars which 250 principals attended. Some of the topics were connected with quality assurance. Now, because of political changes in the recent past, most of those trained school principals are no longer in their previous posts in schools.

e) Teacher training providers for quality assurance in the recent past were often international consultants. Most of them had experience in quality assurance. Advisers from BDE had experience in quality assurance connected with the previous education system and had gained some new understanding and experience by working alongside foreign consultants who conducted seminars and workshops in the country over the past 10 years.

f) Five years ago (in 1997), a civic education project was started, supported by international consultants.⁸ 36 advisers from BDE attended seminars led by

⁵ UNICEF, WHO, NGO

⁶ Thematic review of national policies for education, FYRoM, CCNM/DEELSA/ED (2001)⁷, page 27

⁷ More than 2/3 of primary schools are in some of large projects (Interactive learning, Step by step, Health promoting schools) and about 50% of vocational secondary schools are in VET project

⁸ Centar for Civic Education – Calabasas, California, USA

international consultants or by national team members. The main job of these advisers is to conduct teacher training or support (advice) for teachers in certain school subjects. They, together with 36 trained mentor teachers, conduct seminars on civic education in primary schools.

g) None of the in-service training providers is registered for those activities alone. Teacher training providers are responsible also for other duties within the educational system (as is BDE) or for pre-service training (as in the case of the Universities). They are formally funded by the budget on the basis of yearly planning. BDE developed its annual plan for teacher training on the basis of an agreement with the Ministry of education and the Ministry of finance. In the last 5 years the funds for in-service teacher training have been very limited. Several years ago schools received a small amount of money for professional development and teacher training and to pay accommodation costs for participants in teacher training. Most of the in-service teacher training over the past 8 years was financed by international resources.⁹

6. School development planning

a) By law,¹⁰ each school is obliged to prepare an annual school plan and to send it to the regional office of the Ministry of education and to BDE. There is no official obligation for development planning over a longer period, but school principals are encouraged by the BDE to prepare a middle term (4 year) school development plan. One of the criteria for developing professional opinion and preparing references for candidates for the job of school principal is the drafting of a middle-term plan for school development written by the candidate for school principal.

In the seminars and workshops school principals are trained for school development planning (content, format). For the annual school plan the starting point is analysis of previous school results and available school resources. Officially, the preparation of such school plans is the responsibility of the school principal, but usually it is prepared jointly with the school pedagogical-psychological service.¹¹ Annual and middle term development plans are submitted to the School board and officially adopted by the School Board.¹²

The main purpose of development planning is quality assurance, but in most schools annual school plans are formally prepared in response to a legal obligation to do so. Frequently, the loss of trained school principals has lowered the quality of development planning. Another problem is that schools finances are highly centralized and are not linked to the school development plan.

⁹ UNICEF, WHO, NGO, and other donors

¹⁰ Law for primary education, art 30., Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002, Law for secondary education, art 29., Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002

¹¹ In most of the school there are psychologist and/or pedagogues. Their duty, except working with individual students, is to do reviews and analyses of teaching/learning process and support teaching staff

¹² School board is consisted of 9 members (representatives of teaching staff, Ministry, local community and parent)

b/c) By law,¹³ the review of school performance is the responsibility of the BDE and for that it prepares some instruments, but usually they are not known to the school in advance. In the last 7 years, schools have rarely been reviewed. Schools are not supported in developing their own instruments for self-evaluation.

d) In the period when intensive training of school principals was taking place (1996-2000), some schools practiced development planning based on quality assurance.¹⁴ There were even school initiatives for schools networking on an informal base.

7. National/international benchmarks and assessment processes

a) The initiative related to improvements in the quality of assessment was started as a result of the Educational Rehabilitation Project in 1999. In preparing this project, the World Bank team for education identified the lack of capacity to evaluate student performance as a serious constraint in improving the delivery of public education in the Republic of Macedonia.¹⁵ CITO, the National Institute for Educational Measurement from the Netherlands, was invited by the World Bank to undertake a two-year capacity building project on assessment. The Dutch Government funded this project.

Now, by law¹⁶, the MoEs delegate responsibility for external periodical assessment of student achievement to BDE. An Assessment Unit has been set up within BDE to deal with issues of effectiveness and quality in the education system. The first circle of National Assessment for mother tongue (Macedonian and Albanian) and Mathematics at the end of grade 4 was carried out in 2000. The main characteristics were that statistically stratified representative samples of classes were assessed. The knowledge and skills for each domain (except oral expression) from the curriculum were measured. The national assessment also provided information and data about certain educational factors (schools' condition, syllabi, teaching methods, socio-cultural back-ground of students, students' attitudes towards education) which influence students' achievement. As an outcome of testing, the national report of students' achievement and data about educational factors, as well as standards of achievement, was printed and distributed to each school. Schools that were included in the sample received the reports on student achievements at school level. There are plans to develop the same framework for National assessment at the end of fourth grade for Natural and Social Science in 2003 and National Assessments for mother tongue and Mathematics at the end of eighth grade in 2004.

