



Country report of the Netherlands

Foreword

This report from Rotterdam, the Netherlands is presented as part of the project PACT – Partnerships Achieving Communities Tackling early school leaving.

The report provides a background for policies and issues related to Early School Leaving (ESL) in Rotterdam and in the Netherlands. The report describes some contemporary background of context and policy which is similar to European cities and schools tackling socio-economic factors due to international and diverse ethnicities and languages in urban schools. The European Union's ET2020 Working Group on School's Policy (2014-2015) on its priority theme "early school leaving" is the framework for how the country report will be interpreted and used locally.

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The objectives of the report

This report gives the current status of ESL both nationally and locally. The main objective of this report is providing facts and perspective to implement programs at a policy level. This report is one of four outputs from PACT - Partnership Achieving Communities Tackling early school leaving. This report will provide guidelines for creating policies concerning ESL challenges. For this purpose, qualitative research has been conducted. Moreover, the report lists several ongoing and successful measures taken to combat ESL. Exploring ESL-patterns nationally and locally makes it possible to set effective measures into action.

1. Introduction

In this first chapter there will be an overall description given of the educational system in the Netherlands in general and with regard to early school leaving (ESL).

1.1 The educational system in general

Compulsory education in the Netherlands starts at the age of five, although in practice, most children start school at the age of four. Children in the age between 4- 5 and 12 years of age visit primary education and children aged between 12 to at least 16 years of age visit secondary education. Primary education in the Netherlands has a duration of 8 years and can also be provided for students with special needs at special schools. The students select a type of secondary education in the last year of primary schooling on the base of their school's recommendation. The secondary level school education system consists of 4 levels – vocational training, pre-vocational secondary education (vmbo, 4 years), senior general education (havo, 5 years) and pre-university education (vwo, 6 years).

Vocational training was established for students for whom vmbo would be too difficult. Vocational training schools in the Netherlands directly prepare the student for a job. These schools work closely together with the practical training-level work field to teach the students the required skills for securing further employment for the students. If possible, some of these students can transition into vmbo with learning path support (lwoo). This support is accessible for students who are able to obtain a diploma on the vmbo level, but need special assistance for the duration of their education or temporarily. This assistance can entail smaller classes, help with homework, or offering special training to the students.

The other three types of secondary education, i.e., vmbo, havo, and vwo, start with a period of basic secondary education, during which all students study a broad range of subjects which in theory is the same for all school types. The actual programme and content, however, may vary to differences in learning abilities. After completing VMBO at the age of about 16, students may enrol in upper secondary vocational education (MBO). Students who have obtained their VMBO-t diploma may also proceed to HAVO, which will give them access to universities of applied sciences (HBO). A VWO diploma grants access to all universities, including research universities. In the second phase of their curriculum, HAVO and VWO students choose between four subject clusters:

- nature and technology
- nature and health
- economy and social studies
- culture and social studies

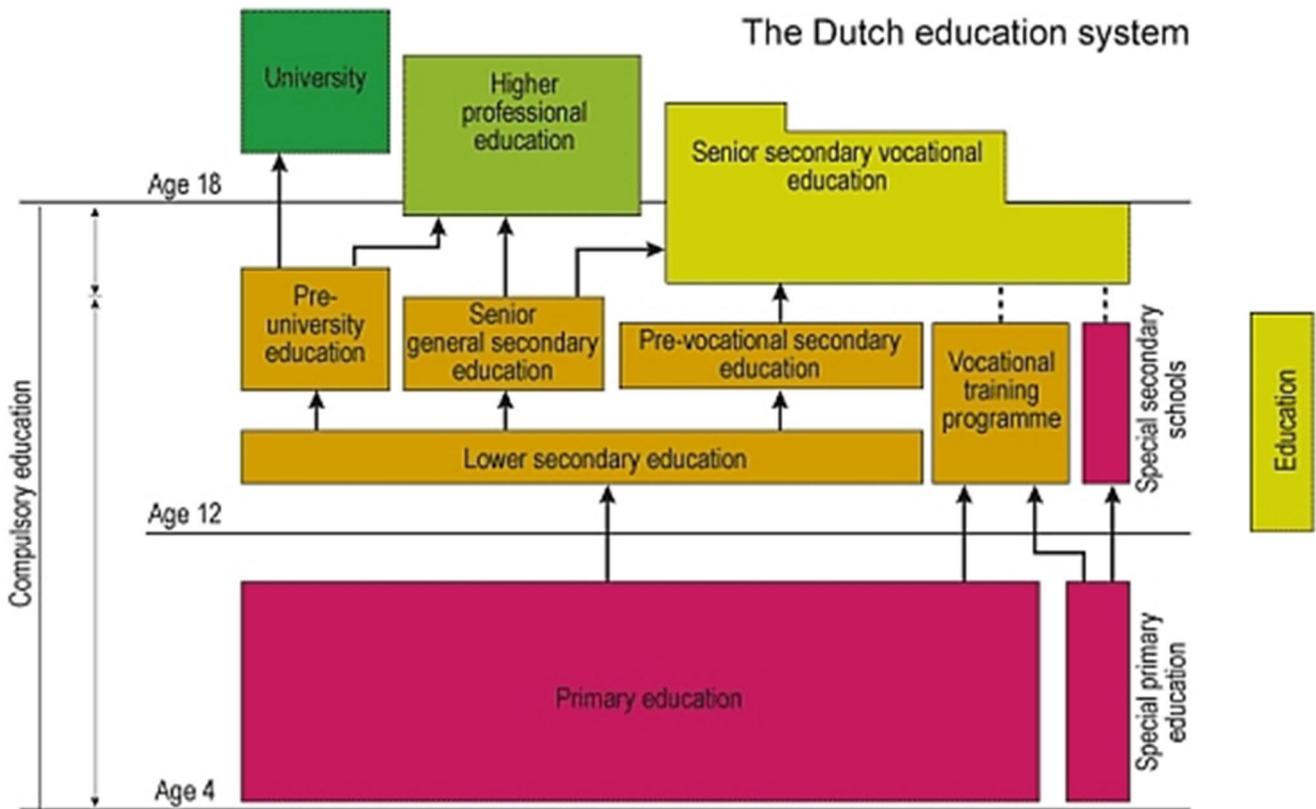
Additionally, the Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB) covers two types of education: upper secondary vocational education (MBO) and adult education. MBO comprises school-bound vocational training (BOL) and block or apprenticeship programmes with work components (BBL). MBO courses are offered in four subject fields (economics, technology, agriculture and personal and social care/health care) and the courses can be taken at four different qualification levels:

- assistant worker (entrance level/ level 1);
- basic vocational training (level 2);
- professional training (level 3);
- middle management or specialist training (level 4).

Of all Dutch education branches, the MBO division is in closest proximity to the labour market. MBO colleges have frequent contact with companies and organisations where students work or obtain their work experience. Regional trade organisations and the industry communicate with the colleges about the

quality and content of the courses on offer. This relationship between colleges and companies is extremely important to ensure that the education provided at the colleges meets the demands of the labour market.

Scheme 1: The educational system in the Netherlands



1.2 Types of schools

There are two types of schools, private and public. On the primary as well as secondary level public and private schooling exists. Private schools may have a religious or ideological character, unlike publicly run schools. Either type of school may be based on a specific educational ethos. Under article 23 of the Constitution, the state provides equal funding for both public-authority and private schools. To be eligible for government funding, schools must meet statutory requirements on pupil numbers and classroom hours, among other things.

Public-authority schools

Public-authority schools are open to all pupils and teachers. Their teaching is not based on a particular religion or belief. Publicly run schools are set up by the local authorities.

Under article 23 of the Constitution, local authorities must ensure there are sufficient publicly run schools in their municipality. If there are not enough schools locally, they are obliged to provide access to public schools, for instance by arranging a bus service to a public-authority school elsewhere.

Government authorities (usually the municipality) are responsible for the budget and educational quality of public-authority schools. Municipalities are also tasked with supervision.

Private schools

Private schools are established and run by private individuals, usually parents. The usual procedure is to set up a foundation with the intention of establishing a school based on religious or ideological principles, such as a Protestant or Muslim school. Private schools of this kind may use teaching materials that underpin their foundational principles.

