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Principles and general objectives of education

In accordance with the Basic Law of National Education of 1973, the general aim of the national education system is to raise all Turkish citizens:

- as individuals who are committed to Atatürk's principles, the revolution and the Atatürk nationalism defined in the Constitution; who assimilate, protect, develop the national, human, moral and cultural values of the Turkish nation; who love and continuously try to raise their family, country and nation; and who are aware of their duties and responsibilities towards the Turkish Republic, a democratic, secular and social state of law based on human rights and the basic principles defined in the Constitution;
- as individuals who have a balanced and healthy personality and character, who are developed in terms of body, mind, moral, spirit and emotions, free and with scientific thinking abilities and a broad world view; who respect human rights, value personality and enterprise, are responsible towards society, and are constructive, creative and productive;
- in line with their own interests and abilities, to prepare them for life by helping them to acquire the required knowledge, skills, behavior and cooperative working habits, and to ensure they have a profession which will make them happy and contribute to the happiness of society.

In other words, the main purpose of the education system is to raise highly skilful, productive and creative individuals of the Information Age who are committed to Atatürk's principles and revolution, have advanced thinking, perception and problem-solving skills, are committed to democratic values and open to new ideas, have feelings of personal responsibility, have assimilated the national culture, can interpret different cultures and contribute to modern civilization, and lean towards productive science and technology.

The *Ninth Development Plan* covering the period 2007–2013 has been prepared with a vision of Turkey which grows in stability, shares its income fairly, which has competitive power at global scale, which transforms itself into an information society, which has completed alignment process for European Union membership. With regard to education and in order to ensure social development, the Plan foresees to enhance and strengthen the education system based on the principles of efficiency, accessibility and equal opportunities with the purpose of raising productive and creative individuals who are of the information age with advanced thinking, perception and problem solving abilities, who are loyal to Atatürk's principles, believe in democracy and freedom and have absorbed national and spiritual values, open to new ideas, with sense of responsibility, able to contribute to civilization, familiar with scientific and technological usage and production, appreciation for the arts, and have high level of skills. With the aim of increasing quality in education, the Plan stipulates that curricula based on innovativeness and research will be extended

throughout the country, and students will be encouraged to pursue scientific research as well as entrepreneurship.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The basic responsibilities of the State concerning education and training are outlined Articles 10, 24, 42, 62, 130, 131 and 132 of the **Constitution** of the Republic of Turkey of 1982.

The **Primary Education and Training Law No. 222** regulated primary education as a complete system. The **Basic Law of National Education No. 1739** entered into force on 24 June 1973 and as amended by **Law No. 2842** and by **Law No. 4306** of 18 August 1997, covers the following aspects of the education system: general and specific objectives; basic principles; general structure; institutions and establishments of all types and levels; teaching staff; school buildings and facilities; educational materials and equipment; and duties and responsibilities in the field of education and training.

The **Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Law No. 3308** of 5 June 1986 was adopted in order to improve the vocational and technical training system. It was amended as **Vocational Education Law** by the Law No. 4702 (see below). The **Law No. 5544 on the Vocational Qualifications Authority** adopted in September 2006 provides for the establishment of the Authority for the purpose of determining the principles for national qualifications in the technical and vocational fields based on national and international occupational standards, establishing and operating the national qualifications system required for conducting activities related to auditing, assessment and evaluation, certification, and regulating issues related to the national qualifications framework. The **Non-formal Educational Institutions Decree** of the Ministry of National Education (2006) regulates the activities of the non-formal educational institutions.

The Private Education Law No. 625 of 6 August 1995 regulated the establishment and operation of private educational institutions. The **Framework Regulation on Private Schools** of July 2005 and the **Law on Private Educational Institutions** of February 2007 define the basic criteria for the administration, supervision, monitoring and conditions of employment of pedagogical staff in private schools. The **Regulation for Private Higher Education Institutions** of December 2005 specifies the criteria for the establishment, operation and evaluation of private higher education institutions.

The **Law No. 2916 on Children with Special Educational Needs** of October 1983 regulates educational services in this field and repealed the former Decree Law No. 573 on Special Education of 1997.

The teaching profession is regulated by the **Civil Servants Law No. 657** of 1965 and subsequent amendments, the Basic Law of National Education of 1973, the Higher Education Law of 1981, the **Law on Higher Education Personnel No. 2914** of October 1983, as well as some specific regulations such as the **Regulation on the Recruitment and Transfer of Teachers of the Ministry of National Education** of



March 2006 and the **Regulation on the Appointment and Promotion of Faculty Members** of 1992.

The **Higher Education Law No. 2547** enacted on 4 November 1981 defines the goals and principles pertaining to higher education and establishes the principles related to the functioning, duties, authority, and responsibilities in connection with education, research, publication, teaching staff, students and other personnel of higher education institutions and their governing bodies. This Law reformed the higher education system and incorporated such higher education institutions as teacher training schools and institutes of education into the same system, along with universities. The **Regulation for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions** adopted on 10 September 2005 defines the criteria for the evaluation of academic and research activities as well the administrative services of higher education institutions, and provides for the evaluation of the quality through an independent external evaluation process.

The **Law No. 4702** adopted in 2001 amended some existing laws. It stipulates the creation of Vocational and Technical Education Zones comprising vocational and technical upper secondary education institutions. The law also entitles graduates of vocational and technical secondary schools to have access to two-year tertiary-level education institutions to pursue further education in their fields of study.

