

# Education in Germany 2014

An indicator-based report including an analysis of the situation of people with special educational needs and disabilities



## Summary of important results

Commissioned by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research

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Commissioned by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)



The Authoring Group Educational Reporting is responsible for the content of the German national education report 2014, upon which this summary is based.

## Preface

“Education in Germany” is an indicator-based report which has been published at two-year intervals since 2006. It covers all levels of education and combines a comprehensive review with a specific thematic focus. The current volume for 2014 focuses on analysing the situation of people with special educational needs within the German education system. It was jointly commissioned by the Standing Conference of Länder Ministers of Education (KMK) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and was drawn up by a group of authors who bear joint responsibility for it. The members of the Authoring Group are leading representatives of the following scientific and statistical organizations: the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), the German Youth Institute (DJI), the German Centre for Research on Higher Education and Science Studies (DZHW), the Sociological Research Institute at Göttingen University (SOFI), the Federal Statistical Office and the statistical offices of the Länder.

The national education report is a major instrument of education monitoring in Germany alongside the international student performance surveys PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS, the national review of the achievement of the education standards of the Länder in school years four, nine and ten, and Länder-specific assessments of student performance. It provides concise information about the current situation in the German education system, about performance and major problems, about lifelong learning processes, and about the development of education in Germany from an international perspective. The reports are addressed to different target groups in educational policy, administration and practice, in science and training, and in the general public.

The national education reports are characterized by three basic features:

- They are designed on the basis of an educational concept whose goals are reflected in three dimensions: individual self-direction, social participation and equal opportunities, and human resources.
- Following the lead concept of lifelong learning, they consider all sectors and levels of education and provide information about the scope and quality of the programmes offered by various institutions and about participation in such programmes.
- They are based on indicators from official statistics and representative social science surveys which, if possible, cover the developments in recent years and decades and involve comparisons at national and international level.

These quality and relevance standards, however, also reflect the limitations of the national education report. It covers the current problems of educational development only to the extent to which solid data are available. The national education report 2014 is based on the same set of core indicators as the preceding four volumes and in this way enables comparison over time with varying focuses. The specific informative value of educational reporting is derived from this updatability. In addition, the fifth volume includes further indicators relating to new topics, e.g. cognitive competencies in early childhood, higher education institutions and programmes, and continuing education of people with a migration background.

The reports as well as the indicator concept and the complete set of data tables on which they are based are available at [www.bildungsbericht.de](http://www.bildungsbericht.de) (in German, with these main findings in English).

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### Abbreviations of the Federal states

BW	Baden-Wuerttemberg
BY	Bavaria
BE	Berlin
BB	Brandenburg
HB	Bremen
HH	Hamburg
HE	Hessen
MV	Mecklenburg-West Pomerania
NI	Lower Saxony
NW	North Rhine Westphalia
RP	Rhineland Palatinate
SL	Saarland
SN	Saxony
ST	Saxony Anhalt
SH	Schleswig-Holstein
TH	Thuringia
O	Eastern Germany
W	Western Germany
D	Germany

## Introduction

Like its predecessors, the National Education Report 2014 documents the state of the education system across all its different areas, showing its development over the past years and stating the current challenges. The 2014 report has a focus on the education of people with disabilities and looks at the fundamentals, facts and backgrounds of the current debate in society and education policy. Before examining the results produced under this in-depth analysis, the report summarizes the key findings concerning the overarching developments and constellations of the education system in terms of the following questions:

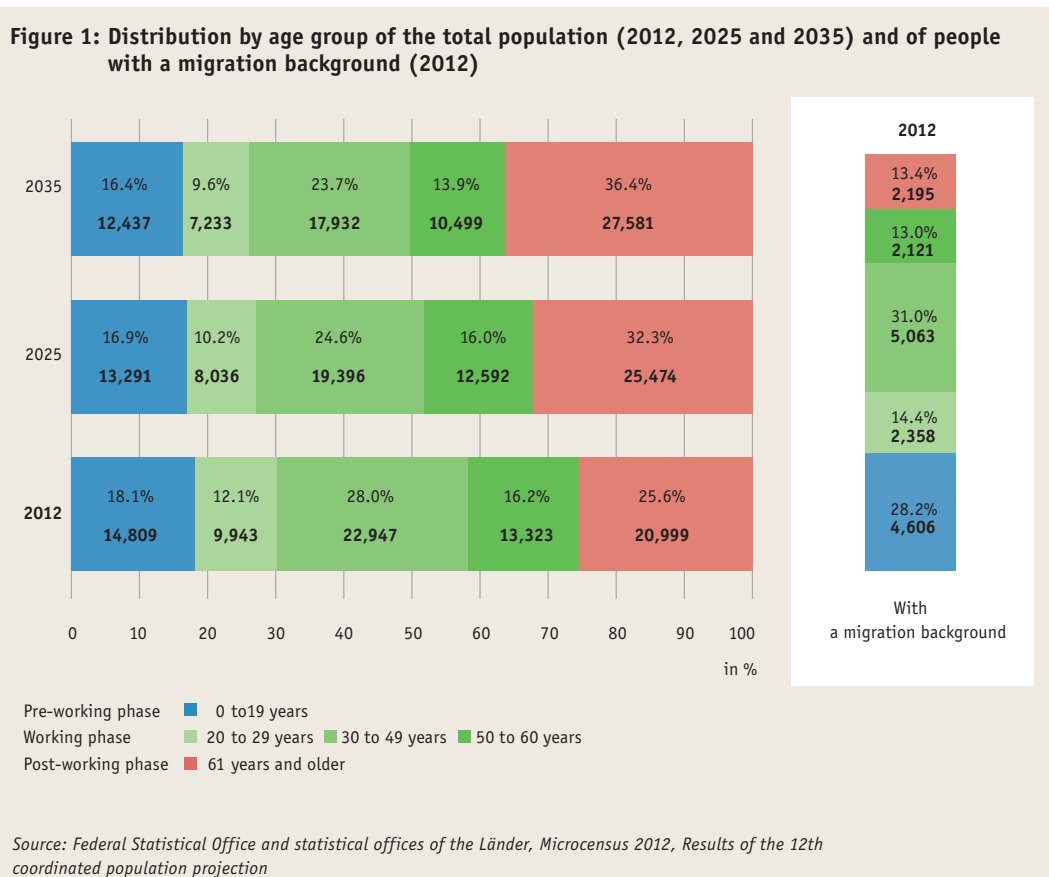
- What changes have taken place in the fundamental societal conditions for education in Germany?
- What developments can be observed regarding the resources provided for education (staff, materials, equipment, financial)?
- What trends are discernible in the area of education processes?
- What statements can be made with regard to education results and outcomes?

The data-based format of the national education report does not lend itself to directly deriving recommendations for action for political or educational measures. However, the findings can help to recognize where action is needed for certain groups and for certain areas of the education system. In the light of this, the key challenges identified by the authors are described at the end of this section.

## Contexts of Education

The demographic trend is marked by a continued fall in the number of births and the gradual entry of the 'baby boom' generation into the retirement phase; the number of people of working age will continue to fall: The birth rate has been falling continuously since 1990 to 674,000 births in 2012. More and more people born in the baby boom years are reaching retirement age and the numbers of those born in the subsequent period with lower birth rates are too low to offset the fall in the numbers of people of working age. This is causing a shortfall in the labour force. In 2011, in contrast to previous years, more people came to live in Germany (279,000) than left the country. Whether this will become a continuing trend and whether it will be able to compensate for the continuing fall in overall population numbers is unclear.

The number of people with a migration background as a proportion of the total population continues to rise in the younger age groups: At least a third of all under-six-year-olds in Germany have a migration background, although there are wide regional variations. Particularly in western Germany, the proportion is over 40% in some states. The increasing heterogeneity of the conditions in which children grow up is being reflected in education institutions: For example, there is a growing trend towards segregation in child day care facilities.



**The proportion of children growing up disadvantaged is decreasing:** While in 2005 there were still 32.4% of children growing up with at least one of the following disadvantages – parents who were unemployed, at risk of poverty or with a poor level of education – the proportion had fallen to 29.1% by 2012, and the proportion of children of parents with all three disadvantages had fallen from 4.0% to 3.4%. There are still major variations between the different states. There continues to be a particular need for action in the city-states.