Schools based on religious or ideological principles

Most of the schools in this category are faith-based schools, including: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish. A private school based on religious or ideological principles may require its teaching staff and pupils to subscribe to the beliefs of that denomination or ideology. For instance, a Protestant school may insist that its staff are committed Protestants. And a Roman Catholic school may forbid pupils to wear Islamic headscarves. However, a school in this category may only impose these rules if they are necessary to fulfil its principles. The requirements may not be discriminatory and the school must apply its policy consistently.

Schools with a specific educational ethos

Schools may be based on a specific educational ethos, such as Montessori, Dalton, Freinet, Jena Plan or Steiner schools. They are also known as private non-denominational schools because their principles are not religious or ideological. Public-authority schools may also be based on a specific educational ethos.

1.3 How school is organised

The Dutch law requires primary schools to arrange the childcare before and after school hours and also includes school-free days and vacations. Schools are required to ensure that children can stay in the child care from 7.30 to 18.30 on weekdays. Most of the time the school is working together with child care organisations while some schools also offer their own child care centre. Child care outside of school is voluntary in the Netherlands and parents pay for the child care centres. Parents can request a subsidy from the Dutch government. Special education schools are exempted from the requirement of child care organisation. In these cases, the school and the parents decide together how the child care outside of school hours will be organised. Secondary education schools and also MBO schools are not required to offer child care outside of school hours.

Some primary schools organise afterschool activities which start directly after the school day ends, so that the children do not have to wait. Most of the time the activities, ranging from creative and cultural workshops to sports, are organised by social organisations in the proximity of the school. Sometimes local businesses are involved as well. Parents pay a little amount for the activities. Only primary schools arrange this. It is not mentioned for secondary and MBO.

Schools are also required to keep the parents up to date on any information. Practical information concerning the activities during the school year is often shared on the school's website and in the school guide. During the school year, many schools send newsletters to the parents. The educational development of each child is recorded on the child's report. Conversations with the parents concerning the children individually take place throughout the school year. Parents are informed about the dates for these conversations by e-mail or telephone. Next to the sharing information, it is incredibly important to cooperate with parents in order to reach the educational goals for each child. The involvement of the parents in the educational process is crucial for the self-esteem, wellbeing and motivation of the children and thus a necessary basis for the learning success of the children. Mariette Lusse is a lecturer "Parents in Rotterdam South" which is part of a knowledge center for language development. Together with her research group she developed a toolkit which offers practical steps towards a successful parental involvement, especially in situations in which the barrier between professionals and parents seems to be high.

Parents and teachers stay in contact and participate in the development of the school policy through the participation council. Every school in the Netherlands must have a participation council. The participation council is a crucial organisation that has a right of co-determination of the rules and regulations in each school and the school must ask for the advice of the participation council before introducing any changes.

If more schools are organised in a school organisation the participation council is collectively organised. The council is directly involved in the development of the school policy. Among the members of the councils are teachers, parents, students in the case of secondary education and other employees of the schools. The members are chosen by the participation councils of each school in the school organisation. The members

of each individual school participation council are elected by the parents, employees and the students in the case of secondary education.

1.4 The approach to early school leaving in the Netherlands

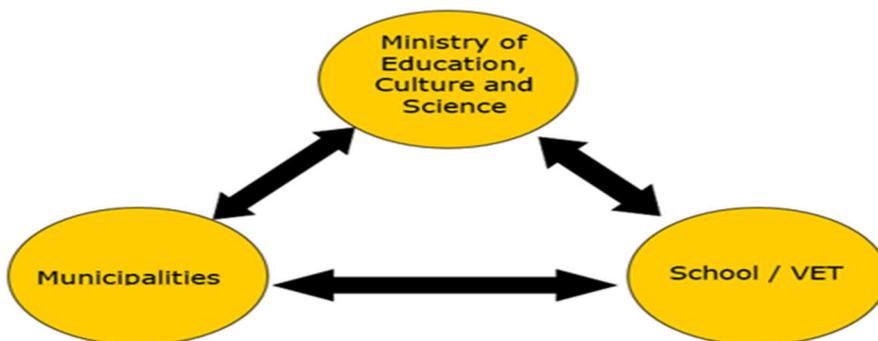
The obligation to qualify is intended to prevent early school leaving and to increase your chances of finding a job. The obligation to qualify means that students aged 16 to 18 are required to attend education if they do not have a HAVO, VWO, MBO level 2 or higher diploma. It is also called a start qualification.

The qualification obligation comes after compulsory education. It runs until the end of the school year in which you turn 16. The qualification obligation lasts until the day that you have obtained a start qualification. Or until the day you turn 18. Pupils between the ages of 18 and 23 are no longer required to obtain a start qualification or attend school. Nevertheless, a diploma increases the chances on the labor market. That is why schools and municipalities work together with a regional reporting and coordination centre (RMC). An RMC employee helps pupils in returning to a suitable education or to a combination of school and work. Or finding other help or care.

By means of this start qualification, the Dutch government aims to support as much students as possible in acquiring a diploma and, as a result, a fair chance on the labour market. In 2021 the Dutch government plans to reduce early school leaving (ESL) under 20.000 in total. A law was enacted in 2019, making this cooperation mandatory. Schools and municipalities lay down in a regional plan which measures they use.

The school has their own choice of methods to achieve objectives. There should be a local / inter sectoral cooperation between municipality, school and other parties based on local problem assessment to make consensus. The role of the government is facilitating, monitoring and evaluating. And they need to translate results in good practices and implement these in order to improve national approach. The Dutch government calls the inter sectoral approach a golden triangle.

Scheme 2: the golden triangle of sectoral approach



The golden triangle

The golden triangle is a long-term performance agreements between the government, municipalities and schools in 39 regions during 2008-2020. In 2016 new regional agreements were made which last till 2020. There are strict percentage targets and performance bonus if met. The Dutch government, schools and cities collaborate in order to minimize early school leaving.

Within the new agreements, the MBOs are given more scope to determine how they can improve their quality. The effectiveness of policies regarding early school leaving is depending on the local circumstances which requires flexible policy implementation. Each institution can therefore work with their own specific regional situation. Whether the focus should be on matching training with needs in the work area, lifelong development, or a completely different theme, the institutions determine themselves. They work together with important partners, such as the business community, municipalities and other educational institutions. This creates more room for regional initiatives in MBO, as agreed in the administrative agreement between

the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the MBO Council. Based on the plans, a total of 1.6 billion will be allocated for the period 2019 up to and including 2022.

Targeted policies that must be effective in reducing early school leaving require a good picture of the major risk factors associated with early school leaving. Whether a pupil leaves school early usually depends on a complex combination of factors.

1.5 The approach to early school leaving in Rotterdam

The city of Rotterdam finds it important that the pupils who go to school in Rotterdam complete their education, obtain their start qualification and do not drop out of education prematurely. Together with the Education Inspectorate and the school field, the municipality is actively committed to combating absenteeism. Absence from school is an important indicator of early school leaving. The municipality does this by, among other things, enforcing compulsory education for young people and their parents. In addition, the municipality supports schools in order to arrive at a good transparent attendance and absence administration, since a good approach to absence starts at school. All the actions initiated have contributed to the fact that for the fifth consecutive year the number of pupils who are absolutely absent (not registered at a school) has decreased.

Specific measures which have been taken in Rotterdam and the region Rijnmond for the period up to 2020 are the following:

Measure 1: flow of vulnerable young people to education and the labor market

The transition of vulnerable young people from secondary to secondary vocational education and from vocational education to work are critical moments in continuing careers of students. The partnerships for secondary and vocational schools take over tasks and guide the vulnerable young people in this transition with the help of a transfer coach. The transfer coach supports the students during the transfer from the sending school to the receiving school, keeping in touch with the student during the first three months at the new school. The MBO organizes good intake supervision.

In order to improve the transition from education to work, consultation tables with the parties involved are organized (sub) regionally to support young people in finding work. It is important to achieve a good match between the demands of employers and the supply of job seekers. This requires good knowledge of the labor market and specific knowledge of the target group of vulnerable young people from intermediaries.