Article 42 of the Constitution stipulates that no one shall be deprived of the right of learning and education, and that primary education is compulsory for all citizens and provided free of charge in state schools. According to the Law No. 4306 of 1997, the duration of compulsory education is eight years for children in the age group 6-14.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of National Education** (MONE) is responsible for all educational services in the country, in conformity with the provisions of the Basic Law of National Education. The MONE consists of central, provincial, overseas organizations and affiliated institutions. The central level includes: the Minister's Office; the **Board of Education** (with responsibility over the curriculum); the **Board of Inspection** and the **Strategy Development Presidency** (formerly the Research, Planning and Coordination Board) among other consultation and inspection units; main service units (comprising 16 General Directorates as of 2011); auxiliary units (including the Department of Educational Research and Development which coordinates the participation of the country in international student assessment studies); and four permanent Boards (mainly of discipline). The external supervision and evaluation of preschools and primary schools is carried out by primary education inspectors, and by ministerial inspectors in the case of secondary schools.

In each of the 81 provinces and 892 districts (as of 2009) there are **Provincial and District National Education Directorates**. Different powers can be vested with these Directorates, depending on the social and economic developments of the province, its population and the number of students. Overseas organizations comprise



Education Consultancies, Education Attachés and Turkish Cultural Centres. The **National Education Academy** is affiliated to the MONE.

The National Council of Education and the Board of Education are the two main advisory bodies to the MONE. The **National Council of Education** is the highest consultative and decision-making body of the MONE. It was established in order to develop the national education system and improve its quality. The National Council of Education convenes once every four years. Decisions taken by the representatives of different society sections are implemented after the approval of the authorities. The **Board of Education** provides advice to the Minister in almost every education-related matter and develops visions, undertakes research, and prepares educational plans and curricula as well as educational materials. Decisions on the planning, development and evaluation of technical and vocational education including apprenticeship training and training at workplaces are taken by the **Vocational Education Council**. It consists of representatives from relevant ministries, trade and employers' unions, non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions, and trade chambers. Similarly, Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Councils take decisions and make recommendations on the planning, development and evaluation of vocational training programmes within their jurisdiction. The **Vocational Qualifications Authority**, established on the basis of Law No. 5544 of 2006, is responsible for defining the national professional qualifications in technical and vocational areas on the basis of professional standards and carrying out activities related to supervision, assessment and evaluation, and certification.

According to a Directive of the MONE issued in November 1999, provinces and districts with a population (within the borders of the municipality) of less than 30,000 individuals are considered as an **Education Zone**. It is possible to form more than one education zone in any district. **School Regions** can also be formed in the education zones. **Vocational and Technical Education Regions** were established as of 2002 to implement the provisions of Law No. 4702.

In accordance with the Law No. 2547 of 1981, the **Council of Higher Education** (YÖK) is the main planning, coordinating and policy-making body for higher education in the country. The President of the Council is appointed by the President of the Republic for a term of four years. Within the Council operate some specific committees such as the **Higher Education Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee** and the **Teacher Training Committee** (ÖYTMK), the latter comprising representatives of the MONE, the YÖK, and faculties of education and intended to enhance cooperation and collaboration regarding teacher training programmes.

On behalf of the YÖK, the **Higher Education Board** supervises and controls the universities, the units attached to them, as well as the academic staff and their activities. The **Student Selection and Placement Centre** (ÖSYM), established in 1974 and affiliated to the Council of Higher Education in 1981, is primarily concerned with the selection and placement of students in higher education institutions. The ÖSYM also offers services to higher education institutions for the administering of examinations, which are either inter-university in nature or are being held on a large scale. The **Inter-University Council** (ÜAK), which is comprised of the rectors of all universities and one member elected by the senate of each university,