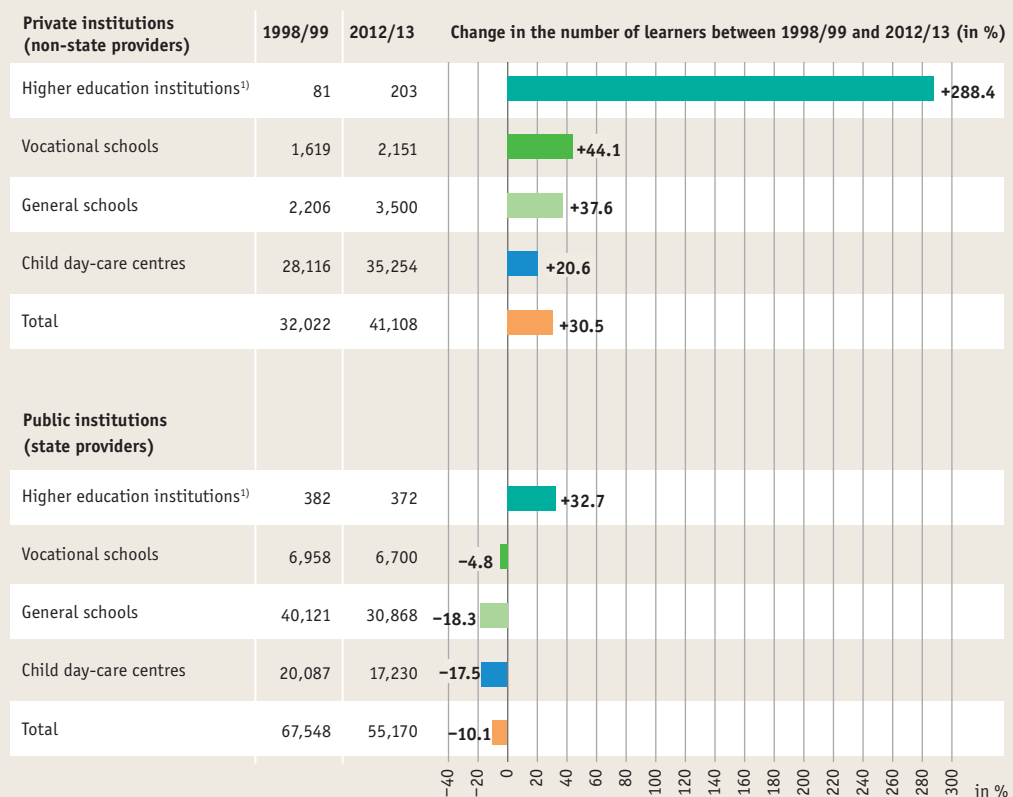
**Further increase in education spending in 2012 but a slight fall as a proportion of GDP:** In 2011, 110 billion euros of public money were spent on education in Germany. This represented 9.9% of total net public expenditure, and was thus 0.3% percentage points higher than in the previous year. The combined overall expenditure in 2012 on education, research and science amounted to 247.4 billion euros and thus 9.3% of GDP. Therefore, the target of increasing spending to 10% of GDP by 2015 has not been reached so far. The percentage share of the education budget according to the international definition as a proportion of GDP has actually fallen compared to the previous year (5.8% in 2012).



## Education Institutions and Participation

**The overall number of education institutions is decreasing; ensuring locally available education is becoming a challenge in some parts of the country:** Since 1998, the numbers of child day care facilities and higher education institutions in Germany have risen by 9% and 24% respectively. However, the number of general education schools has fallen by 19% over the same period. Falling pupil numbers present many rural authorities with the problem of providing schools close enough to where people live, especially in eastern Germany. Although the growing number of independent institutions is partly compensating for this trend, the average catchment area of eastern German primary schools is almost twice as big as that in western Germany. The founding of private universities and private universities of applied sciences is largely responsible for an increase in the number of higher education institutions. However, these institutions have relatively low student numbers. Compared to the rise in the number of higher education institutions, there has been an even more significant rise in the number of study courses on offer to almost 9,500 bachelors courses and 7,000 masters programmes.