Measure 2: supporting students in classes ("unburdening" teachers and educational teams)

Supporting overburdened students in secondary education and in MBO 1 and 2 aims to strengthen the capacity of students and educational teams. Pupils can complete their education positively despite the presence of obstructive factors. Extra attention for pupils and peace in class benefit the quality of education, for example coaching pupils with stacked problems and the realization of smaller classes

Measure 3: strict attendance policy

Frequent absence in MBO is a precursor to cancellation. The regional focus is on reducing absenteeism and stimulating presence. Educational teams can determine what is needed to shape a stringent attendance policy, including permitted absence, and thereby take ownership. They are supported by the local attendance officers and the RMC support centers. The attendance policy becomes part of the quality cycle and annual plans within the educational institution.

Measure 4: Picture in time those students who switch from school

They record the phase that students are in when they switch from secondary to secondary vocational education. Stagnation of this transition has been seen and the sending school contacts the student in question.

1.6 Finance on education

Educational institutions receive one budget from the government for all the costs they incur (called lumpsum). In addition, educational institutions receive extra money to improve education. The extra money they receive is an amount per student and they can use for the following subjects:

- science and technology
- language and mathematics
- cultural education in primary education
- talent development
- professionalization of teachers and school leaders.

This extra money is called the performance box. In 2018 € 282 million will be available for the performance box in primary education. The budget for the performance box in secondary education in 2018 is € 296 million.

In addition to the lumpsum, schools in secondary vocational education receive a contribution for individual quality agreements. The quality agreements include:

- professionalization of teachers and school leaders
- study success
- the quality of vocational training;
- early school leaving.

The amount of the budget depends on the number of students, their age and the type of education. The more students a school has, the amount that a school board receives will also be bigger.

Most of the money goes to primary education (€ 10.5 billion) and secondary education (€ 8.1 billion). This is followed by Vocational Education and Adult Education (€ 4.3 billion) and Scientific Education (€ 4.5 billion). Higher professional education receives € 3.0 billion.

In the year 2018 an average of € 6.900 is available per pupil in primary education. And in secondary education an average of € 8.500 per pupil is available in 2018.

School boards decide for themselves on what to spend their lumpsum budget. They must adhere to the legal rules. The vast majority of this goes to the salaries of teachers and other staff. For example, schools buy furniture and (digital) learning materials from the remainder. Schools themselves know best what to spend their money on to offer good education to their students. They make different choices. One school focuses on digital skills and buys ICT resources. The other school opts for professional teachers for gymnastics or crafts.

School boards explain in the annual report where they spend their money. The Education Inspectorate is the external supervisor to whom they are accountable. The Education Inspectorate checks every year whether a school spends the government money properly. They assess the quality of education at schools and other educational institutions. If there is a suspicion that schools are not spending money well, the inspectorate will conduct an investigation. Schools without clear risks are examined by the inspectorate on a random basis.

Parent contribution

The parental contribution is a voluntary financial contribution from parents to their child's school. The school board determines the amount of this contribution. The school board also determines what the school spends the parental contribution on. The school participation council must agree to this. This does not apply to secondary vocational education.

Schools usually spend the contribution on extra activities outside the regular curriculum. For example, excursions and cultural activities. Information about the amount and spending of the parental contribution must be in the school guide. Primary schools may no longer exclude any children from activities organized by the school. Even if you do not pay the voluntary parental contribution or the school costs.

In secondary education there are two types of contributions:

- Contributions for compulsory school components: if parent do not pay these, the child can participate in this freely. A compulsory school component is any component that is also included in the school guide with the program.
- Contributions for non-compulsory school components: the school can exclude the child from an extra activity if parents do not pay the parental contribution.

For parents who cannot pay the voluntary parental contribution, there is in many cases the option of paying in installments. Some schools have a reduction scheme, but this is not mandatory. The school can give you more information about this. There is a foundation who helps parents who really cannot pay the parental contribution where possible. Sometimes the municipality also has opportunities to financially assist parents

1.7 Finance on early school leaving

The government supports the approach to early school leaving with the following means:

1. Regional approach (more than € 80 million)

In each region, schools and municipalities agree on the measures to be taken. And how they use the available money for this.

2. Result-dependent funding of schools in secondary education (more than € 17 million)

Schools that reduce early school leaving receive extra money. How much extra money they get depends on the percentage of young people up to the age of 23 who drop out. The government determines the extra remuneration on the basis of certain standards (target percentages). Even if a school almost reaches the target percentage, the school can get extra money.

3. Resources on early school leaving as part of quality agreements in MBO

Previously, MBO schools also received separate results-dependent funding. From 2019, these resources for MBO will be part of the total of money for quality MBO agreements. In their quality plan the MBO schools include ambitions about tackling early school leaving. MBOs also have annual standards that should help to reduce the number of early school leavers to 20.000 in 2021.

2. Current state of affairs

In this chapter there will be given an overview of early school leaving on the national level and also for the city of Rotterdam.

2.1 Early school leaving in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands early school leavers are young people who are between 12 and 25 years of age who leave school without a start qualification (mbo-2, havo or vwo). In the school year of 2017-2018, 25.574 students left school without a diploma in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is among the countries of the European Union with the lowest dropout rates with a rate of 7.1%. In 2017 10,6% of the youth left school too early in Europe. The Dutch government aims to reduce the number of early school leavers to 20.000 until 2021. The percentage of early school leavers who are under 18 years old is under 1% while the percentage of early school leavers who are 18 years old or older is 4.9%. More than two-third of early school leaver's drop out of mbo schools. Secondary schools have a dropout rate of 19% and vavo schools of only 3%. The dropout rate for HBO students is 15%. MBO students have a higher risk of dropping out with a rate of 20% while 12 % of the HAVO students leave school early. Only 6% of the VWO students drop out early.

In-depth analysis is needed to be able to identify the underlying causes of the rise, in particular for the rise in MBO. The increase in secondary education seems to be largely explained by newcomers who have entered education. This group has a greater chance of dropping out.

Table 1: number of ESL from 2010/2011 till 2017/2018 (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, DUO)

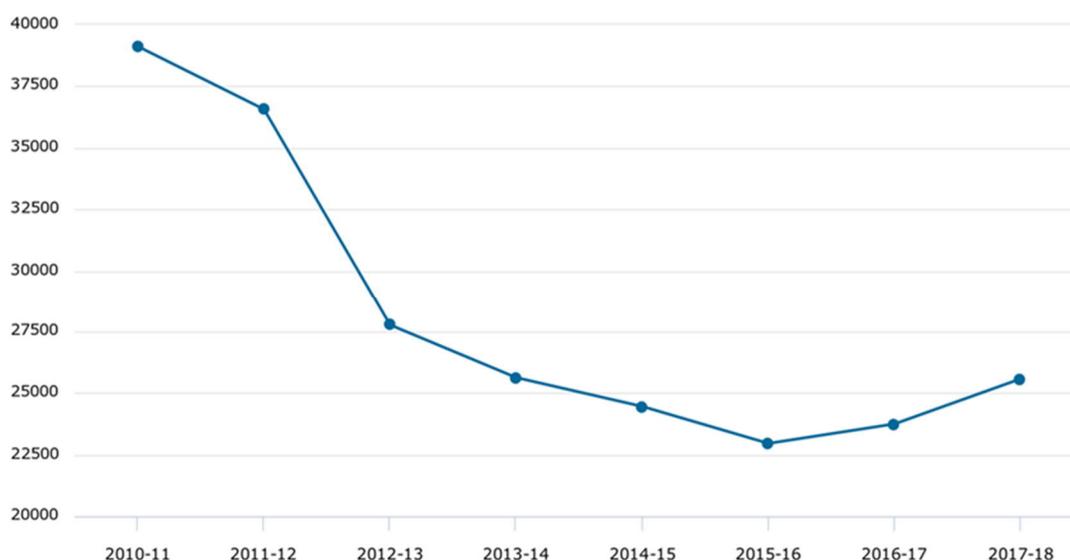
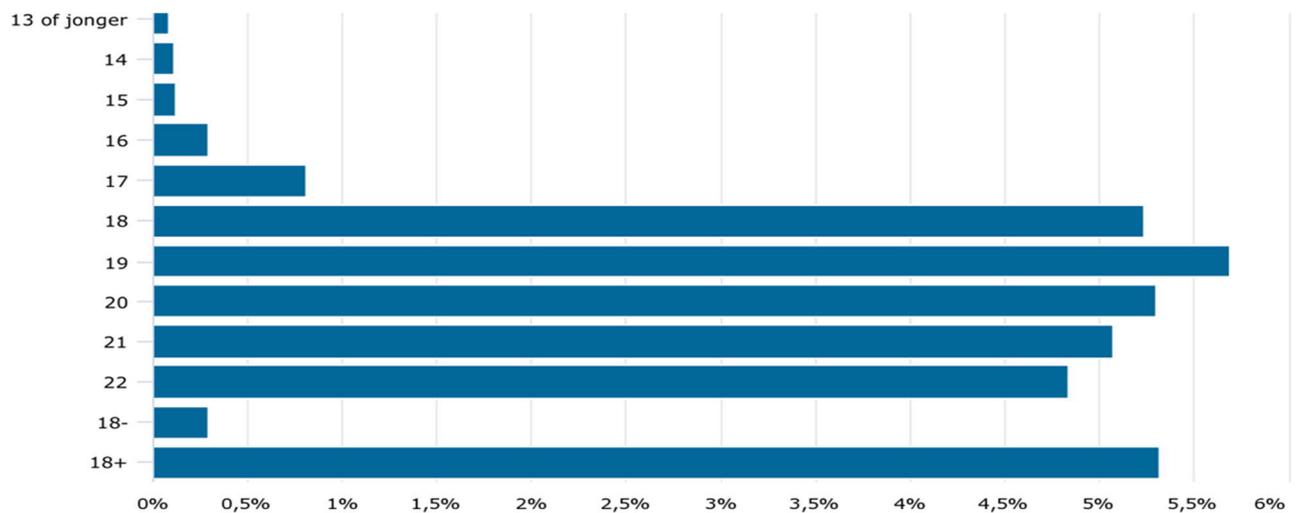