¹³ Law for primary education, art. 112., Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002, Law for secondary education, art 103., Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002

¹⁴ Some of the projects which were part of such plans were supported by Open society Institute – Macedonia and in a short period Ministry of education supported financially schools in which innovative projects were introduced.

¹⁵ Inception Report for the assessment and examination project, CITO, Macedonia, 1999

¹⁶ Law for primary education, art 54, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002, Law for secondary education, art 56, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002

b) As part of the standards development process and national benchmarks setting in 2002, the process of standard setting for civic education for the grade-teaching phase and grade 6 in primary education was started. The main goal is to develop outcomes based standards for civic education that would serve to monitor and assess civic education on a national level. In 2003, items will be piloted and in 2004 the first version of standards will be set.¹⁷ Information on teaching practice and teachers' opinions about civic education will also be collected. This can serve for teaching practice, curriculum and textbook improvement.

There is a formal school-leaving exam at the end of general secondary education (Matura) and a final exam at the end of 4 –year vocational schools. Both exams are under revision. Passing the National Matura Examination will complete general secondary education, and four-year secondary vocational education can also finish with the National Matura.

The basic functions of the National Matura Examination are

- rounding off the secondary education cycle;
- acquiring the right to higher education;
- establishing objective criteria for educational selection.

The National Matura Examination comprises of a compulsory and an elective part. The compulsory part has the objective of assessing the levels of general literacy (native and foreign languages, and mathematics). The elective part of the Matura aims to assess knowledge, abilities and skills in areas of specific interest to the student, and those that they had studied in greater depth during the general secondary or vocational education. A project/ practical assignment will be part of the elective part. The compulsory part will be externally conducted, and the Schools Matura Committee will be responsible for the elective part.

The National Matura Committee and Assessment Unit are responsible for establishing, carrying out, and maintaining the new concept of Matura. It is planned to start the real Matura in 2005, although the Assessment Unit has up till now carried out three pilot examinations to obtain information concerning quality of test materials and testing procedures.

The Assessment Unit, as the representative of the Republic of Macedonia, participates in three international studies: TIMSS, PIRLS and OECD PISA +. These international studies have provided extensive data and information about education systems, syllabi, instruction, student achievement and teaching practice in other countries. They also give distinctive comparative information about students' achievement from international perspectives.

c) The results of all testing is available to schools as reports on a National level. This is because National Assessment and International Studies are sample based assessments. Only the schools that are included in the testing received reports on the

¹⁷ Achievements Standards for Civic Education, Project submitted by CRS to USAID/ Macedonia, 2002

school level. Advisers from BDE are responsible for training teachers in how to use reports for preparing development plans at school level.

d) The National assessment and certification process is still in development in the Republic of Macedonia. Thus there is a danger that assessment of a sub-set of curriculum goals could distort the balance of general curriculum goals. However, those with responsibility in the country are aware of this problem and are trying to avoid it by developing assessment objectives that are more skills- than knowledge-oriented and by covering, as far as possible, goals from the curriculum.

8. National Inspectorate

There is a national inspectorate - the State Educational Inspectorate (SEI). This is an organ of the Ministry of Education and Science. According to the Law on educational inspection, the SEI supervises the enforcement of laws and other ordinances and general acts that regulate education in the institutions of preschool, primary and secondary education, and in the students' dormitories.

The SEI supervises:

- the existence of conditions for conducting educational activities;
- the implementation of preschool curricula;
- the implementation of primary and secondary school curricula;
- the use of approved books and handbooks in primary and secondary education
- monitoring the annual plans of work of the public and private educational institutions: weekly and daily number of hours of class work and work practice; the duration of the school day; the start and end of the school year; the number of effective school days; the working hours of teachers; the number of students in classes and the number of children in preschool groups;
- student enrolment and assessment; school competitions; certification of merits and awards, the implementation of pedagogical measures; exams and student rights and duties;
- in-service professional training and the development of teachers;
- implementation of experimental plans and programs;
- fulfilment of the program of work during strikes;
- the pursuit of pedagogical evidence and documentation and the issuing of certificates and diploma;
- the procedure for curriculum development at the university;
- the conditions and procedures for appointing teaching and research staff in the university;
- the verification of the work of public and private educational institutions.

