2019

Public consultations on the proposal of Regulations on promotion and rewarding of teachers

Ministry of Science and Education opened public consultations at the beginning of January 2019 on the Draft of the Regulations on Promotion and Rewarding of Teachers, Professional Associates and School Heads in Primary and Secondary Schools and Dormitories. During the drafting process a new approach was used. Education staff employed in schools was consulted and the result of the process is 1.385 suggestions.

New Regulations on the Appropriate Type of Education of Teachers and Professional Associates in Primary Schools


Proposal of the Strategy on digital maturity of schools and education system

Ministry of Science and Education opened public consultations on the Proposal of the Strategy on Digital Maturity of Schools and Education System. Public consultations were closed in early 2019.

The Strategy records results of the process of strategic planning of informatization of the education system in the Republic of Croatia started in 2015, culminated in 2018 with the work of Commission for Drafting the Strategy on Digital Maturity.

The process of strategic planning was initiated in order to direct policies, activities and projects in the technology implementation area in schools and in the education system by 2030, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact of initial investments. Furthermore, the objective is also recognizing the work and role of teachers, school heads and employees in education agencies in the process of integrating ICT in the education system.
Public consultations on the Draft of Decision on curriculum documents for History and Physical and Health Education

In February 2019, Ministry of Science and Education opened public consultation on the Draft of Decision on curriculum for History and Physical and Health Education for primary schools (ISCED 1 and 2) and upper secondary general education (ISCED 3). Public consultations were opened because proposed documents are significantly different from the versions for which the public consultation process had already been carried out.

Implementation of the pilot phase of the curricular reform

In the school year 2018/2019 the pilot phase of curricular reform is in progress. Experimental programme “School for Life” (Škola za život [2]) is implemented in 74 schools which were selected for participation out of which 48 primary schools (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2) and 26 secondary schools (ISCED 3). Ministry of Science and Education conducts the curricular reform. The Experimental programme is being implemented in the school year 2018/2019 in first (ISCED 1) and fifth (ISCED 2) grade in all teaching subjects, while in the seventh grade (ISCED 2) only the following subjects are included: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In upper secondary education (ISCED 3), the Experimental programme is being implemented in the first grade of general education (gimnazije) in all subjects and in vocational schools in general education subjects. The curricular reform is financed from the State Budget, European Social Fund and European Commission Structural Reform Support Service.

The aim of the Experimental programme is to verify the applicability of new curricula, new teaching methods and new teaching tools in order to increase students’ competences and their satisfaction with education and to increase teachers’ motivation. In September 2019, the implementation of the pilot phase of curricular reform is planned for second (ISCED 1) and sixth grade (ISCED 2) of primary schools and in the eight (ISCED 2) grade for subjects Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In upper secondary schools (ISCED 3) it will be implemented in second grade in all subjects in general education and in vocational schools in general education subjects. From 2019/2020 curricular reform will be implemented in all schools (in first and fifth grade of primary schools, in seventh grade for subjects Biology, Chemistry and Physics and in first grade in upper secondary schools – ISCED 3).

Second phase of the e-Schools programme

The e-Schools programme [3] is carried out through several projects aimed at introducing ICT into the school system and raising the level of digital literacy. The implementation of the second phase of the project is planned in the 2019-2022 period and it will be based on the results of the pilot project. The e-Schools programme aims to achieve a complete digital transformation of schools in the Republic of Croatia with the general objective of contributing to student preparedness for the labour market or further education. The project includes all schools in the Republic of Croatia, thus ensuring overcoming the digital divide. The project will provide e-services and e-contents, as well as ICT equipment and education of teachers and other school staff who will use all of the materials provided in the project. In the second phase of the programme, results of the research and the evaluation carried out through the pilot project are took into account, thus ensuring that activities are designed in a way which will have the best possible impact on the work of schools and the highest efficiency in terms of spending financial and human resources.
Regulations on Teaching Assistants and Professional Communication Intermediaries

Regulations on Teaching Assistants and Professional Communication Intermediaries [4] (in Croatian, Pravilnik o pomoćnicima u nastavi i stručnim komunikacijskim posrednicima, Official Gazette 102/2018) were adopted at the end of 2018 in order to equalize the opportunities of students with disabilities and to ensure their equal participation in the education process.

These Regulations for the first time establish methods of involvement, the manner and the content of training and performing the work of teaching assistants and professional communication intermediaries in schools and other public institutions providing education services, the conditions which have to be fulfilled as well as the procedure for providing this kind of support to students with disabilities.

Regulations set out the procedure for determining the need, financing, procedure and decision-making process for the right to support. Furthermore, qualifications and conditions to become teaching assistants and professional communication intermediaries are also prescribed.