Table 2: percentages on early school leaving to age (DUO)

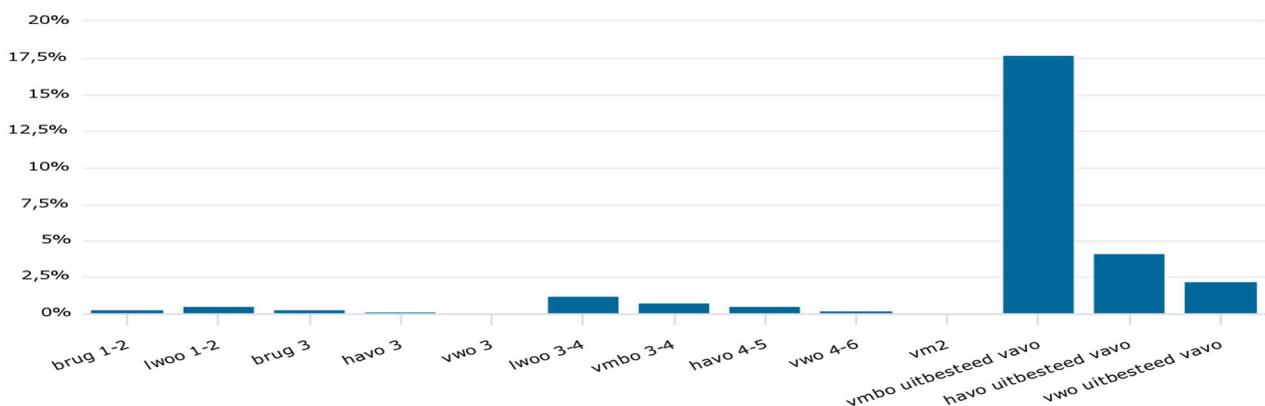


Each school in the Netherlands is authorized to decide which measures they take in order to minimize the dropout rate in their schools. Mentoring students in their first year of secondary school, supporting students in their choice for a line of work and registering students who play truant as well as exploring the reasons of truancy in personal communication with the students are all options that are regularly employed by schools. Each educational level has a respective drop out benchmark and schools that have a drop-out rate below the benchmark get additional financial resources from the government.

The government of the Netherlands wants to extend compulsory education for students which did not receive a diploma (mbo-2, havo, vwo) until they are 21 years old. Rotterdam applied to become a pilot-city for this new policy. Now, the compulsory education in the Netherlands is required until 18 years of age. Extending compulsory education might make it possible to decrease the number of ESL in the Netherlands even further and thus give more young people a chance to be succeed in the labour market.

The dropout rate in secondary education has been low for years. Together with the municipalities and other partners, schools have further reduced the dropout rate, from (rounded off) 0.5% to 0.4% of the number of pupils.

Table 3: ESL in secondary education by type of education 2017/2018 (DUO)



For a number of years, more attention has been paid to the risk of dropping out of the transition from VMBO to MBO. As a result, 7.717 young people dropped out during the transition year from VMBO to MBO. The year before there were 8.078. In MBO, dropout rates have dropped from 5% of students to 4.6%,

a decrease of 8%. Level 1 has the least students, but has had the highest dropout for years. Last year the drop-out rate dropped to 28.8%; the largest decrease in years. The drop-out in levels 3 and 4 is lower than at the other levels of the MBO, but the number of dropouts is definitely the highest. The dropout rate has also fallen less rapidly than in the other levels.

The dropout rate for 18 to 23 year old's has fallen sharply in recent years. This was also the case in 2018, with around 6%. The dropout rate among students younger than 18 years has remained the same. Despite the significant decrease, the group of young adults still accounts for the vast majority of dropouts: of the 22.948 dropouts, around 20.000 are 18 or older.

2.2 Early school leaving in Rotterdam

Rotterdam is the city with the highest amount of early school leavers in the Netherlands with a number of 1.367 of students in 2016/2017. 3.14 % (2016-2017) of the youth between 12- 23 years old leaves school without a diploma (DUO-OCW).

Table 4; number of early school leaving to type of education (2016/2017)

Type of education	Number	Rotterdam% esl	National % esl
VO	154	0,54 %	0,46 %
MBO	1213	8,07%	4,64 %
Total	1367	3,14%	1,75 %

In the 2016-2017 school year, the percentage of new dropout rates for MBO participants living in Rotterdam is slightly lower than in 2014-2015. The decrease mainly occurs at levels 1 and 2, while a slight increase can be observed at levels 3 and 4. This corresponds to the national picture

		Early schoolleaving of Rotterdam MBO students by level		
		Rotterdam		
		2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
amount of students	total	15159	15299	15042
	mbo-1	843	711	704
	mbo-2	3629	3577	3192
	mbo-3	3623	3803	3391
	mbo-4	7284	7408	7755
amount esl	total	1169	1192	1148
	mbo-1	273	221	197
	mbo-2	442	438	351
	mbo-3	184	190	203
	mbo-4	270	343	397
esl-percentage	total	7,71%	7,79%	7,63%
	mbo-1	32,38%	31,08%	27,98%
	mbo-2	12,52%	12,24%	11,00%
	mbo-3	5,22%	5,27%	5,99%
	mbo-4	3,72%	4,63%	5,12%

Table 5. Early schoolleaving of MBO students by level, living in Rotterdam. (Source VSV-scanner, weighed students residential municipality)

	Netherlands		G4		Rotterdam	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Share transferring down						
Parents' Education level						
Unknown	8.074	20%	403	14%	124	16%
MBO level 1 or lower	5.119	21%	955	18%	349	21%
MBO level 2 up to and including VWO	11.718	21%	977	18%	384	21%
Higher Education	9.738	13%	653	9%	209	12%

Table 6 share of transferring down by education level parents; source: SSB, adaptation Risbo/City of Rotterdam(OBI)

The share of children transferring down is particularly lower if the parents have a higher education diploma. Children of parents with a maximum of MBO 1 or an education up to and including a VWO diploma are discharged equally. This is at the national level in Rotterdam.