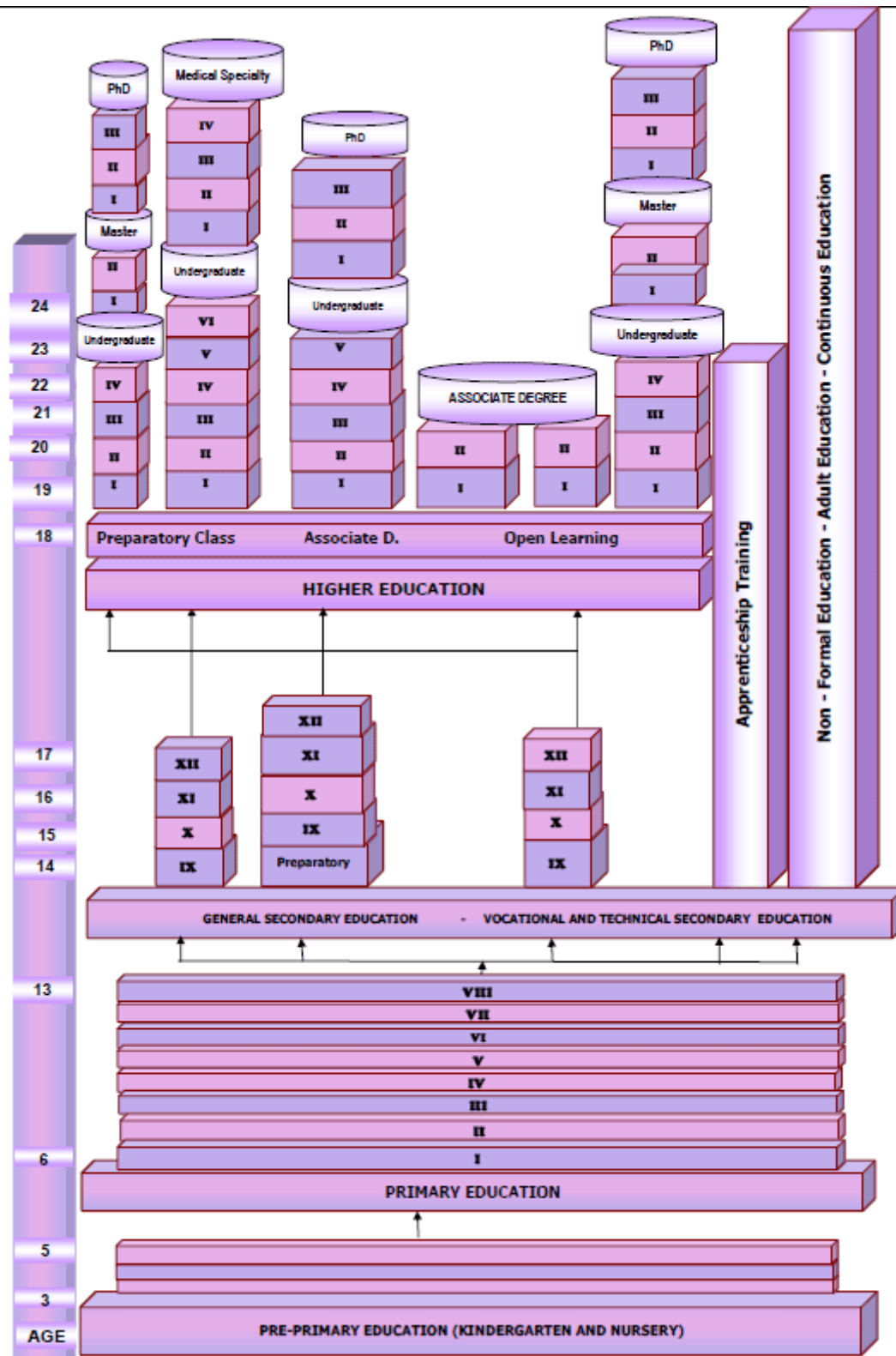


mainly deals with academic issues, including the coordination of educational, scientific research and publication activities. It provides advice and recommendations to the YÖK and universities. The **University Rectors' Committee** is made up of all university rectors and five ex-rectors. The highest authority of a university is the **rector**, appointed by the President of the Republic. Other university bodies include the **senate** and the **executive council**. Faculties are headed by **deans** and higher schools by **directors**.

School **principals** are responsible for the administration, evaluation and development of schools. School administrators are appointed by the governor through district administrator's offer and upon province administrator's approval. Each school has a **Teachers' Council**. **Students' Councils** have also been established so that students can participate in school management. These councils shall help students to adapt to the school environment; support efforts to increase the quality of education and training; help students solve their problems; and organize social activities. **School-Parent Associations** normally comprise principals, teachers and parents' representatives. They support the school administration and financially contribute to the school.

Structure and organization of the education system

Turkey: structure of the education system



Source: Ministry of National Education, 2011.



Pre-school education

Pre-primary education is not compulsory. Preschool programmes are for children between 3 and 6 years of age; they are offered in independent kindergartens, pre-primary/reception classes in primary schools and practice classes. There are also crèches and day care centres for children in the age group 0-6 years.

Primary education

Primary (basic) education lasts eight years, is compulsory, co-educational and provided free in public schools to children in the age group 6-14. The last three years of primary education (grades 6 to 8) were not compulsory and considered as lower secondary education until 1997/98. The transition from five-year primary schools and three-year junior high schools into eight-year primary (basic) schools was implemented starting from the school year 1997/98. There are no final examinations at the end of grade 8. Upon successful completion of primary education, pupils receive the primary education diploma. Graduates can enter general high schools and vocational secondary education schools or sit a centrally-organized entrance examination to be admitted to more demanding institutions (i.e. Anatolian high schools and social sciences high schools).

Secondary education

Secondary education is not compulsory but free of charge in public schools. It is provided in general high schools of different types (i.e. general high schools, Anatolian high schools, science high schools, Anatolian teacher training high schools, Anatolian fine arts high schools, and social sciences high schools) and at least 19 different kinds of vocational and technical high schools which provide training in more than 130 occupations leading to the qualification of specialized worker and technician. Since 2005/06 secondary schools offer four- or five-year programmes (including one preparatory year in the case of institutions using a foreign language as a predominant medium of instruction) to primary education graduates; the duration of secondary education programmes was three to four years until 2004/05. Upon successful completion of secondary education, students receive the high school diploma (general, technical or vocational) which grants access to the higher education entrance examinations. Apprenticeship training (dual training system) is provided for those who have not been able to continue their education beyond primary education or who left the formal education system for various reasons. The period of training is between two to four years depending on the nature of the profession.

Higher education

Secondary education graduates are required to sit a two-stage central entrance examination for admission to a university. The higher education examination is for admission to two-year vocational programmes and for computing the composite scores of the undergraduate placement examination (where also the average of secondary education school grades is taken into account). The higher education system comprises universities, higher technology institutes, and police and military academies. Each university is normally comprised of higher professional schools offering two-year pre-bachelor's (associate degree) programmes of a strictly



vocational nature, and faculties and higher schools (the latter with a vocational emphasis) offering four-year bachelor's degree programmes. Bachelor's degree holders can also obtain a certificate of specialization after one additional year of study (not recognized as a degree). Master's degree programmes last one and a half to two years (in the latter case including the preparation of a final paper/thesis). A specialist diploma in natural sciences is awarded upon successful completion of a two-year postgraduate programme. Doctoral and equivalent programmes take between two and five years to complete (usually three years). Long first-cycle programmes in the faculties of medicine are six years' long, and those in the faculties of veterinary sciences, pharmacy and dentistry last five years; faculties of education train secondary education teachers normally through five-year programmes. Medical specialization programmes equivalent to doctoral-level programmes are offered by faculties of medicine and training hospitals under the Ministry of Health.