**Figure 2: Changes in the number of education institutions and learners between 1998/99 and 2012/13 by education sector and type of provider**

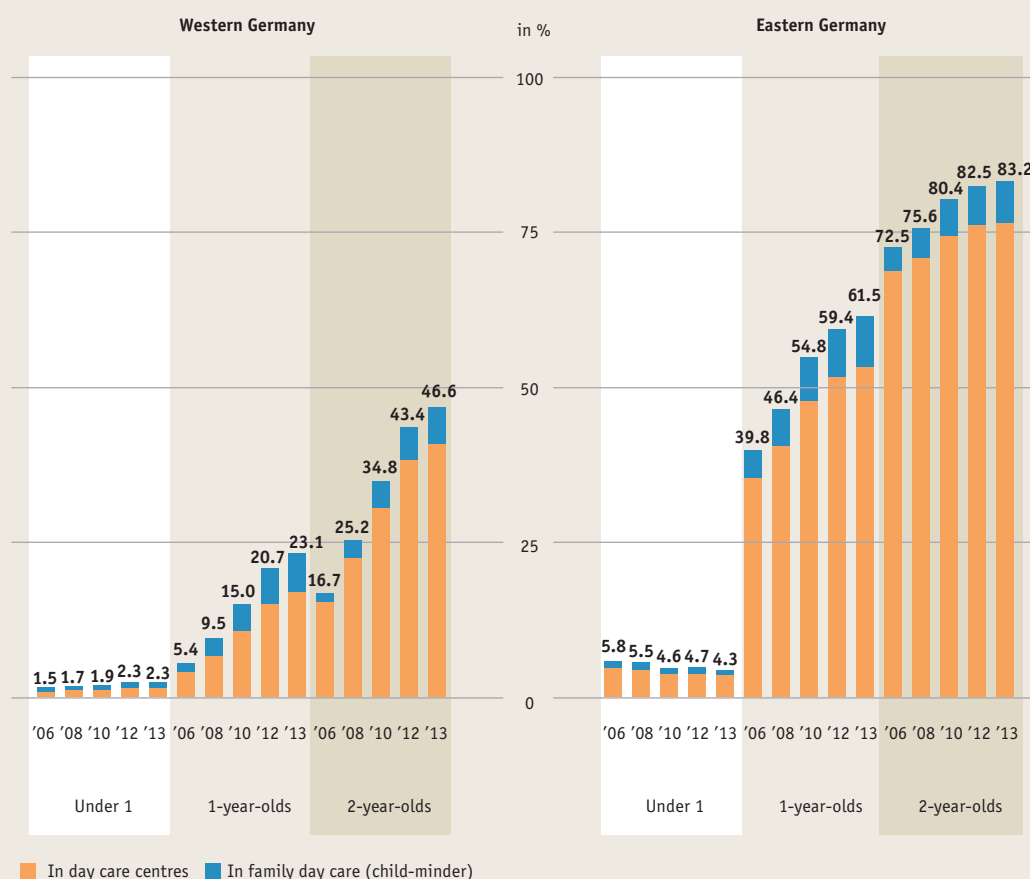


1) Where higher education institutions have more than one location, these are counted separately.

Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, child and youth aid statistics, school statistics, higher education statistics

**Rising percentages of under-three-year-olds in day care and of participation in educational pathways leading to advanced qualifications:** The proportion of under-three-year-olds in day care continues to rise in both western and eastern Germany. While the number of children less than a year old who are in day care is negligible in both regions, the proportion of one-year-olds in such facilities rose to just under 62% in the east and 23% in the west. At the level of secondary education, the popularity of the Gymnasium (grammar school) continues unabated. In higher education, the proportion of persons qualified to enter higher education and of those starting their studies was again over 50% in 2012 (even after the figures are adjusted to take account of the effect of the double intake due to the removal of one school year from upper secondary programmes). The situation in vocational training remains difficult. In spite of the decreasing number of those entering vocational training, there was a more serious shortage of training places in 2013 than in the previous two years. The overall percentage of those participating in continuing education rose markedly in 2012 for the first time for 15 years; this was almost entirely due to the increase in continuing training in companies.