The work of the SEI is directed by the Chief State Inspector – the Director. The Director of the SEI and the Deputy director are appointed by the Government, at the proposal of the Minister of Education and Science. The competences of the SEI

are exercised by State educational inspectors located in the bigger municipalities. Their offices are not fixed and cover large regions.

b) According to the proposals for the modernization of education, the SEI will receive a stronger role. The project proposal developed in cooperation with the World Bank seeks to overcome the present limitations. These proposals envisage the establishment of the SEI as an Audit agency charged with the responsibility of monitoring the work of the BDE. It is expected that educational inspectors will also support school boards in their evaluation of the school principals. It is also thought that the SEI will develop a methodology for evaluating school achievements. International support is considered to be a precondition for these developments.

In general, the new SEI as an Agency is envisaged as having the following competences:

- to inspect the creation of nationally established evaluation criteria
- to publish its inspection reports, to disseminate the information to schools, and to make recommendations to schools
- to conduct a follow-up visit to the inspected schools one year after the publication of the report and to deliver a report on improvements and achievements in the implementation of the recommendations
- to prepare and produce an annual report on the standards in, and the quality of, particular school subjects
- to advise the Minister concerning the policy implications of the inspection reports.

9. Curriculum and definitions of “Quality”

a) By law,¹⁸ the development of the national curriculum is the responsibility of BDE. The national curriculum is developed by the Ministry of education. The primary education curriculum has to be recommended to the Ministry by the Pedagogical service (Pedagoska sluzba), a special experts consultancy body.

b) Over the last few years, the intention has been that the new curriculum should be more goal- than content- oriented. Interactive methods of teaching and learning have usually been recommended. In parts of the national curriculum some content standards are named: knowledge and ability (what is expected to be developed by the end of each school year). For the primary school in each subject curriculum a separate part is named: basic knowledge, which could serve as a sufficient standard. These curricula are rather detailed and there are recommendations from the school support institution¹⁹ that they need to be used as a framework for developing school curricula and for teacher planning. In practice, teaching is still knowledge- and fact-based and

¹⁸ Law for primary education, art. 28, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002, Law for secondary education, art. 22, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002

¹⁹ Bureau for development of education

there is not enough flexibility in accommodating the school curriculum to the different backgrounds of the students.²⁰

All curricula are printed as official documents and are sent to all schools, usually without charge. By law,²¹ national curricula are the basis for the planning and delivering of teaching.

c) In the country there is no established system of national assessment.²² The grading system in schools is normative. There is no valid and reliable information on educational outcomes at country level. For this reason the government can hardly set targets based on standards for students' and schools' performance. There are no publicly announced targets connected with students' attainment or school quality improvement, which are expected to be reached during a certain period, set by the government.

d) Civic education is part of the national curriculum for primary and secondary education as a separate subject. As with other subjects, curriculum content standards for education for democratic citizenship are set. The process of setting outcomes-based standards started for primary education in the year 2000. Standards for two subjects were developed.²³ In the year 2002, standard setting procedures for outcomes standards in civic education in primary education began to be used.²⁴

10. Accountability

a) Schools are accountable for meeting the aims and objectives of education according to the prescribed curricula. They can submit initiatives for changes and updating these curricula. Instruction is carried out in the official language (Macedonian), or in the students' national language (Albanian, Turkish, Serbian). Schools can make use of textbooks that have been approved by the Minister. Schools are expected to organize the enrolment of the students in their region on time, to oversee the regular attendance of students and to provide reports about all this to the Ministry. They are also expected to organize students' transportation to schools, and to provide meals and accommodation in dormitories. The practice of physical and mental abuse of students is not allowed. Schools are expected to comply with the regulations for the transfer of students from one school to another according to the

²⁰ Thematic review of national policies for education-FYRoM,CCNM/DEELSA/ED (2001)7, page 23

²¹ Law for primary education, art. 23, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002, Law for secondary education, art. 21 and 24, Sluzben vesnik na Makedonija, 11. 07. 2002

²² First pilot national assessment (for two subjects in the end of the grade-teaching phase) was conducted in year 2001

²³ National assessment – Achievement standards for mother tongue for grade teaching-phase, BDE, Skopje, 2001 and National assessment – Achievement standards for mathematics for grade teaching-phase, BDE, Skopje, 2001

²⁴ Standards for civic education – project, Assessment unit, BDE, 2002

law, i.e. at the request of parents or guardians. Schools must maintain pedagogical documentation and issue public documents in accordance with the law. Schools are not allowed to organize or carry out activities of a political or religious nature.