The school year at the primary and secondary levels consists of 180 teaching days divided into two semesters; classes are held five days a week, Monday to Friday. The academic year normally begins on the second week of September and ends by the second week of June.

The educational process

Curriculum development is a continuous process which is based on institutional cooperation and the participation of many different stakeholders. The process consists of making decisions on learning objectives, selecting the learning contents and teaching methods, developing or improving the teaching materials and evaluating the curriculum.

The programmes aim to meet the needs of the individual and of society, to integrate theory and practice, to provide learner-centred education, to emphasize interdisciplinary subjects, and to provide settings rich in learning opportunities.

In order to prepare and develop educational programmes, the specialized commissions consisting of experts, programme development professionals, and other educators consider educational and scientific research results, the opinions of students, teachers, parents, trainers, as well as the educational standards of the European Union. The draft programmes are finalized and approved by the Turkish Board of Education, and then they are submitted to the Minister of Education for approval. After the Ministry's approval, the programmes are piloted and implemented.

During the period 1997-2004, as a result of the curriculum development process carried out according to national needs and values and also taking into account contemporary scientific developments, stakeholders' opinions as well as the needs, interests and aspirations of the students, a total of 878 curricula for all kinds of schools at different levels have been developed and implemented. The new programmes intend to promote a student-centred approach rather than teacher-centred teaching model. A new school model is also promoted, where schools are conceived as learning organizations self-monitoring, self-developing and able to innovate. The new curricula are intended to develop in students: skills such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculating, communication, observation, and the use new



information technologies; thinking and reasoning skills; artistic appreciation; and psycho-motor and perception capacities. The specialized commissions in charge of the design of the programmes and the twelve-year curriculum (covering primary and secondary education) focused on the key competencies that every student should have in the subject field, conducted skill analyses for each programme, and prepared concept maps. (MONE, 2005).

“By the end of 2003, intensive efforts were undertaken to develop new basic education curricula, with a number of new features. For the first time since 1940s, curricula are considered as a whole by comparing them internationally. Instead of an attributive approach, the new curricula reflect and support a cognitive and constructivist approach. Education of all citizens is considered with a more comprehensive approach to learning rather than an emphasis only on teaching. The curricula for primary and secondary education are constructed within a continuous educational framework rather than segmented into primary and secondary, as was the case in the past. Furthermore, integration with world and European Union standards are taken into consideration. Eight common skills for all courses have been determined. A concept analysis for each course has been conducted for the twelve-year basic education (primary and secondary education), with concept analysis by grade levels, comparison between courses, and connections between courses. Interdisciplinary subjects such as sports culture and Olympic training, health culture, guidance and psychological counselling, career, entrepreneurship, natural disasters preparedness, special needs education, human rights and citizenship have also been included in the new curricula. The acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes is emphasized and curricula have been enriched with activities and are more student-centred. Instead of a results-based approach in assessment and evaluation, a new approach has been accepted which also evaluates the process. Sensitivity to the Turkish language has become a main objective for all courses.” (OECD, 2007).

“All curricula developed for grades 1 to 5 were to be implemented in the 2005/06 academic year throughout the country. Pilot implementation of the newly developed curricula for grades 6 to 8 was to begin from grade 6 in the 2005/06 academic year in a phased manner. In 2007, the development of curricula for four-year high schools was proceeding with implementation expected within two years. A new assessment and evaluation system was also going to be introduced at eighth grade, allowing better transparency, accountability and consistency in the system. The aim is to produce a framework curriculum leaving enough space for teachers and to produce a new kind of textbook that will consist of separate books for students, for teachers and for practical exercises. The new curricula will also include examples of assessment tools. The emphasis on student-centred learning requires a change in teaching and learning from the mainly memorizing approach to more active learning for students.” (*Ibid.*).

Pre-primary education

As mentioned, pre-primary education is not compulsory and caters to children between 3 and 6 years of age. Preschool programmes are offered in independent kindergartens, pre-primary/reception classes in primary schools and practice classes. There are also crèches and day care centres for children in the age group 0-6 years.



The Basic Law of National Education of 1973 included pre-primary education within the formal education system.

The aims of pre-primary education are to ensure the physical, mental and emotional development of the children and the acquisition of good habits, to prepare children for primary education, to create a common learning environment for children living in difficult conditions, and to ensure that children speak the Turkish language correctly and well. (MONE, 2005 and 2011). The Regulation on Pre-primary Education Institutions issued in 2004 and amended in 2007 specifies the criteria for the operation of preschool institutions. At the MONE central level, pre-primary education is under the responsibility of the General Directorate for Pre-primary Education. The majority of pre-primary education institutions are in the public sector. All public pre-primary institutions are free of charge; a parental contribution for meals and cleaning materials is normally required. Private institutions apply the official programme or follow their own programmes that must be approved by the MONE.

Children who are between 37-72 months can attend kindergartens, those between 60-72 months can attend the pre-primary/reception class, and those between 36-72 months can attend the practice classes. Classes are formed grouping children by age (36-48 months, 48-60 months, and 60-72 months), and each group should include not less than 10 children and no more than 20. Kindergartens normally operate between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., with a 60-minute break for lunch. (Eurydice, 2009).

