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Pupil assessment

During school year 2017-2018, a pilot implementation of the pupil descriptive assessment was carried out in 81 public compulsory education school units (nipiagogeia/pre-primary schools, dimotika scholeia/primary schools, gymnasia/lower secondary education schools).

There are plans for the introduction of the descriptive assessment to compulsory education.

Nipiagogeio (pre-primary school)

Under the Cohesive Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework for Pre-primary Schools and the relevant Detailed Curriculum (Ministerial Decision 21072β/Γ2/28-2-2003 [1]), the main purpose of assessment is to provide private feedback on the educational process, aimed at improving the education provided.

In nipiagogeio (pre-primary school), there is no standardised path to learning. Assessment is continuous, integrated in the daily process and based on the overall evaluation of the programme.

The educator systematically monitors the child during the school year. Initially, the educator identifies the level of experience, knowledge and interests of the child (initial or diagnostic assessment) and attempts to adapt the learning process to the abilities and individual characteristics of the child. Then, the educator checks the progress of every child (formative or gradual assessment) as the child develops new ideas, attitudes, values and competences. Finally, the overall achievement of the aims of the programme is assessed (final or overall assessment).

Essentially, assessment focuses on the effect of the learning process on the development and socialisation of the child on individual, as well as on team basis.

In nipiagogeio, there is no place for traditional forms of assessment. On the contrary, they have to be replaced by alternative ones such as:

- The progress and results of projects
- Peer assessment of the team by the children themselves
- The child’s portfolio.

Regarding the methods and techniques, systematic monitoring of the children by the educator inside the classroom is suggested, while self-assessment, dialogue, discussion and the student’s individual portfolio are considered necessary.

In this context, the educator must:

1. Assess the learning and development of the child in relation to the pursued objectives based on the belief that every student can improve
2. Assess the effectiveness of the curriculum, the conditions and means of implementation, its teaching and pedagogical practice
3. Explore the possible difficulties, which hinder children's progress
4. Engage the children themselves, their parents and other specialists in the process of assessment of their learning and progress, recognising the need for the shaping of a unique comprehensive personality
5. Share the learning goals of the curriculum with the children and discuss the assessment criteria with them, encouraging them to self-assess the progress they have made
6. Provide information to families of the learning and development of their children, as well as ideas for further support at home, so that there is a learning continuum outside the classroom.

In order to address cases of children facing serious learning difficulties or/and behavioural problems, protect and support them, the niπiagogeio teacher may cooperate with the following:

1. The school head or school director
2. The teacher of the inclusion class
3. The parents/guardians
4. The competent KESY, within the framework of the operation of the team for the educational support of pupils or EDEAY (where in operation)
5. The competent educational coordinator
6. The educational coordinator of special education needs and inclusion education
7. The competent services and bodies for protecting and supporting the children and their families.

Dimotiko scholeio (primary school)

According to the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and the Detailed Curricula (Ministerial Decisions 21072α/Γ2/28-02-2003 [2] and 21078/Γ2/28-02-2003 [1]), the assessment of the progress of pupils is a continuous and advisable process which is embedded in the teaching procedure.

It consists of the assessment of the pupils' performance in each subject of the curriculum of the relevant school year and it follows specific criteria which result from specific educational goals.

The pupils' assessment concerns not only the acquired knowledge, but also the development of competences, as well as the formation of attitudes, values and behaviours.

The process of assessment ought to be characterised by transparency, reliability, objectivity and validity. The aims and the criteria of the assessment ought not only to be clear, but also to be communicated to the pupils on time.

The pupils' assessment concerns their performance, as well as their progress in comparison to their prior performance.

A number of approaches, which are oriented according to the goals, the content and the teaching method of each study subject, as well the age, the educational needs and the experiences of the pupils, are used during the assessment process. At the same time, the characteristics of the pupils, the individual way and pace of progress, the stage of linguistic development, as well as the opportunities each child has in his social and family environment are taken into consideration.

The assessment process in primary education appears in a number of forms, which can be briefly presented as follows:

Initial or diagnostic assessment

Initial or diagnostic assessment is mainly performed at the beginning of the learning procedure and
especially at the beginning of the school year or at the beginning of a course. It aims at defining the level of prior knowledge and experience, the pupils’ interests and detecting possible difficulties pupils might be facing.

**Formative or gradual assessment**

This type of assessment is performed during the teaching procedure and consists of a continuous daily practice, which has a mainly informative nature. It aims at the assessment of the progress of each pupil towards the fulfilment of certain educational goals, but also at deciding whether to modify the planning teaching method, in order to help pupils achieve the desired goals.

