2019

Amendment of the Education Act

As of 1 January 2019, an amendment of the Education Act [1](SK) established a new type of school - the Secondary Sports School, which will prepare pupils with sports talent. In the past, there was only one type of sports secondary schools - sports gymnasiums. The new type of secondary school - secondary sports school - offers secondary general education and secondary vocational education. Current sports gymnasiums are transformed into secondary sports schools and pupils admitted under previous regulations complete their studies accordingly.

Another important change concerns the field of foreign language teaching. So far, pupils have been taught English since the third year of primary school, and in the seventh year they have chosen another world language. Since the 2019/2020 school year, pupils in the third year of primary school will be able to choose which world language to learn first. If the pupil does not choose English as the first foreign language, he/she must choose it as the second foreign language in the 7th - 9th year. This change is voluntary for schools and the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [2](SK) assumes that most schools will remain in their current practice and will continue to teach mandatory English as the first foreign language.

The Act on pedagogical and professional employees

As of September 2019, the new Act on pedagogical and professional employees [3](SK) becomes effective. The act mostly governs the rights and obligations of pedagogical and professional employees, their work activity and professional development, the scope of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [4], the Central Register of Employees of Schools and School Facilities [5](SK).

The new act also introduces:

- the right for protection against social-pathological behaviour of managing pedagogical employees, managing professional employees, and other employees of the school or the school facility, founder, legal representatives and other natural and legal persons,
• the obligation of pedagogical and professional employees to behave in compliance with the Ethical code of pedagogical and professional employees,
• the uniform term work activity and specification of individual activities,
• obligation to speak the language of a national minority as a prerequisite for teaching subjects in the language of the national minority,
• term qualification education and pre-attestation education,
• monitoring in personal development and administrative offenses,
• a new procedure for assessing the fulfillment of qualification prerequisites for teaching or professional staff.

The act further:

• clearly defines the categories of pedagogical employees (school special pedagogue, professional development teacher, and others); introduces a new category of professional employees – career advisor,
• changes the functional education system and the system of education of pedagogical and professional employees. The change also concerns the system of attestation. A credit system change regarding the recognition of credits for successful completion of pedagogical and professional employees’ education and payment of the credit bonus is proposed,
• simplifies the original title of the public administration system from the ‘Central Register of Pedagogical Employees, Professional Employees and Other Employees of Schools and School Facilities’ to the Central Register. The act proposes to reduce data recorded in the Central Register.

2018

Amendment of the Education Act

Parliament approved an amendment of the Education Act [1](SK) in July 2018 (Act no. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training). The amendment concerns determining of the number of pupils at 8-year gymnasiums based on objectively measurable criteria. Now, the number of first-grade pupils at 8-year gymnasiums should not exceed 5% of the total number of pupils in a given population year in a given school year for the whole Slovak Republic.

Development project  Health on the Plate 2018

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic provided support to a total of 30 schools from around Slovakia as a part of the call for submission of applications for financial support for the development project entitled Health on the Plate 2018 [6]. The project aims to support activities focusing on obesity prevention and to create a suitable environment for proper drinking regimen in schools. Successful applicants are dominated by primary schools (22 projects) followed by seven secondary schools and one joint school.
Amendment of the Act on dual education

An amendment of the Act no. 61/2015 Coll. on Vocational Training came into force on 1. September 2018 and it should implement changes in the system of dual education. The changes will make entering the system by employers, and small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, including the self-employed, more efficient.

The amendment brings a decrease in administrative burden when verifying employers’ competences to provide practical education.

A Position of a principal teacher is introduced, who will perform tasks connected with the coordination of practical education. The amendment is a reaction to the practice in making dual education contracts and teaching contracts.

Major changes affected powers of self-governing regions within their territorial scope to determine the number of full-time secondary school first-grade classes divided into individual study fields for the admission procedure for the next year.

Model curricula and ratios of practical training should be cancelled; they will be defined in the state education programmes.

Company school is introduced, which aims to support employers who are founders of a secondary vocational school and train the future labour force for themselves or other employers in that school.

The act was drafted in cooperation with representatives of major employer unions and associations, and self-governing regions, Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic [7], as well as the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science of Slovakia [8].