	Netherlands		G4		Rotterdam	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Share transferring up						
Parents' Education level						
Unknown	4.843	12%	388	13%	139	18%
MBO level 1 or lower	2.928	12%	706	13%	238	14%
MBO level 2 up to and including VWO	6.447	12%	701	13%	262	14%
Higher Education	10.151	13%	983	13%	290	17%

Table 7 share of transferring up by education level parents; source: SSB, adaptation Risbo/City of Rotterdam(OBI)

The previous table shows that the percentage of Rotterdam children who transferring up compared to the four major cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, which we call the G4) and national figures is higher across the board, regardless of the level of education of the parents. In the G4 and throughout the Netherlands there is virtually no difference in the proportion of up-streamers if the educational level of the parents varies.

Improving the continuing learning pathway from secondary education to senior secondary vocational education and higher education is important for the future of the city. Of the pupils in Rotterdam with a VMBO-KL diploma, a larger proportion than average moves on to an MBO study program at the higher level 4. Students with a VMBO-GL / TL degree in Rotterdam continue slightly more often than average in the four major cities pursue their career via MBO level 4. The pupils with a HAVO or VWO diploma in Rotterdam also opt for further education more often than on average in the four major cities.

Chapter 3: Preventive measures

To compensate and reduce the risk factors, several measures have been put to action both at schools and in the municipality. They are listed below. First a description of the preventive measures to tackle early school leaving on national level and furthermore a description of preventive measures on the local level of Rotterdam.

3.1 Preventive measures on early school leaving

Early school leaving is combined with various child and environmental factors that often already lead to problems at a young age. Interventions to prevent early school leaving can therefore be added (Holter, N, 2010).

The interventions in this chapter are not only aimed at early school leaving, but mainly respond to the risk factors that precede it. Furthermore, these are only preventive interventions. The need for prevention is clear from the fact that it is difficult to early school leavers to return to school (Van der Steeg & Webbink, 2006).

In the Netherlands many initiatives on early school leaving are taken at regional level. This has achieved the cooperation between education and youth care and cooperation between schools has improved. There are also more opportunities to follow a tailor-made training course (Derriks, Voncken, van Tilborg & van Es, 2003). The various initiatives often feature a number of themes:

- Personal connection. Most interventions consist of organizing small group meetings or the use of mentors to create a bond between the individual student and the school. This makes an important risk factor of premature school leaving tackled immediately.
- To bring students into contact with a concrete future perspective. Early school leavers generally do not see the added value of a school diploma. By students to get in touch with various jobs or further education they learn to see this value.
- Support and development of academic skills. Many students drop out because they always fail and as a result get the feeling that their efforts are for nothing. By them learn specific study skills and pay attention to the curriculum, is the chance smaller on early school leaving.
- Involving the family. The family plays an important role in whether or not to finish school and therefore needs attention.

It has been said that the most effective interventions for the group of young people who are in danger of early school leaving are:

1. Programs that change the school organization and class management;
2. Cognitive behavioral therapy aimed at teaching self-control and social competence;
3. Mentor interventions, if properly structured and constantly supervised
4. Cognitive behavioral therapy aimed at teaching self-control and social competence;
5. Mentor interventions, if properly structured and constantly supervised

3.2 Preventive measures in Rotterdam

In practice, it is difficult to have early school leavers return to school. That is why preventive activities are more successful than activities aimed at pupils who have already dropped out. The preference is for a joint preventive approach, aimed at multiple areas of life of the pupil. To prevent early school leaving you have to take into account the risk factors and protective factors in the child, in the home situation, in the group of friends, at school and in society. It is important that parents, school and other professionals (such as an attendance officer) work together to prevent negative influences from friends. In Rotterdam equality of opportunities is the main theme within the education policy (Gelijke kansen voor elk talent, Gemeente Rotterdam). In order to enhance the equality of opportunities en thereby also reducing early school leaving

there are several measures which Rotterdam is taking in the coming years. The measures, also described in the policy plan 'Gelijke kansen voor elk talent' (Rotterdam, 2018) are the following:

1. improving the transitions between school types in order to reduce the division between pupils in current
2. practice and to reduce dropout; the quality and accessibility of schools. A high-quality and varied range of (pre) schools throughout the city ensures that all pupils are challenged to get the best out of themselves and reduces segregation.
3. appropriate care and support for students who need it to be successful in their school career;
4. suitably qualified and well-equipped teachers, school leaders and pedagogical staff;
5. a Rotterdam-based method of democratic citizenship, because education feels the task of helping children and young adults to become resilient, responsible citizens who make a valuable contribution to Dutch society;
6. the link between education and the labor market to educate children for the world of tomorrow;
7. room for talent development of all children, starting with the development of day programming in the Children's Zone on South.

In order to take these measures in practice, hereby a few important interventions which are taken on local level will be described:

The transformative school

A method developed by Iliass El Hadioui which focuses the gap between behavioural and cultural differences in schools, at home and on the street in cities. Youngsters with multicultural backgrounds often encounter issues with the different behavioural expectations they encounter at schools, at home and the street. The method of transformative schools supports teachers in developing the talents of vulnerable children by building on their individual talents using positive reinforcement. Acknowledging the rich and diverse cultural backgrounds of vulnerable children for e.g. their bilingualism helps them to feel valued which in turn contributes to an enhanced school success. Also, students learn to switch between the different behavioural patterns expected of them at home, on the street and at school which increases their social and cultural capital and prevents them from being subjected to social exclusion. A close network of the school administration, teachers and parents is vital to the success of the professional implementation of the scientific method of the "transformative school". Knowledge exchange around the "transformative school" is organized in the network "de transformatieve school".

The Marnix gymnasium in Rotterdam is a partner school in the project and already implemented the method of the transformative school. The school offers pre-university education for a duration of 6 years. The pupil population is composed of intelligent, very intelligent and highly gifted children which all have different needs with regard to their education. The Marnix gymnasium offers special programs for highly gifted children, mostly consisting of following less lessons and enhancing their individual skills. It is also possible to join pre-university programs at various universities. The children with diverse cultural backgrounds at the Marnix school reflect the multicultural population of the city of Rotterdam (more than 160 nationalities). The children with multicultural backgrounds differ from the Dutch students because they have diverse cultural backgrounds and religions. This situation is challenging as a common ground needs to be established at school so that all students are supported in an optimal way. Teachers need a lot of didactic experience and knowledge to deal with differences in social-economic, cultural backgrounds and ability. To cope with the challenges and the street culture, which is also present at the school remedial programmes, were introduced. The programmes offered students additional help in Dutch and Math. Next, the parents are involved in the educational progress of their children.

After introducing these student programmes, the Marnix gymnasium recognized that the teachers also needed support in order to adequately facilitate learning in diverse classes. These challenges marked the start for the project of the transformative school at the Marnix gymnasium. Initially, the project will last for

3 years and help the teachers to enhance their skill set in supporting students who are dealing with social exclusion and the pain associated with it. Helping the students with switching between different values and behaviours in different social settings has already resulted in a better school climate which in turn results in increased motivation for learning. Moreover, the teachers are steadily encouraging the children to continue their education, which results in a decreased drop-out rate.

Next to being a project partner for the transformative school, the Marnix gymnasium also started a Talents class 5 years ago. In this class students with the cognitive ability to visit the Marnix gymnasium but lack certain skills to succeed without help are offered additional lessons in reading and understanding texts and organizational skills one afternoon each week. The parent involvement is crucial to the success of the talents class and consists of coaching them for 10 meetings about the educational matters of their children as well as offers the opportunity to talk with experts about challenges. 90% of the children who followed this programme succeed in getting a better school advice.

Now, the Marnix gymnasium wants to focus on strengthening the mentoring trajectory for its students. The school used to offer mentoring once a week but notices that this is not sufficient. Within the scope of PACT the school wants to establish a programme in which university students mentor their students and thus offer their students an even more integrated support system in order to help them succeed both on an educational as well as personal level.

Mentoring programs

Various mentor programs exist in The Netherlands for children as well as adults, during which mentees are supported by a mentor as a tutor for school work, a guide in career decisions, for social-emotional support, or for general support with regard to functioning in society (Dekker, Van Straaten, & El Kaddouri, 2013). For instance, the Oranje Fonds initiated De Beste Maatjes- [The Best Buddies-] project to support existing and new mentor programs. Some of these programs are aimed at primary and secondary school children, such as School's Cool in Amsterdam that is aimed at supporting primary school pupils at risk who are in transition to secondary school (Vaessen & Van der Vegt, 2009).