Public consultations on the Draft of Decision on curriculum documents for specific teaching subjects

At the end of 2018, Ministry of Science and Education opened public consultation on the Draft of Decision on curriculum documents for specific teaching subjects which will be the basis for implementing the curricular reform as of school year 2019/2020. Public consultations lasted until the beginning of January 2019 and were open for subjects Croatian Language, Mathematics, English Language, German Language and Physical and Health Education.

New Regulation on technical conditions and documentation for students on exchanges

Technical conditions for appropriate student accommodation and documentation which needs to be submitted for a temporary residence permit for the purpose of upper secondary education within the framework of student exchange programmes lasting more than 90 days are determined within the new Regulation. The Regulation ensures implementation of the Directive (EU) 2016/801 [5] of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing. New Regulation is available in Croatian language (Pravilnik o načinu utvrđivanja tehničkih uvjeta za primjeren smještaj učenika i dokumentaciji koju je potrebno priložiti zahtjevu za odobrenje privremenog boravka u svrhu srednjoškolskog obrazovanja kroz programe razmjene učenika, Official Gazette 99/2018 [6]).
**Initiative on the new law on textbooks**

As a precondition for the implementation of curricular reform in all schools in the school year 2019/2020, the new Law on Textbooks and Other Educational Material for Primary and Secondary Schools has been proposed. With the new Proposal the prices of textbooks are regulated (in relation to the instruction time and number of subjects in the school year) as well as the weight of the textbooks having in mind digital possibilities for new textbooks and quality of the textbook content. Compulsory basic textbooks are separated from other working materials in the proposal, such as workbooks. The use of interactive digital textbooks in the teaching process is possible within the proposal. Clearer processes of the approval of textbooks and of the selection of textbooks for use in the teaching process are prescribed.

Public debate on the Law was held from 30 August to 29 September 2018 and the first reading of the Law was held in the Parliament.

**Amendments of the Decision on establishment of the Network of schools**

In September 2018 the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Decision on Amendments of the Decision on Establishment of the Network of School Institutions, Student Dormitories and Education Programmes (Odluka o izmjenama i dopunama Odluke o donošenje Mreže osnovnih i srednjih škola, učeničkih domova i programa obrazovanja, Official Gazette 86/2018 [7]). Network of schools defines school institutions with all facilities in which education activities are performed and also defines education programmes. The Network of schools is structured to meet the needs expressed by systematic monitoring and prediction of demographic, economic and urban development in the country, to meet the requirements of accessibility and rational organisation of enrolment areas and to meet the conditions and standards prescribed by the State Pedagogical Standard (Official Gazette 63/2008 [8], 90/2010 [9]) for primary and lower secondary education. With the Decision on Establishment of the Network of School Institutions, Student Dormitories and Education Programmes the abolition of schools is not anticipated. On the other hand, needs of the founders for establishing new schools, education programmes and introducing other changes are expressed.

**Compulsory Informatics in lower secondary education (5th and 6th grade)**

Based on Decision on Curriculum for Subject Informatics for Primary and General Secondary Education in the Republic of Croatia (Odluka o donošenju kurikulum za nastavni predmet Informatike za osnovne škole i gimnazije u Republici Hrvatskoj, Official Gazette, 22/2018) adopted in March 2018 subject Informatics is compulsory for all pupils as of school year 2018/2019 for ISCED 2 level of education, for grades 5th and 6th (for grades 7th and 8th the subject Informatics is optional). Subject Informatics will be optional for all pupils for grades 1st to 4th (ISCED 1) as of school year 2020/2021 and for ISCED 3 it is compulsory for all pupils in general education in one stage of their education. In general secondary education schools Informatics is compulsory for the first grade, and for other grades it is optional. In general secondary schools with emphasis on languages, as well as the general secondary schools with emphasis on classical languages (ISCED 3) Informatics is compulsory in second grade and optional in other grades. In general secondary schools with emphasis on natural sciences and mathematics the subject Informatics is compulsory in all grades (but with two proposed
programmes which differ in amount of instruction time dedicated to the subject). The curriculum is published for all three ISCED levels even though for ISCED 1 it will be implemented as of 2020/2021.

Generic competences which the subject Informatics tends to develop are:

- creativity and innovativeness by creating digital works and algorithms
- critical thinking and evaluation of technology and sources of knowledge
- problem solving and decision making with the help of ICT
- information and digital literacy by understanding and constructive communication on concepts in the field of Informatics
- personal and social responsibility by considering ethical questions
- responsible and efficient way of communication and collaboration in the digital environment
- active citizenship as readiness and courage for publicly and responsibly expressing opinion and acting with mutual respect in a digital environment
- managing education and professional development by learning through ICT, distance learning, video conferencing, virtual walks, access to online databases etc.