**Final or overall assessment**

This type of assessment is used to summarise and offer feedback, in order to assess and compare the level of pupil achievement compared to specified and anticipated pedagogical and educational goals. **Final assessment** is performed after the completion of a course or a syllabus. The aim is to systematically assess the result of the teaching procedure and pupils' efforts.

Assessment techniques are directly correlated with the particular characteristics, the aims and content of each subject. They aim at exploring the pupils’ cognitive achievements, whilst emphasising their ability to acquire, manage and apply knowledge in various ways. In addition, they highlight the communicative skills and learning profile of each pupil. Assessment techniques, which at the same time consist of teaching practices and apply to all subjects, include:

1. Written questions, with a duration of a few minutes or up to one teaching hour
2. Written or oral exams of various types
3. Short guided essays
4. Short questions, written or oral
5. Summary of content, written or oral
6. Judgement tests, which are more appropriate for the assessment of a deeper understanding of the content of a unit or a book
7. Projects.

Detailed information on the assessment of each subject taught in primary education can be found on the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework website at the address: [http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/](http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/)

The assessment of pupils during their attendance of primary school is performed per subject and falls within the exclusive responsibility of the teacher or the teachers of the relevant class or grade, as well as of the specialised subject teachers, for subjects like Foreign Languages, Music, Arts, Physical Education, etc.

According to [presidential decree 8/1995](http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/), the assessment of the progress of each pupil is based on the following:

- Everyday oral examination and overall participation of the pupil in the educational procedure and relevant school activities
- The pupil’s performance, as far as the assessment criteria are concerned. These criteria form a fundamental part of the school programme and are included in the teaching material. The criteria concerning the assessment of pupils in the last two years of primary school (grades 5 and 6) may be extended so as to include more complicated questions, which could relate to more than one subject
- The work that the pupil prepares as homework or at school.

At the end of every term - there are 3 in total during the school year - pedagogical meetings are carried
out. The entire teaching personnel of the school unit participate, concerning the assessment of the progress of pupils at grade and school level. Within 10 days from the end of the term, the school head holds a meeting with the parents or the guardians of the pupils, where the latter receive the individual “Performance Assessment” which informs them of the results of the assessment as well as the performance of the pupil during the relevant term.

**Grading scale**

In Grade 1, the first “Performance Assessment” is handed at the end of the second term (presidential decree 121/1995). In grades 1 and 2, the assessment is only descriptive. The descriptive assessment allows teachers to inform pupils as well as their parents of the results of their efforts, abilities and aptitudes, as well as any possible weaknesses in specific fields.

In grades 3 and 4, in the “Performance Assessment”, apart from the descriptive assessment, the following grading scale is used: “Excellent” (A), “Very Good” (B), “Good” (C), “Almost Good” (D).

In grades 5 and 6, the following additional grading scale is used, which is expressed both verbally and arithmetically: “Excellent” (9-10), “Very Good” (7-8), “Good” (5-6), “Almost Good” (1-4). Pupils with severe cognitive difficulties are assessed with “Almost Good”. These pupils, as well as pupils attending grades 1 and 2, who are facing similar difficulties, benefit from remedial teaching programmes.

At the end of the teaching year, pupils who have attended grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and provided that they fulfil the promotion requirements (as outlined in the following section) are awarded a “Progress Certificate”, while pupils who have attended grade 6 are awarded a “Leaving Certificate”. On the Progress Certificates awarded at the end of grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, only the characterisation “Promoted” is written, without any marks, while on the Leaving Certificate, apart from “Promoted”, the verbal characterisation of the grade is also written (“Excellent”, “Very Good”, “Good”, “Almost Good”), as well as the equivalent arithmetic symbol which consists of the average yearly performance grade of the pupil. The “Progress Certificate” is a prerequisite for enrolment in the next grade.

**Progression of pupils**

• At the beginning of the school year. The school head and teachers inform the parents/guardians per grade or collectively on the timetable and the detailed curriculum, the contact hours and days or on general issues that pertain to the behavior, the progression of pupils and school operation
• At least once a month. The teacher of each grade sets a specific day and time, after the end of the lessons of the compulsory programme and within working hours. The day and time of co-operation are recorded in the register book of the school teachers’ board and parents/guardians are notified in good time. In addition, the classroom teacher can meet in exceptional cases with the parents/guardians, if necessary
• During the school year and within 10 days since the end of term. The school head and the classroom teacher are responsible for the organisation of this briefing, in order to inform parents of their children’s progress. They are organised by decision of the school teachers’ board and take place beyond the teaching timetable, within working hours and at a time convenient for most parents/guardians.
Nipiagogeio (pre-primary school)

Under the presidential decree 79/2017, repetition of pre-primary school for children at the age of transition to grade 1 of primary school, is permissible in cases of serious attending difficulties assessed and confirmed by KESY or a children’s medical - pedagogical centre evaluation or a relevant certificate from the special education needs and inclusion education coordinator or from an educational coordinator of nipiagogeio teachers, while the parents' consent is required.