A large-scale mentoring program in Rotterdam called Mentoren op Zuid [Mentors on South], is a school-based (i.e., taking place at school) peer-to-peer mentoring program (i.e., individually based mentoring by a student mentor as a role model) aimed at mentoring primary and secondary school pupils who live on the south bank of Rotterdam (Fabries et al., 2017). A large proportion of these pupils come from low social-economic status (SES) environments and are of migrant background (Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2013). The primary and secondary school pupils in this project are mentored by students that are enrolled in universities of applied sciences in Rotterdam.

Mentoren op Zuid (MoZ) is a program that is developed in cooperation with the Stichting Studentmentoren Rotterdam [Foundation Student Mentors Rotterdam]. This foundation, in turn, collaborates with various partners, such as Hogeschool Rotterdam, schools on the south bank of Rotterdam, and Foundation De Verre Bergen (Fabries et al., 2017). Schools on the south bank of Rotterdam face specific challenges, such as a relatively large proportion of pupils dropping out. Many of the children miss a supportive home environment when it comes to strengthening their school career, often due to low SES and low expectations. As a result, these children are less likely to enrol in tertiary education and have lower ambitions when it comes to work (Gregg, 2013, in Fabries et al., 2017).

MoZ is inspired by capital theory (Bourdieu, 1977; El Hadioui, 2011; Putnam, 2015). Of the four types of capital mentioned by Bourdieu (1977), social and cultural capital are important in education and mentoring. Social capital refers to how interactions (in social networks) affects access to knowledge. Cultural capital contains knowledge, skills, and education. These two types of capital are divided unequally in society. People from low SES backgrounds, because of lower educational levels and lower-level jobs, are more likely to have less social and cultural capital. Bourdieu, therefore, calls for a change in society. Groups with less social and cultural capital should be able to strengthen their position. Education and its emancipative duty plays an important role in Bourdieu's proposed change. That is to say, education should strengthen the

position of those children who have less access to social and cultural capital, as a result of growing up in less advantaged environments (Bourdieu, 1977; Putnam, 2015).

El Hadioui (2011) supplements Bourdieu's capital theory by making a division between three different cultures in which children live, i.e., street culture, school culture, and home culture. According to El Hadioui, a 'pedagogical mismatch' can occur between these cultures, which may cause confusion and deviant behaviour. El Hadioui argues that schools should be aware of the street and the home culture that children bring into the school. He proposes a methodology, The Transformative School, to help teachers bridging the gap between home (and street) culture and school culture in playful as well as scholastic manner (El Hadioui, 2011). The aim is to overcome the 'pedagogical mismatch' and, additionally, connect pupils with school. The mentoring program Mentoren op Zuid can be considered as a means to overcome El Hadioui's 'pedagogical mismatch', as well as to empower primary and secondary school children in their social and cultural capital. Especially those primary and secondary school pupils who grow up on the south bank of Rotterdam, a region that inhabits a relatively large amount of low SES families, may benefit from the guidance of student mentor as role model.

The aim of MoZ is twofold. Firstly, as mentioned above, MoZ aims at increasing social and cultural capital of primary and secondary pupils at the south bank of Rotterdam and, as a result, improving their self-efficacy, wellbeing, and school outcomes (such as less drop out; Fabries et al., 2017). Secondly, MoZ aims at improving the competence of student mentors, such meta-cognition, problem solving, and communication skills (Luigies, 2013, in Fabries et al., 2017). In the school year 2015-2016, a total number of 740 students and 740 pupils took part in the program. This number has expanded and is supposed to expand in subsequent years. Students that are enrolled in universities of applied sciences in Rotterdam and primary and secondary school pupils are matched on the bases of, among other things, personality and interests. Only complete classes are selected to take part in the program, to avoid pupils feeling marginalized. The mentoring is individually based, which means that each pupil is linked to one student. The mentoring weekly takes place at the school of the primary or secondary school pupil, during one semester. After each mentoring session, the university teacher – also associated with MoZ – and the school teacher meet the students for consultation (Fabries et al., 2017). The starting point of the school-based peer-to-peer mentoring of the MoZ program, is the need of the pupil. Mentoring can be focused on learning skills and school work, on social support, or on school career guidance. Also, student mentors as a role model can provide information on tertiary education and they can open up their social networks to the pupils. These endeavors intend to strengthen social and cultural capital of primary and secondary school pupils, especially from low SES backgrounds.

Care student in picture

The city of Rotterdam launched the project 'Zorgleerling in beeld' together with Koers VO, a network of secondary schools and special needs secondary schools in the Rotterdam region, in order to improve the transition from primary to secondary education for students who require special support with their education and might be suited for vocational training or vmbo met leerwegondersteuning (lwoo). Standardized testing, issuing admission letters for special needs secondary education as well as making sure that the schools offer the care these students need are among the tasks of the network. Additionally, the network is responsible for informing parents about choosing a secondary school which fits to the needs of their children. The unified testing and information system help to reduce the drop-out rate of children because they are provided with individual support and education which is targeted to their respective needs.

Homesitters Pact

"Homesitters" are children between the ages of 5-18 who are not registered at a school or who do not attend school for long periods of time. These absences are without exemption from the Compulsory Education Act or an exemption from regular attendance. If a child comes to stay at home, despite preventative efforts, PPO Rotterdam will come up with solutions from day 1. All educational and support options are explored and, if necessary, the homesitter is discussed with the upper school manager or a board member of the school board in question.

One of the most important goals of tailored education is to reduce the number of minors who stay at home. The four largest cities Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Rotterdam have made concrete agreements that aim to greatly reduce the number of homesitters. These agreements are outlined in the "Homesitter's Pact", with former children-ombudsman Marc Dullaert as the ambassador and driving force of the pact. The goal of the pact is to ensure that by 2020 children will spend no longer than 3 months at home. Faster responses from the healthcare sector, student transportation sector and prevention are important aspects of the pact. PPO Rotterdam strives to reduce the number of homesitters to zero. They work together with the municipality of Rotterdam, which is responsible for ensuring the compulsory education act. The municipality strives to reduce the number homesitters by 75%, and aims to reduce the length of homesitting to a maximum of 6 weeks. In order to achieve this goal, the Taskforce Homesitters has been set up together with the municipality of Rotterdam, Koers VO, the school boards and care providers.

PPO Rotterdam is actively working to prevent homesitters. To this end, each neighborhood has a "Pyramid of healthcare" aimed at preventing students from becoming homesitters. Homesitting is in most cases prevented by entering into timely discussions with the school and parents about appropriate educational support and discussing the opportunities and threats faced with each other. The preventive activities undertaken by our school contacts and concerned parents play a critical role in prevention of homesitting. The PPO Rotterdam programs also ensure that a suitable educational location can be realized for almost all students. The number of homesitters in Rotterdam is relatively low, but every homesitter is 1 too many. We want to map all homesitters, including the 4-year olds. All children deserve a suitable educational environment, even if they are not required to attend school yet.

The pre-school social programs, which are funded by both PPO and the municipality of Rotterdam, focus on early detection for young children and supports parents with toddlers in finding a suitable educational institution in Rotterdam.

Taakspel (task game)

Taakspel is an effective universal preventive behavioral intervention program for children in groups 3 to 8 of primary education. It is a group-oriented method in which students learn to adhere better to class rules during regular lessons through a game. It gives teachers the means to get started with behavior effectively. The intervention is based on learning-theoretical principles and emphasizes desired behavior.

The use of Taakspel is aimed at increasing task-oriented behavior and thereby reducing rule-breaking behavior among pupils and at promoting a positive educational climate.

The ultimate goal of Taakspel is to reduce early problem behavior in children at an early stage and to turn it into desired behavior in order to prevent possible deviant behavioral development.

Learning together

Learning Together focuses on the parents of these children. By guiding parents in demonstrating educational support behavior and teaching them parenting skills related to this, such as offering structure, setting boundaries and giving positive attention.