In subject Informatics pupils will also develop different techniques for solving problems which are useful in other fields.

**Amendments to the Primary and Secondary School Education Act**

In the Primary and Secondary School Education Act (Official Gazette, 89/2008, 86/2010, 92/2010, 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012, 126/2012, 94/2013, 152/2014, 07/2017, 68/2018) a separate article is integrated which regulates the work of school employees working on EU projects or EU funds if the funds for salaries of those employees are reserved within projects. With the approval of school committee, school heads can allow and enable work of school employees on EU projects and EU funds if it does not negatively affect work processes and teaching activity in schools. School employees working on EU projects and EU funds will have reduced workload equivalent to the time dedicated to working on a project. For school employees working on EU projects and EU funds and not working full-time hours, their weekly assignments can be increased equivalently to project workload. School employees have a right to increased salary (30%) for the time dedicated to working on projects.

**Collective labour agreements for primary and secondary school teachers**

In May 2018 collective labour agreements for primary and secondary school teachers were signed (Kolektivni ugovor za zaposlenike u osnovnoškolskim ustanovama, Official Gazette, 51/2018; Kolektivni ugovor za zaposlenike u srednjoškolskim ustanovama, Official Gazette, 51/2018). The agreements will be in force until 2022. In comparison to previous agreements, the same level of rights was retained, but with minor changes related to special working conditions (work with pupils with developmental difficulties), material rights for employees who accompany pupils on multi-day activities outside schools and work with children at their home for secondary school teachers.
National curriculum of primary and secondary education

Proposed national curriculum documents for primary and secondary education have both been completed and published on 14th December 2017 after the public discussions.

Both of them are proposed steering documents in the Republic of Croatia for different levels of education. They are the basis for enabling the development of key competences essential in the process of realisation of personal potential, continuation of education and lifelong learning. They are based on educational developments in Europe, in the world and in Croatian educational tradition and documents.

The fundamental values in elementary education derive from the Croatian educational policy oriented towards complete development of students, preservation of the cultural, national and natural heritage and the need to harmonize local and national development with global development.

The fundamental value in primary education is the right to quality education for all students. The fundamental value implies other values such as knowledge, entrepreneurship, identity, respect, responsibility, solidarity, health and integrity. According to the proposed steering documents, primary education in Croatia has four essential objectives:

1. Comprehensive and balanced development of all students’ potential
2. Teaching students the value of continuing education and lifelong learning
3. Relationship between students based on cooperation and respect
4. Active and responsible participation of students in life of their community.

The principles of teaching and learning in elementary education prescribed by the proposed national curriculum documents are following:

1. Complete development and well-being of students
2. Active role of students in learning
3. Connection with life experiences, interests, values and knowledge
4. Encouraging more complex forms of thinking and applying the learned material
5. Focus on cooperation and openness to the community
6. Clear and high expectations
7. Individualisation
8. Stimulating and safe environment.

Secondary education is based upon following values: quality education for all students, equality in access to education in accordance with educational achievements and potentials, freedom of choice and professional autonomy. Other supported values are responsibility, perseverance and diligence, entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity, personal integrity, personal and group identity and respect for individual and cultural diversity.

The objectives of secondary education are complete development, thorough general education and quality preparation for continuing education and lifelong learning.

The Ministry of Science and Education published the Public call for applications for the experimental program School for life (“Škola za život”) with the deadline set on 15th March 2018. The subject and the aim of the call is to select up to 80 schools (primary and secondary education), which will then join the experimental implementation of the program in the school year 2018/2019. The experimental program will be implemented in first and fifth grade in all teaching subjects, while in the seventh grade only the following subjects will be included: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In secondary
education, the experimental program will be implemented in the first grade of general education (gimnazije) in all subjects.

Establishing a System for Developing Digitally Mature Schools (pilot project)

The e-Schools programme [12] is carried out through several projects aimed at introducing ICT into the school system and raising the level of digital literacy. Schools included in the pilot project (151 schools) are equipped with a presentation classroom and an interactive classroom. Teachers of natural sciences (chemistry, physics and biology) and mathematics were given hybrid computers, the rest of the teaching staff got tablets and the professional associates got laptops. One of the key activities of the project is the systematic introduction of the ICT into the school learning environment and the development of digital educational content. The objective of the project is the integration of the modern learning and teaching methods into the educational process.

The implementation of the second phase of the project is planned in the 2019-2022 period and it will be based on the results of the pilot project. In the second phase, it is planned that all schools in Croatia are included in the project.