In addition, if the absences of a pupil exceed 100 during the school year, the certificate for enrolment in grade 1 of dimotiko scholeio is provided by decision of the school teachers' board. It is issued after the educational coordinator of nipiagogeio teachers agrees upon it. Otherwise, the pupil must repeat his/her attendance of nipiagogeio (law 4610/2019).

Dimotiko scholeio (primary school)

According to presidential decree 121/1995, pupils attending grades 1 and 2 progress to the next grade, as long as the teacher of the class believes that they can respond to the daily oral assessments, the assessment criteria included in the teaching material and the work assigned to them either at school or as homework, and that they can participate in the learning procedure and other school activities. Otherwise, they are required to repeat the same grade.

Pupils attending grades 3 and 4 progress to the next grade, so long as the majority of the final average grades of the subjects are other than D. Otherwise, they are required to repeat the same grade.

For pupils attending grades 5 and 6, the yearly progression mark per subject consists of the average of their marks in all 3 terms, as found on the progress assessments of each term. The general mark of yearly progression is calculated by adding the marks which correspond to the yearly progression of each subject and then dividing the total sum by the number of the subjects taught. Pupils attending grades 5 and 6 may progress to the next grade or leave school (in case of graduates), as long as their average mark is 4.5 and above (10 stands for excellent). If the general average mark is under 4.5, the pupil is required to repeat the same grade.

As far as grade retention is concerned, we should note that the majority of educators agree with the view of education scientists, according to which all individuals should be offered the same opportunities to develop to the highest degree every psycho-somatic and mental facet of their personality. For this reason, the school ought to investigate and point out the cognitive difficulties faced by certain pupils in good time, and to offer them any possible help either within their classroom or via individualised remedial teaching programmes, so that they can surpass their difficulties and integrate in their class, in this way minimising the need for repetition of the school grade.

It is self-evident that grade retention concerns not only the teacher, but also the entire school unit. Therefore, the cases of pupils who face the possibility of repeating the grade are a subject of discussion in special pedagogical meetings of the teaching personnel, which are carried out following a decision of the school head. At the same time, the relevant educational coordinator is informed. The latter deals with each case separately in co-operation with the classroom teacher and the school head, and states his opinion concerning the further progression of the pupil.

Therefore, the percentage of pupils that repeat a grade at primary schools is pretty low. In particular, during school year 2017-2018, the percentage hovered under 1%. The percentage stands at similar low levels during previous school years.

As far as progression to the next grade is concerned, apart from the required minimum marks as defined in presidential decree 121/1995 and presented above, regular attendance for a minimum time period of at least half of the school year is required. However, in case of justified leave for a time period longer than
half of the school year, a pupil can progress to the next grade as long as, upon agreement of their parents, the pupil undergoes and succeeds in a relevant examination within the first 10 days of June or the first 15 days of September.

Progression to the next grade equals automatic enrolment of the pupil to the next grade of primary education.

**Certification**

**Nipiagogeio (pre-primary school)**

The pupils who graduate from nipiagogeio receive the “Attendance Certificate”. It is issued by the nipiagogeio the pupil has graduated from at the end of the teaching year, according to the provisions in force for all pre-primary schools of the country. It is an official public document. It bears the national logo of the Hellenic Republic, the name of the nipiagogeio issuing it, as well as that of the Regional Directorate of Education and the Directorate of Primary Education in which the school is adherent and the date of issue.

The pre-primary attendance certificate is a prerequisite for the pupil’s enrolment to primary school, which is automatic.

**Dimotiko scholeio (primary school)**

Pupils successfully graduate from primary education provided that the general average mark of their performance, which is calculated according to the average mark of their performance per subject in all 3 terms - the procedure is fully presented in the above section - equals at least 4.5 or above, where 10 equals “Excellent”. Pupils who graduate from primary education successfully are awarded the primary school Leaving Certificate, known as “Leaving Certificate”.

The primary school leaving certificate is provided by the school unit the pupil has graduated from. It is an official public document. It is issued upon completion of the school year, according to the provisions in force for all primary schools of the country. It bears the national logo of the Hellenic Republic, the name of the school unit issuing it, as well as that of the Regional Directorate of Education and the Directorate of Primary Education in which the school is adherent, and the date of issue.

The primary school leaving certificate has, apart from the word “Graduated”, the number as well as the equivalent word form of the general average grade of yearly performance: “Excellent” (9-10), “Very Good” (7-8), “Good” (5-6).

The primary school leaving certificate is a prerequisite for the pupil’s enrolment to lower secondary education schools, which is automatic.