Drafting the new act on the teaching staff

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [4] is drafting a new act on the teaching staff. The ministry has presented areas to be amended:

- qualification requirements,
- attractiveness of the profession,
- the beginning teaching staff and other employees,
- school’s culture and code of ethics,
- professional development: verification of competencies, further education, attestation process, continuing education plan,
- changes in accreditation of continuing education programmes,
- employer’s obligation to arrange continuing education of teachers,
- deleting credits from the act,
- the position of the profession’s representatives
- new positions: career advisor, library information specialist, school trainer for special activities,
Professional standards and
functional education for headteachers.

At the moment, comments are being incorporated.

**Directive to prevent and tackling bullying of children and pupils at schools and school facilities**

The Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic issued a Directive to prevent and tackling bullying of children and pupils at schools and school facilities (SK). The Directive regulates the basic characteristics, forms and manifestations of bullying of children and pupils, possibilities of preventive action and methods of dealing with bullying of pupils in connection with the responsibilities of schools and school facilities.

**2017**

**Pilot testing of motion skills of first and third-grade primary school pupils**

First and third-grade pupils of selected primary schools participated in pilot testing of motion skills at 24 schools in the Slovak Republic in October 2017. Three schools from each region were chosen.

The goal of the nationwide testing of first and third-grade pupils is to recommend pupils (and their parents) types of sport the children are best suited for and which they can do at performance level, or which they would like doing with respect to their skills. The National Sports Centre (SK), Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee (SK) and Slovak Paralympic Committee (SK) also work on the testing.

As of school year 2018/2019, the testing will be compulsory for all primary school first-graders. Pupils will take the same test in the third grade as well. Each tested child will receive a certificate that will contain a list of recommended sports.

**Regional and multicultural education of children from national minorities**

In 2017 the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic allocated funds in the amount of 28 000 € for implementation of development projects focusing on the development of regional and multicultural education of pupils from national minorities in primary and secondary schools.
The project will also support schools' activities focusing on coexistence of children from national minorities with the majority population aiming at learning about foreign cultures, doing away with prejudice as well as teaching regional education.

Finance will be allocated to founders of primary and secondary schools with a minority language of instruction or where a minority language is taught.

**The amendment of the Act on financing of primary and secondary schools and school facilities**

The amendment of the Act on financing of primary and secondary schools and school facilities, which entered into force on the 1. September 2017, brought:

- Extension of the financial allowance for pupils’ transportation to schools and municipalities where no primary school with a specific language of instruction is founded but pupils are interested in studying in the language of a national minority.
- Extension of provision of allowance for education and training of children in kindergartens for children whose parents receive benefits in material need. The allowance will be provided by the state for the entire period of child’s kindergarten attendance. Only children who are one year before compulsory school attendance were entitled to this allowance before.
- Reduction in administrative burden of schools, school facilities and their founders.
- Provision of allowance for courses of physical activities in nature for eight-year gymnasium and conservatory pupils twice during their study.

**Concept of education in language schools - Action plan 2017-2020**

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic published an Action plan (Akčný plán) which describes individual measures of the Language school education plan for 2017-2020 and other related changes. Implementation of the approved measures will take place by means of completion of the following tasks under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic:

1. Innovation of the State educational programme for language schools,
2. Standardisation of state language examination,
3. Implementation of the new language examination into the language examination system, innovation of the language education certificate,
4. Amendment of the Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 321/2008 Coll. on language schools (SK),
5. Extension of possibilities of professional development for language school teaching staff’s.
**Motivational scholarship for selected study fields**

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [4] wants to motivate pupils to apply for study field graduates of which are sought after on the labour market.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic [15] prepared a List of study fields that fail to produce enough graduates for labour market needs [16] in cooperation with trade organisations and unions.

Primary school pupils who decide to study such study fields will be provided motivational scholarship from the state budget. The amount will depend on pupils’ study results. In addition, schools will also be allocated normative funds increased by 10% for each such pupil.

The department of education also created a List of study fields that exceed labour market needs [16]. Normative funds for pupils of such study field will be lowered by 10%. Drafts of the lists were discussed by the Government board for vocational education [17] (SK).

**Legislative references**


National Council of the Slovak Republic, 2008. Act No. 245/2008 on education and training (Education Act) and on the change and supplement to some acts as amended by subsequent provisions (Zákon č. 245/2008 Z.z. o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov [1]) (last accessed 21/08/2019).