Learning Together has been developed for and with this target group and is therefore focused on parents who are not yet fully proficient in the Dutch language, a low level of education, diverse cultural backgrounds, limited space in house and few financial resources. Limited skills in the field of education and stimulation of their children also play a role in this. The aim of this project is to increase the educational performance of children who live in Rotterdam South and are in groups.

Parents can register via schools if the school performance of children is lagging behind. When parents find this out themselves and want support, they can also register themselves. At primary schools and with other cooperation partners (such as community centers) recruitment takes place in an accessible manner.

Activities at school

Talent is very diverse; it is an exceptional skill of a cognitive, technical, social, artistic, sporting, digital or other nature. The challenge of education is to recognize, develop and utilize the talent of every child. Schools can learn request additional financial resources at the municipality. Based on the school plans, an inventory was made of the activities to which schools are going to spend their extra resources. In part, these activities take place in extension of hours outside the curriculum.

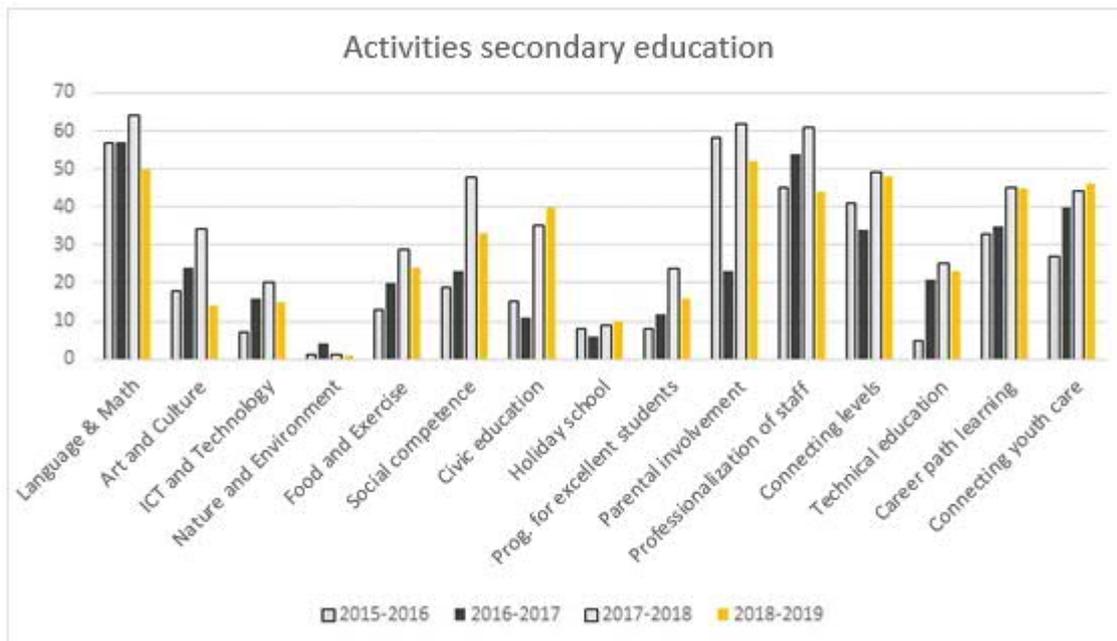


Figure: activities at schools (staat van het onderwijs 2018)

This overview shows the activities that have been carried out and are planned. Schools can use the budget for multiple activities. The figure below shows the implementation of the activities that are paid from the school development budgets. The number of schools that carry out the activities in the current school year is set against the number of schools that carried out the activities in previous school years.

Parental involvement

In the 2018-2019 school year, Rotterdam has 133 schools with a parent involvement employee (Education Department, municipality of Rotterdam). Schools use employees' parental involvement to be supported and facilitated in the design and implementation of parent policy, such as promoting the educational support behavior of parents. The intended result is an equal educational partnership between school and parents, which contributes to better educational outcomes.

Parents 010

The organisation Ouders010 gives a voice to parents in the education policy of Rotterdam. Parents are in contact with school executive boards, policy makers and the city in order to discuss the education policy. Ouders010 offers invited and also uninvited advice. On the level of schools, the parents have influence through the representative advisory board and the shared representative advisory board (SRAB) the school policy. A school executive board with more schools must have a SRAB. On the level of the city education policy, the foundation Ouders010 is discussing education policies with the vice mayor, civil servants and school executive boards.

Active parents regularly organize Ouders010 tables at schools, in neighbourhood meeting centrums and at their homes. During these meetings the parents and social workers talk about their experiences with schools and their children, the education policy in Rotterdam and about their ideas for education

improvements. The executive board of Ouders010 disseminates this information in their meetings with policy workers and the school executive boards.

Progress Conversation

In progress conversations the student's development with regard to their development at school and at home. Progress conversations can be viewed as an alternative to the traditional rapport conversations that focus on the learning development, grades and behaviour of the students.

Interactive parent evenings

On the one hand, many schools lament the low attendance of parents at parent evenings. On the other hand, parents often criticize the long and complicated lectures held at these evenings. As an alternative, parents as well as students can be given a more active role in these evenings. As a result, the evenings will be more satisfying for everyone involved.

Information card

Unclear communication to parents creates unnecessary barriers. With an information card, you provide parents with the most necessary information about school. The knife cuts both ways, because it also forces you to be clear about how parents can contact you and to plan parent activities in a timely and clear manner.

Consultation last grade

The school advice has a major impact on the future of students. Conducting an advisory consultation is therefore an important, but sometimes difficult task for teachers in group 8. Rosa Rodrigues developed a guideline for conducting advisory conversations in her research, which helps teachers to put the finishing touches.

Chapter 4: Special programs to support youth in disadvantages urban areas

4.1 National support programs

The “Gelijke Kansen Alliance” was established in the Netherlands in 2016. It is a national umbrella initiative that supports regions and municipalities to provide equal education to all Dutch children and youth, no matter their socio-economic and ethnic background. The initiative was established because research has had found that poorer children often are less successful at school in the Netherlands. The network wants to support knowledge exchange as well as support a closer connection between the various stakeholders involved in providing education and support for children. Coordinators of the “Gelijke Kansen Alliance” offer consulting to municipalities with regard to enhancing equal chances for children and connect municipalities and other local stakeholders with each other. Next, the platform introduces different initiatives on their website in order to inspire further action by other governmental and non-governmental actors. Next to that, the alliance also made policy arrangements with regard to supporting poor children financially as well as improving the possibilities for changing to a better school level. Investment in education such as in teachers and first year classes which make the transition from primary to secondary education easier by allowing students to decide after that year which higher education form, they would like to choose. Moreover, the culture education on the pre-vocational secondary education was improved in order to offer all students the opportunity to engage in cultural activities.

Children with a functional impairment or disability need more assistance and support when they are at risk of dropping out of school. To deliver more effective help to this group of children the government of the Netherlands, municipalities, schools, youth support and employers work together in each region of the Netherlands and meet at least once a year to discuss, evaluate and if necessary, enhance their approach with regard to especially vulnerable youth and early school leaving.

4.2 Local support programs

National Programme for Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

The NPRZ integrates area-based and people-based approaches for social inclusion. It combines physical, economic and social interventions and empowers residents by improving their access to job opportunities and education. Since the 1970s, the city authorities have tried to address the problems of social exclusion, with some success. However, the people who benefitted from these policies tended to leave the South Bank area to live in more attractive neighbourhoods. Meanwhile other socially vulnerable people moved into the cheap housing left vacant, which means the social problems of the area persist.

This situation led to the proposal of an integrated approach to combating the decline of the area. The NPRZ was developed in cooperation with the Dutch national government. In September 2011, a group of 17 stakeholders, including the city of Rotterdam, the national government and the local residents committee, signed an agreement for the regeneration of the area. This focus is on the areas Feijenoord, Charlois and IJsselmonde in the South of Rotterdam. The principle of the NPRZ is that school and work are the best guarantees for a better life.

The initiative is centred on three pillars, combining people-based and area-based approaches to urban regeneration:

1. Enabling talent: this allows young people in the South Bank to develop their talents through education and training, craftsmanship, life-long learning and the prevention of school drop-outs. Young people are in a better position to compete for the new jobs being created in high-value sectors in the Rotterdam harbour, such as logistics and the petrochemical industry.