The preschool education curriculum implemented since 1994 is an integrated developmental programme for children aged 36-72 months. It has been revised in 2006. The main features of the programme are: child centeredness; objective- and achievement-based; flexibility; freedom to teacher; openness to the parental participation; focus on activities rather than on subjects. Some activities can be carried out in an integrated way. The main activities contemplated in the programme include: leisure time; Turkish language practice activities (poems, conversations, storytelling, etc.); play and movement; music (songs, dancing, rhythms, etc.); science and mathematics activities (exploration, observation, inquires, etc.); drama (pantomime, role playing, etc.); practicing arts; reading and writing preparation activities (intended to increase the children's level of readiness for school and not to teach to read and write); and field journeys. The programme is flexible enough to allow for various forms of implementation; it also includes activities that families can carry out at home. Teachers assess the progress and development of children in various ways (i.e. observation, development checks, standardized tests, portfolios). At least one progress report based on the observation results and including concrete examples is given to the parents. This document is prepared in the form of a report card using expressions such as good, fair, unsatisfactory, participated, or not participated. (*Ibid.*).

The MONE in cooperation with UNICEF has been working since 1993 to expand preschool participation through the Mother and Child Education Programme. Since 2003, the programme has been transformed into the Mother and Child Education Programme focused on families with children aged 0 to 6.

In 1997/98, the gross enrolment ratio for the age group 49-72 months was 9.3% (it was 8.9% in 1996/97). The average children-teacher ratio was 24:1. In 1999, the children-teacher ratio for pre-primary education was 16:1. In 2005/06 there were

18,539 preschools with a total enrolment of 550,146 children and 20,910 teachers. (MONE, 2007). In 2004/05, the gross enrolment ratio for the age group 3-5 was estimated at 16.1%.

The MONE reports that in 2010/11 there were 27,606 preschools with 1,115,818 children enrolled; the number of teachers was 48,330, of whom 44,916 were female teachers. The enrolment ratio for the age group 3-5 was estimated at 29.8% (29.4% in the case of girls), and for the age group 4-5 at 43.1% (42.3% in the case of girls). (MONE, 2011). In 2009/10 there were 22,225 pre-primary/reception classes in primary schools with a total enrolment of 727,941 children (out of a total enrolment of 980,654 children at the pre-primary level). (Eurydice, 2009).

Primary (basic) education

As mentioned, lower secondary education (grades 6 to 8) was not compulsory until 1997/98, when the transition from five-year primary schools and three-year junior high schools into eight-year primary (basic) education schools started to be implemented. Compulsory primary (basic) education lasts eight years, is co-educational and provided free in public schools to children in the age group 6-14. There are no final examinations at the end of grade 8. Upon successful completion of primary education, pupils receive the primary education diploma. Graduates can enter general high schools and vocational secondary education schools or sit a centrally-organized entrance examination to be admitted to more demanding institutions (i.e. Anatolian high schools).

The main objectives of primary education are to ensure that all children acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviour and habits necessary to become a good citizen raised in accordance with the concept of national morals, and to prepare them both for life and further education, taking into account their interests, talents and abilities. (MONE, 2011). The Regulation for Primary Education Institutions of August 2003 defines the objectives more comprehensively, including helping pupils to get acquainted with the national and universal cultural values, to use contemporary technologies effectively, to get acquainted with the nature and preserve it, and to learn about the techniques of accessing the knowledge, improving scientific thinking, entrepreneurship and creative minds. Within this framework, the new primary education curriculum aims at supporting all pupils in developing eight fundamental skills, i.e. accurate and effective use of the Turkish language, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, problem solving, reasoning-inquiring, use of information technologies, and entrepreneurship. The revised programmes started to be implemented in 2005/06. (Eurydice, 2009).

The curriculum includes compulsory subjects and a number of lessons/periods that are decided at the school level depending on the conditions of school and local environment, students' interests, needs and aspirations, and parents' opinions. Schools may also decide to increase the number of elective lessons with the MONE approval. In grades 4-8 one of the electives can be foreign language instruction, either for reinforcing the compulsory foreign language or for introducing a second foreign language. Foreign language instruction can also be offered in all grades as extracurricular time. The table below shows the weekly lesson timetable of primary education in 2001:

Primary (basic) education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle					Second cycle		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Turkish language	12	12	12	6	6	5	5	5
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Social studies	5	5	5	–	–	–	–	–
Science	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	3
Social sciences	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	–
Citizenship and human rights education	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
History of the Turkish Republic	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Foreign language	–	–	–	2	2	4	4	4
Religious culture and ethics	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Drawing-handwork	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Music	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Work training	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	3
Traffic and first aid education	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
Individual and group activities	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–
Elective courses	–	–	–	3	3	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Note: Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

The weekly lesson timetable implemented in 2008 is presented in the table below:

Turkey. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Turkish language	12	12	12	6	6	5	5	5
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Knowledge of life	5	5	5	–	–	–	–	–
Science and technology	–	–	–	4	4	4	4	4
Social sciences	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	–
History of the reforms and Kemalism	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3
Foreign language	–	–	–	3	3	4	4	4
Religious culture and ethics	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Visual arts	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Music	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Technology and design	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Traffic and first aid education	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
Guidance/Social activities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Sub-total compulsory lessons</i>	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Elective lessons	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Source: Eurydice, 2009. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes. Elective lessons can include: consolidation studies (in grades 1-3), foreign language (in grades 4-8, two periods per week); artistic activities, sports, IT, chess, agriculture/husbandry (in grades 6-8), folk culture (in grades 6-8), and media literacy (in grades 6-8).

Normally, in grades 1 to 5 one classroom teacher teaches all the subjects, while in grades 6 to 8 there are subject teachers. For some subjects such as music, physical education, and foreign language it is possible to employ subject teachers after grade 4. Educational methods are determined by teachers on the basis of the existing curriculum and syllabi. Teaching aids are selected by teachers and approved by the school principal. Primary education textbooks are approved by the MONE and distributed to all pupils free of charge.