Primary schools can begin work after meeting the starting conditions and after receiving from the Ministry the decision/approval for their verification. They are expected to keep pedagogical documentation and issue public documents in accordance with the law. Schools can organize instruction in satellite schools, and instruction in combined classes. Schools are expected to have developed their school-year work-plan by the beginning of the school year, and to organize additional instruction for students who lag behind. Schools are expected to fulfil the regulation for completing 180 days of instruction per school year and to provide for inspection and monitoring by authorized representatives. Schools can recruit staff but that recruitment has to meet the requirements set up by the law on new employment contracts. Schools are expected to organize systematic specialist health check-ups on staff at the beginning of the school year, and to terminate the employment contract of staff suffering from mental disease, alcoholism or drug abuse. Teachers are expected to implement the curriculum and to assess and evaluate the progress and achievement of students. They are also expected to regularly attend in-service training courses, seminars and workshops.

b/c) Schools can be fined if they

- do not carry out instruction in the official language (Macedonian), or in the language of the nationality of the students (Albanian, Turkish, Serbian);
- organize political and religious activities in their schools;
- begin work before meeting the conditions for starting work and before receiving approval for its verification;
- organize a satellite school without having approval from the Ministry of Education;
- have not developed their year work-plan in due time, or fail to carry it out;
- do not organize additional instruction for students;
- have not fulfilled the requirements to carry out instruction during the required 180 days;
- organise combined classes without approval from the Ministry;
- have failed to organize and execute on time the enrolment of students;
- do not enrol students from their region;
- have failed to report to the Ministry concerning the unenrolled students, or students that do not attend school regularly;
- do not meet the requirements for transfer of students from one school to another according to the law, i.e. on the request of parents or guardians.
- practice physical or mental abuse of students;
- recruit staff contrary to the requirements set up by law;

- do not organize systematic specialist health check on staff at the beginning of the school year, or if they do not terminate the employment contract of staff suffering from mental disease, alcoholism, drug abuse;
- do not prepare a new employment contract;
- use textbooks that have not been approved by the Minister;
- do not keep pedagogical documentation in accordance with the law;
- issue public documents not in accordance with the law;
- obstruct the execution of inspection and monitoring by authorized representatives.

d) Incentives/sanctions. Pedagogical measures for students include exclusion from school (for having more than three negative marks or failing to have regular school attendance), entitlement to awards (talented students are entitled to accelerated promotion to a higher grade). Teachers are entitled to a 0.5% raise in salary for each year of service, and upon recommendation by the school and the BDE to being awarded the title of a distinguished pedagogical worker.

e) Parents/guardians are responsible for the enrolment and the regular school attendance of their students.

Students are accountable for their regular school attendance. Students receive negative marks during the school year and at the end of the school year are entitled to additional instruction.

The School Board is responsible for approving the school statute; developing the year-work-plan and approving the reports, developing the financial plan; making recommendation to the school principal on issues related to complaints lodged by students and teachers;

The School Principal is responsible for organizing and managing educational work, proposing the annual work-plan, executing the decisions made by the School Board; selecting, assigning and dismissing staff, submitting reports to the School Board, The BDE and the Ministry of Education.

The BDE is responsible for developing curricula for pre-school, primary and secondary (general and vocational) education, for monitoring the implementation of curricula, the use of approved text-books, organizing in-service training courses of teachers, appraisal of staff and school principals.

The State Educational Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring the implementation of legislative issues by schools.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for setting up educational policy and for the development of education, developing and passing regulations and laws; financing primary and secondary education, monitoring the allocation, distribution and expenditure of finances and the implementation of educational policy.

11. The way forward

It is necessary for schools to have their own budget for in-service teacher training which could be spend, according to their need, for improving quality at school level.

Specialized institutions for in-service teacher training should have to be accredited before offering schools their services.

A system of self-evaluation for schools needs to be developed and schools need to be encouraged to request support for school and teacher from suitable institutions.

The position of school principal needs to become more professional and all candidates for that post need to be trained in advance. Part of that training should be school development planning focused on quality assurance. An institution should be accredited for school principals' training.

School development plans should be obligatory for each school and should be supported by the Ministry of education and/or the local community.

School boards should take responsibility for taking part in school development planning and implementation year by year.

The crucial issue for sustainable development of assessment and examination development is the establishment of an Institution that would be responsible for carrying out those activities. It is also very important to establish a system for external examinations and assessment on a national level. The establishment of a valid, reliable, practical and internationally recognized system for assessment and examination would be a powerful contribution to quality assurance mechanisms in the Republic of Macedonia.

The process of setting outcomes-based standards needs to be continued. Standards should be set in a minimum of three levels and printed in a form that can be easily used by teachers and schools for improving quality.