2017

Co-funding of the costs of education of pupils and students with lower socio-economic status and pupils with disabilities (measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion)

Funds for increased expenses of the customized transport, didactic materials and nutrition of pupils with disabilities are regularly ensured (in 2017 primary schools were funded with 23.82 million HRK and secondary schools with 2.10 million HRK).

The Ministry of Science and Education increased the funds for a larger number of teaching assistants and other experts working directly with children with disabilities in schools (in 2017 50 projects were funded with the amount of 362.40 million HRK providing the financial support and support in education for 2 648 pupils and in September 2017 a four-year contract was signed for ensuring the funds for teaching assistants). Furthermore, in August 2017 the Ministry of Science and Education passed a grant decision for associations providing services of teaching assistants for children with disabilities (funds for additional 307 teaching assistants were ensured).

The Ministry of Science and Education is co-funding textbooks for pupils in primary and secondary education and for students in higher education who are entitled to the compensation for free textbooks (in 2017 9.95 million HRK was spent on these activities for 13 719 pupils and 1 362 students).

ProMicro project for development of STEM skills

On September 6th 2017, Minister of Science and Education Blaženka Divjak announced the initiation
of "ProMicro" project [13], aimed at development of STEM skills in ISCED2 level students through introduction of algorithmic thinking and problem-solving based approaches to various teaching subjects and extracurricular activities using microcomputers. Technical implementation of the project is entrusted to CARNet (Croatian Academic and Research Network) [14] and IRIM (Institute for Development and Innovation of Youth) [15].

The first phase of the project will focus on educating of schoolteachers of different subjects on how to use microcomputers in their daily classroom work, with a special emphasis on the development of digital literacy and creativity in children. In the second phase of the project, all 6th grade primary school students will be equipped with microcomputers and educational contents for their use. Microcomputers will be owned by the school, which will lend them to students for a period of one year or during the 6th grade.

### Law on the Employment of Pupils and Students


The Working Group held its first working meeting on 14 March 2017.

### 2016

#### Comprehensive curricular reform

The first stage of the Comprehensive curricular reform, devoted to the development of curricular documents, was completed in February 2016. During this stage of the project, a large (several hundreds) number of presentations and consultative meetings was held with all the stakeholder groups of the project, spanning the whole range from the educators in kindergartens, schools and other types of educational institutions to the representatives of top range public-policy organizations and bodies involved in education and education-related trade unions.

The final output of this work is a total of 55 documents, including „National Curriculum Framework“ as the pivotal document as well as a number of curricular documents related to various educational levels, curricular areas, cross-curricular topics and subject curricula. During February 2016 all of these documents were made publicly available online [16].

On 18. March 2016 Ministry of Science, Education and Sports invited all interested stakeholders to take part in the online expert discussion [17] regarding all these documents, which was concluded on 1. May 2016. Almost three thousand experts, whether on their personal or institutional behalf, participated in in the expert discussion.

On 27. April 2016, Ministry opened the general public consultation regarding the curricular
documents. The consultation will be concluded in early autumn this year.

Main objections which emerged from the expert and public consultation can be summed up in three categories:

1. The expert community should have first received and discussed the framework curriculum along with explanation of the methodological approach, its scientific and empirical grounds and expected outcomes of its application in the education system.
2. The documents should have been developed and discussed in methodologically valid and necessary order; originally envisaged in the curriculum development process. The fact that many or most objections refer to methodology many institutions pointed out that there was no sense in giving feedback to subject curricula when their major remarks refer to methodology or framework curricula from which subject curricula should be derived in their basic principles.
3. After relevant input from this level of discussion has been integrated into the document the following levels of documents should have been developed.

These potential substantial drawbacks in the organization and implementation of the overall process are to be further addressed and discussed among expert community and policy makers in order to define the steps in the further progress of the process.

Given the number and substance of the relevant feedback it is to be expected that the state and quality of development of draft documents will remain the topic of expert and policy consultation and debate until the above outline issues are resolved.

Regarding the fact that the proposed curricular documents structured on the basis of the proposal for the Framework for the National Curriculum are not currently structured in terms of content as it is stipulated by a legal provision that serves as the basis for their adoption, the procedure for adopting the Act on Amendments to the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools has been launched in the meantime, whose adoption is planned in the fourth quarter of 2016.

On 22. July 2016 the minister of Science, Education and Sports appointed a Committee for Improvement of the Educational Reform [18]. The task of the Committee was to analyze the current implementation of the measures envisaged in the various strategic national documents related to the pre-tertiary education, with special emphasis on documents related to the comprehensive curricular reform, and to make recommendations for the implementation of the remaining measures.

On 3 November 2016 the commission adopted the report [19] and presented it to the Minister of Science and Education.
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