Pupils' achievement is evaluated through exams as well as projects, performance assignments, and performance in the classrooms. In the first three grades pupils are evaluated mainly through projects and classroom performances. A maximum of two tests or written examinations can be applied in grades 4 and 5 for evaluation purposes. In grades 6 to 8 a minimum of two written examinations and one oral examination are administered in each subject. Pupils' behaviour is also assessed. The results of the evaluation are expressed as follows: excellent (equivalent to 5 or 85-100 in terms of marks); very good (equivalent to 4 or 70-84 in terms of marks); good (equivalent to 3 or 55-69); fair (equivalent to 2 or 45-54); and below the standard (equivalent to 1 or 0-44). In order to progress to the next grade, the arithmetic average of the pupils' marks in the two semesters must not be lower than 2 in every subject. Primary school graduates receive a completion diploma which shows

the overall score, representing the mean of end-of-the-year achievement scores in grades 4 to 8.

In 1996/97, the net enrolment ratio was 99.8% in primary schools (grades 1-5) and 69.6% in junior high schools (grades 6-8). In the same year, the average number of pupils per class was 43 in primary schools and the average pupil-teacher ratio was 28:1. In 2000/01, the gross enrolment ratio for primary education was 100.9% (95.6% in the school year 2005/06). In 2005/06 there were 34,990 primary education schools with 10,673,935 pupils enrolled and 389,859 teachers (including preschool teachers within primary schools). (MONE, 2007).

The MONE reports that in 2010/11 there were 32,797 primary schools (including 898 private schools) with 10,981,100 pupils enrolled (of whom 5,357,624 were girls); the number of teachers (including preschool teachers within primary schools) was 503,328, of whom 266,074 were female teachers. The gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 107.5% (107.8% in the case of girls), and the adjusted net enrolment ratio at 98.4% (98.2% in the case of girls). (MONE, 2011).

In the same year, there were 1,134 schools, institutions and/or classes providing special needs education (at pre-primary, primary and secondary level), of which 612 in the formal sector. The total enrolment was 173,507 pupils (including 91,564 girls), of whom 141,248 in formal education programmes; 84,580 pupils were enrolled in inclusive education classes and 18,541 pupils were in special education classes at the primary level. The total number of special education teachers was 10,344, of whom 10,036 were permanent teachers.

Secondary education

As mentioned, secondary education is not compulsory but is provided free of charge in public schools. Secondary education is provided in general education high schools of different types (i.e. general high schools, Anatolian high schools, science high schools, Anatolian teacher training high schools, Anatolian fine arts high schools, multi-programme high schools, and social sciences high schools) and at least 19 different kinds of vocational and technical high schools (reduced to nine main types in 2009/10; see Eurydice, 2009) which provide training in more than 130 occupations leading to the qualification of specialized worker and technician.

The duration of secondary education programmes was three to four years until 2004/05. Since 2005/06 secondary schools offer four- or five-year programmes (including one preparatory year in the case of institutions using a foreign language as a predominant medium of instruction, i.e. Anatolian high schools and social sciences high schools). Upon successful completion of secondary education, students receive the high school diploma (general, technical or vocational) which grants access to the higher education entrance examination. Graduates from vocational and technical education institutions can enrol in two-year programmes offered by vocational higher education schools without taking the entrance examination. Apprenticeship training is a dual system in which theoretical training is given in vocational training centres and practical training in the workplace. Students must be aged 14 and at least primary education graduates to participate in apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training is provided for those who have not continued their studies beyond primary education

or who left the formal education system for various reasons. The period of apprenticeship training lasts from two to four years depending on the nature of the professions.

The objectives of secondary education are to give students a minimum common culture, to acquaint them with the problems of the individual and society and to teach them how to seek solutions, to raise awareness to ensure their contribution to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country, and to prepare students for higher education, for a profession, for life and employment in line with their interests and skills. All pupils completing primary (basic) education are entitled to attend secondary education in line with their interests, abilities and competencies. (MONE, 2005 and 2011).

Institutions called 'Anatolian' high schools use a foreign language as the predominant language of instruction and normally require students to enrol in a preparatory year (preceding the four-year secondary programme) with intensive foreign language teaching. General education high schools do not train students for a specific profession and mainly prepare them for higher education. In general/academic high schools students follow the same curriculum in the first year (normally grade 9); starting from the second year, they can choose among the following streams: natural sciences, Turkish-mathematics, social sciences, foreign languages, arts, and physical education and sports. In vocational and technical high schools, students follow the same curriculum in the first year and starting from grade 10 they can choose among the following fields: industrial and technical; commerce, tourism and communication; social services; and religious education. Normally, in their final year students spend two days a week at the school for theoretical training and three days a week at the workplace for practical training. In the first year of secondary education common compulsory subjects normally include: Turkish language and literature; religious culture and ethics; history; geography; mathematics; biology; physics; chemistry; hygiene; foreign languages; and physical education.

The average number of periods/lessons per week in each grade varies depending on the type of high school. In general high schools, the curriculum load is normally 30 periods a week in each grade. In Anatolian high schools the weekly load is 36 periods in the preparatory year and 37 periods in grades 9-12. The weekly load is 38 periods in grades 9-12 of the Anatolian teacher training high schools. In social sciences high schools the weekly load is 37 periods in the preparatory year, 38 in grade 9, and 40 in grades 10-12 (each period lasts 45 minutes in full-time, single shift general education schools; it lasts 40 minutes in general education schools operating in more than one shift and in vocational and technical education schools). In several types of vocational and technical schools the number of periods per week is 30 in grade 9 and 40 in grades 10-12, increasing to 37 in grade 9 and 45 in grades 10-12 in the case of high schools providing training in hostelry and tourism. In the case of vocational high schools specializing in public health, the weekly load is 40 periods in grade 9 and 43 in grades 10-12. (Eurydice, 2009).