2. Economy and labour market: this pillar guarantee that the population of South Bank is schooled and trained to meet the labour demand generated in the high value sectors of Rotterdam's harbour and its associated industries, as well as in the care and medical sector and in the creative industries. These activities also help to create an inclusive labour market for people living in the South Bank.
3. Housing and physical infrastructure: the aim is to rebuild and/or upgrade one third of the housing stock in the South Bank over the next 20 years and to improve the physical infrastructure and attractiveness of South Bank. This will be done in cooperation with the social housing corporations - non-profit providers responsible for funding, allocation and provision of social housing.

Children Zone

This is a project that aims to improve the chances for children aged between 0 and 14 years by focusing on their families in seven disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the South of Rotterdam: Afrikaanderwijk, Bloemhof, Carnisse, Hillesluis, Feyenoord, Oud-Charlois and Tarwewijk. Parents receive help in organizing the daily life of their family. Offering families support as early as possible is necessary in order to prevent larger issues. The parents receive support based on five key concepts: a nice home, being comfortable with yourself, a positive future for your child, control over your financial situation and working on your future. A plan to improve the situation at home is developed in close collaboration with the parent and his or her wishes are central to the plan. Individual skills are strengthened in areas where an improvement is desirable.



Harlem Children Zone principles:

The neighbourhood teams are familiar with the residents and short waiting times ensure that they are approachable to parents. Each school in the respective neighbourhood is connected to a contact person to the neighbourhood team. These close connections allow the neighbourhood team to stay informed and offer help where it is needed the most. Often, the neighbourhood teams work together with HBO and university students from the social sciences who do their internship in the teams. To ensure high quality support in the neighbourhoods the students are mentored by supervisors and follow a method that was developed especially for this situation.

Day Programming

In the context of NPRZ, the municipality is developing a coherent offer in the field of day programming in cooperation with educational institutions and other partners, starting in the Children's Zone. With education and parties such as after-school care, homework supervision, cultural organizations, sports and businesses, the municipality stimulates talent development and better educational outcomes in those areas where it is most needed.

Education orientation and assistance (LOB)

The city of Rotterdam and its region has a high demand for well-educated people in the sectors of health, harbour, healthcare, technology and building. In order to stimulate pupils to receive a diploma and in order to receive a good job it is necessary to provide students with information that is applicable to their situation. Next to that, experiences on the job is essential in helping them to make an informed choice with regard to their education and job choice. Talent portfolio's enable students to enhance their own profile: they present their skills and preferences in order to find an education that matches their interests. Sometimes intervention is necessary if too many students want to choose a study programme which does not match with the current needs of the labour market. One possibility to gain experience is to "try studying", which allows students to experience a study or vocational training that interests them for a day.

Informed choices decrease the chances of a student switching or dropping out of a study or vocational training. In order to increase the chances for young people to find a job it is necessary to increase the offerings for assisted job choices. In Rotterdam-South young people have the biggest chances of finding work in the harbour, technology sector or the health sector. This is why the aim to increase the number of students in these sectors has been implemented since 2015 and remains as relevant in 2015. For this reason the targets for new secondary vocational education registrations are communicated to the secondary school boards (BOOR, CVO, LMC and STC). Each year data is collected and evaluated in order to determine that the policy plan is still effective (see <http://www.gaanvooreenbaan.nu> for more information).

Choices regarding which school to visit affect educational opportunities at a later moment in time. A student that a student at the pre-vocational secondary level makes can, for example, prevent the student from choosing certain secondary vocational studies. It is thus of vital importance to support students and their parents in their preparation of choosing their educational path at all the critical moments in which choices of to be made. At the intake moments in secondary vocational schools students are invited for a conversation in order to increase their awareness and commitment towards their school choice by highlighting the career choices the student can make with their chosen study.

Chapter 5: Overview of two schools

The Kameleon – an overview

The Kameleon offers primary education on the south bank of the City of Rotterdam. Besides the normal primary classes, the school has classes for newcomers. The Kameleon is a public school and state funded. The school has 480 students and 40fte teachers.

Regarding preventive and curative measures on early school leaving, the teachers contact the parents if the student is missing classes regularly. The school principal is contacted if this measure should not help. If the student misses 16 hours in 4 weeks without a formal notification (Kennisgeving Ongeoorloofd verzuim) will be issued. If children are on sick leave frequently, the school will establish contact with the parents and request a meeting. The guidelines for the meeting are based on the value of BOOR – active pluralformity, which entails respecting one another. This means that the Kameleon shows the parents that there are valued and respected, while at the same time informing them about our expectations with regard to a smooth education and development path of their children. When the school suspect that the children are on sick leave without being ill they will visit the student at home or if the child is missing at school without notification and the child is known to have a problematic family situation they will also visit the child at home.

There are several educational measures to prevent early school leaving. The Kameleon highly value their educational climate, which ensures that their students and their parents feel appreciated. Children which experience difficulties at school are accompanied by their behaviour specialist during “Samentijd” meetings. These meetings can also be conducted with teachers who have questions connected to their pedagogical methods. They actively engage their students in their own learning process. As a result, children take responsibility for their educational development. As a school, the Kameleon is very attentive to the educational needs of their students and offer internal support. If this support does not suffice, they ask for help in the network ‘PPO Rotterdam’ to find support which suits the needs of the student.

The school work together with a school policy worker and the neighbourhood teams in order to help parents in offering educational support to their children. They give students advice in class 7 and 8 by making use of a very careful and detailed method. Class teachers, the coordinator for the oldest children and the principal discuss each student individually in order to issue the most suited advice for secondary education. From the next school year onwards, they will also involve the students as well as parents in the pre-advice face, by offering them meetings for feedback. The school has conversations with the secondary schools in order to ensure a smooth transition. Activities in the network of career and secondary school orientation are offered. In this way children can make adequate and informed choices with regard to their education.

Marnix Gymnasium Rotterdam – an overview

Marnix Gymnasium Rotterdam exclusively offers secondary education on the highest level in a district close to the city centre of Rotterdam. This small scale pre university education takes 6 years. A gymnasium differs from another form of pre university education (athenaeum), because education in Latin and Greek language and culture is obligatory. The Marnix Gymnasium is a protestant Christian school, but is nowadays open for all religions and ethical backgrounds. Although Marnix Gymnasium is not a public school, it is state funded and for that reason has to meet the requirements of quality set by the ministry of Education. The Marnix gymnasium is only accessible for students who received an advice for this level of education from their elementary school. The school has 601 students and 52 teachers. Next to that there is some supporting staff and management. Students and parents particular praise the good and safe atmosphere. Education on such a high level requires the students to take a variety of courses. In grade 1, 2 and 3 students follow lessons in Dutch, English, French, German, Latin, Greek, history, economy, ethics, geography, arts, biology, mathematics, physics, chemistry and physical education. Next to these subjects, a class spends one hour per week with their mentor. In these lessons, the focus lies in enhancing the social

wellbeing of students and equipping students with effective learning strategies. Next to that, the students spent time with their mentor exploring future study and career opportunities.

In grade 4, 5 and 6 students choose a 'profile' in which they will take their final exams and follow courses which are specific to the given profile. Students can choose from 4 profiles: culture & society, economy & society, nature & technology and nature & health. Dutch, English and mathematics are obligatory for all students. At the end of grade 6 students have to pass a national exam. At the end of every year students with sufficient results are promoted to the next grade, if they fail they have to repeat the school year.

Next to the obligatory curriculum there is a broad variety of extracurricular courses a student can choose, for instance Spanish, Chinese, Cambridge certificate, excursions, poetry, debating, science projects, honours programme, Olympiads, ant students unions.

Concerning Early School Leavers (ESL), the table below shows the percentage of students which has been promoted to the next grade during the last 5 years. In 2016-2017 less than 3% of the students left our school to continue their education on a lower level (havo). 4,4% of the total student population left our school to continue education on an equal level (pre-university education, athenaeum).

school year:	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
grade 1	88	87	90	90	96
grade 2	87	91	83	79	90
grade 3	91	92	83	91	94
grade 4	90	85	80	83	90
grade 5	83	83	77	63	90
grade 6	98	99	96	83	80

percentage of students promoted to next grade in the last 5 school years

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