The table below shows the weekly lesson timetables for the high school, social sciences field in 2001.

Turkey. General secondary education (high school, social sciences field): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
<i>Common general culture courses:</i>			
Turkish language and literature	4	4	4
Religious culture and ethics	1	1	1
History	2	2	–
History of the Republic of Turkey	–	–	2
National security	–	1	–
Geography	2	–	–
Mathematics	5	–	–
Biology	2	–	–
Physics	2	–	–
Chemistry	2	–	–
Hygiene	2	–	–
Foreign language	4	–	–
Philosophy	–	–	2
Physical education	2	–	–
<i>Sub-total</i>	28	8	9
<i>Field courses:</i>			
Literary texts	–	3	3
General history of Turkey	–	3	–
History of Ottomans	–	–	3
Physical geography of Turkey	–	3	–
Anthropology and economical geography of Turkey	–	–	3
Geography of other countries	–	3	–
Psychology	–	2	–
Logic	–	–	2
Sociology	–	–	2
<i>Sub-total</i>	–	14	13
<i>Field elective courses</i> (prescribed number of weekly periods)(*)	–	6	6
<i>Elective courses</i> (prescribed number of weekly periods) (**)	4	4	4
Total weekly periods	32	32	32
Counselling	1	1	1

Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

Notes:

(*) Field elective courses offered in Form II: history of art (two weekly periods); history of Turkish literature (2); history of Islam (2); mathematics (4); geometry (2); foreign language (4); computer studies (2); language science (2). Field elective courses offered in Form III: history of Turkey (2); tourism (2); history of philosophy (2); history of art (2); history of Turkish literature (2); foreign language (4); computer studies (2); language science (2); mathematics (4); geometry (2).



(**) Elective courses offered in Form I: drawing (2); music (2); man and the environment (2); traffic education (1); human relations (1); standardization and quality [sic] (1); second foreign language (2); intensive foreign language (2); quick reading techniques (1); computer science (2). Elective courses offered in Form II: drawing (2); music (2); physical education (2); man and the environment (2); history of science (2); second foreign language (2); intensive foreign language (2). Elective courses offered in Form III: drawing (2); music (2); physical education (2); democracy and human rights education (1); human relations (1); information technologies (2); library (1); second foreign language (2); intensive foreign language (2).

At the secondary level, there cannot be less than three examinations in a term for the subjects taught for three or more teaching periods per week, and there cannot be less than two examinations in the subjects taught for one or two teaching periods per week. In addition to the examinations, students' achievement is also evaluated through: projects, assignments, on-the-job training, classroom performances, and extracurricular activities. While the evaluation of students' academic achievement depends on examinations, the evaluation of their behaviour and attitudes relies on the teachers' observations. The school guidance services cooperate with families to make these evaluations, which are reflected in the students' reports as the 'behaviour grade'. Students are assessed using the same scale as in primary education, with an additional level i.e. 'failed' (equivalent to 0 or 0-24 in terms of marks). The end-of-the-year grade in any subject is the average of the grades obtained in the first and second semesters. Students progress to the next grade if they have obtained a minimum of 2 ('fair') in all subjects. (Eurydice, 2009).

According to national data, in 2005/06 the gross enrolment ratio at the secondary level was 85.2%. The total number of students enrolled in secondary education (public and private) was 3,258,255, and the total number of teachers was 185,317. In the same school year, there were 7,435 secondary education institutions (all sectors), including 3,406 general high schools (of which 628 in the private sector) and 4,029 vocational and technical high schools (of which 22 were private). (MONE, 2007).

The MONE reports that in 2010/11 there were 9,281 secondary schools, of which 4,102 providing general education (including 774 private schools) and 5,179 vocational and technical education schools (including 24 private schools). The total enrolment was with 4,748,610 students (of whom 2,162,439 were girls); a total of 2,676,123 students (including 1,267,677 girls) were enrolled in general secondary education programmes and 2,072,487 students (including 894,762 girls) were in vocational and technical education. The number of teachers was 222,705, of whom 94,612 were female teachers; 118,378 teachers (including 51,338 female teachers) were in general education and 104,327 teachers (including 43,274 female teachers) were in vocational and technical education. The gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 89.7% (84.7% in the case of girls), and the adjusted net enrolment ratio at 66.1% (63.8% in the case of girls). (MONE, 2011).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

The Ministry of National Education (MONE) has been performing measurement and evaluation studies focused on 'Educational Situation Assessment' since 1993; tracing of student achievements in years constitutes the quality control mechanism for the education system. Such Assessment Studies were carried out in several grades (4, 5, 6,



7, 8 and 11) and covered different subjects (Turkish, mathematics, science, social sciences, English, and computer literacy). These studies are used to compare regions, schools and different types of schools in respect to student achievement and to conduct comparisons between new and old programmes. At the same time, they help to collect data about students' socioeconomic situation and other aspects, thus establishing a kind of database that can be used for various other purposes. A randomly selected sampling was carried out over the whole of Turkey by means of national measurement and evaluation studies, standard achievement tests and interviews, with student assessment examinations conducted in grades 5, 8 and 11 in Turkish, mathematics, science and social sciences. The findings of these studies are used for various purposes, including in the development of new lesson curricula and materials. (MONE, 2005).

The country has participated in major international student assessment studies, such as the IEA-sponsored TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), and the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

“In PISA 2003, Turkish students performed significantly below the OECD average on all measures, and second to last among OECD countries (Mexico consistently was the lowest performing country). In mathematics, Turkey scored 434 compared to the OECD average of 500. Over one-third of the students were not proficient at level one, the lowest of six levels of proficiency. In problem solving, Turkey scored 408 compared to the OECD average of 500. In reading, Turkey scored 441 compared to the OECD average of 500. Turkey had the largest percentage (36.8%) except for Mexico of students whose reading proficiency was at or below the lowest of the six levels of proficiency. In science, Turkey scored 434 compared to the OECD average of 500. In the 2001 results for PIRLS, Turkish fourth-graders scored above such countries as Argentina and Iran, but scored significantly below most other countries participating in the survey, including the other OECD Mediterranean countries. Girls (459 compared to OECD country mean of 538) did better than boys (440 compared to OECD country mean of 521) to about the same degree as the OECD average. This suggests that once girls get to school they do better in reading than boys.” (OECD, 2007).

“An analysis of the PISA 2003 results reveals that among the countries participating countries, Turkey had the greatest variance in mathematics proficiency between schools and high variation within schools. The differences between schools in mathematics proficiency were greater in Turkey than in any other OECD country, which suggests significant disparities among schools in the country. Turkey also had the highest number of schools which reported that a shortage of teachers significantly affected student learning. These differences can be attributed partially to significant disparities in the socio-economic status of students entering different schools as well the socio-economic status of students within schools. Nevertheless, the differences also reflect marked differences among schools in policies and practices of school administrators, standards, curriculum, teacher quality and other conditions that affect student learning. The PISA results show that, despite admirable increases in enrolments and participation rates, Turkey continues to fall far short of internationally competitive levels of student learning.” (*Ibid.*).

Teaching staff

Article 43 of the Basic Law on National Education defines teaching as a profession that requires specialized expertise, and specifies the duties related to education and training as well as the relevant administrative duties of the State. Article 45 of the same Law indicates that the teacher training programmes comprise knowledge and skills on general culture subjects, specialized field education, and pedagogical training. Teachers were trained in higher education schools under the MONE and in faculties of education; the responsibility for teacher training was completely transferred to universities in accordance with the Higher Education Law of 1981 and the Decree Law No. 41 of 20 July 1982.

All teachers are required to hold a higher education degree regardless of the educational level at which they teach. The minimum requirement is a four-year bachelor's degree in the case of pre-primary and primary school teachers (as well as teachers of music, foreign language, arts, physical education teaching both at the primary and secondary level), and a master's degree (five-year programme) in the case of secondary school teachers. These programmes are offered by the faculties of education. Graduates from faculties other than education (particularly faculties of science and letters) have to enrol in a master's degree programme (lasting one and a half year) if they want to enter the teaching profession. Anatolian teacher training high schools, with intensive foreign language teaching during a four-year period, have been opened at the secondary level with the objective to provide more qualified students for teacher training institutions. Graduates of these schools are entitled to benefit from additional points on the Student Selection and Placement Examination if they choose to attend teacher training faculties. After graduation, candidates work as practicing teachers for one to two years. In addition, they can apply for in-service training courses organized by the Department of In-service Training at the Ministry of National Education (MONE). The MONE determines the number of teachers to be employed every year.

Initial teacher training programmes were revised in 2006/07. Major innovations include: a change in the programme components ratio (50-60% allocated to field knowledge and skills, 25-30% to professional knowledge and skills, and 15-20% to general culture subjects; allocated time and ratios vary depending on the teaching branches); more freedom given to teacher training faculties to determine the courses up to the 25% of total credits and increased opportunities as regards elective courses; and new subjects added to the programmes, including history of science, effective communication, school administration, and social services practice. Special education and IT are compulsory subjects. In 2009 there were 27 teacher education programmes for pre-primary, primary, general secondary education and academic subjects in vocational and technical education (excluding programmes for vocational and technical courses). (Eurydice, 2009).

Teachers working in public schools are recruited in accordance with the general conditions determined in Article 48 of the Civil Servants Law and have the status of civil servants (the same applies to academic staff in public higher education institutions). School teachers (and associate professors and professors in higher



education) normally hold a permanent contract, although since 2005 teachers are also employed on a non-permanent contract basis. Teachers are evaluated and supported by school principals and school administrators (in the case of secondary education) and externally by inspectors. Salaries, salary scales and additional benefits are determined in compliance with Civil Servants Law.

Participation in in-service-training activities is not compulsory, excepting three seminars per year (at the beginning, during and at the end of the school year) for the professional development of primary education teachers. However, for the placement in some positions, in-service training related with that position can be an asset. Furthermore, for career progression in-service and additional trainings are credited. (Eurydice, 2009). In-service training activities were centrally planned by the MONE until 1995, when the provincial administrations were also authorized to organize such activities at the local level. Provincial Directorates plan in-service training activities in conformity with the local requirements. In 2003, more than of 272,800 teachers and other educational staff were offered in-service training opportunities through 7,520 training activities, of which 400 were organized at the central level and the remaining at the local level.

The weekly teaching loads were revised in 2006. Accordingly, preschool and classroom teachers in primary schools are obliged to attend 30 hours per week (of which 12 hours require extra payment), subject teachers (primary and secondary education) are obliged to attend 30 hours a week (of which 15 hours require extra payment). Classroom teachers are obliged to be present in the school for a minimum of 30 hours a week. Subject teachers can leave the school at the end of their class hour. However, all teachers are obliged to fulfil legally determined and school administrations' anticipated duties in addition to teaching (i.e. attend school meetings, participate in extracurricular social and cultural activities, organize guidance activities, etc.). (Eurydice, 2009).

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For more detailed and updated information consult EURYDICE, the information network on national education systems and policies in Europe:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>