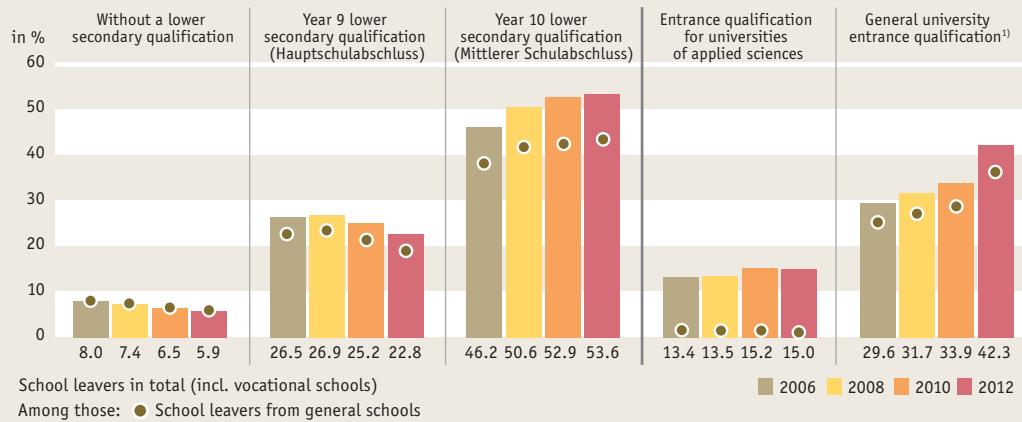
**Figure 3: Children under the age of 3 in day care by age group for Western and Eastern Germany in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013\* (in %)**



\*Data for 2013 valid for 1 March. The 2013 data thus refers to the nursery school year 2012/13 and shows the percentages of children enrolled in early childhood education approximately 5 months before the introduction of the legal entitlement to day-care provision for 1 and 2 year-olds in Germany.

Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, child and youth aid statistics; population statistics, own calculations

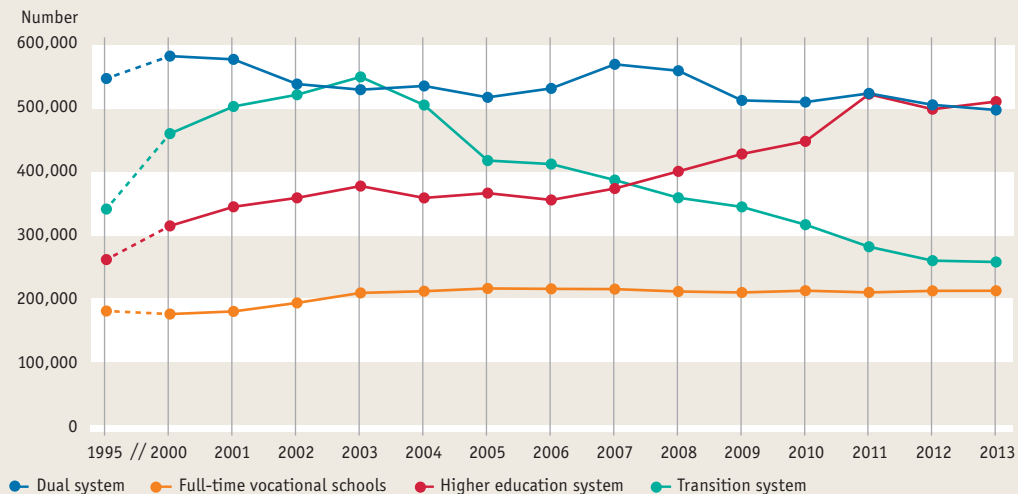
**Figure 4: School leavers from general and vocational schools between 2006 and 2012 by type of qualification attained (in % of the respective age group)\***



\*The data includes double counting over time, for example where persons have completed schooling as mature students or have gone on to add a higher qualification. For this reason the percentages add up to more than 100 across the different qualifications.  
 1) Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Hamburg had double final graduation years for university entrance qualifications in 2008 and 2010 respectively. The same applied in Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Brandenburg and Bremen in 2012.  
 Source: Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) (2014): Schüler, Klassen, Lehrer und Absolventen der Schule 2003-2012

**For the first time, there were as many people entering higher education as people enrolling in programmes under the dual system of vocational education and training; the relationship between these two sectors needs to be redefined:** While the number of new trainees in the dual system has been declining for a long time, the number of students entering universities has been experiencing continuous growth. In 2011, for the first time ever in Germany’s history, there were the same numbers of people starting out in both these sectors (approx. 500,000 in each). There are now slightly more university entrants.

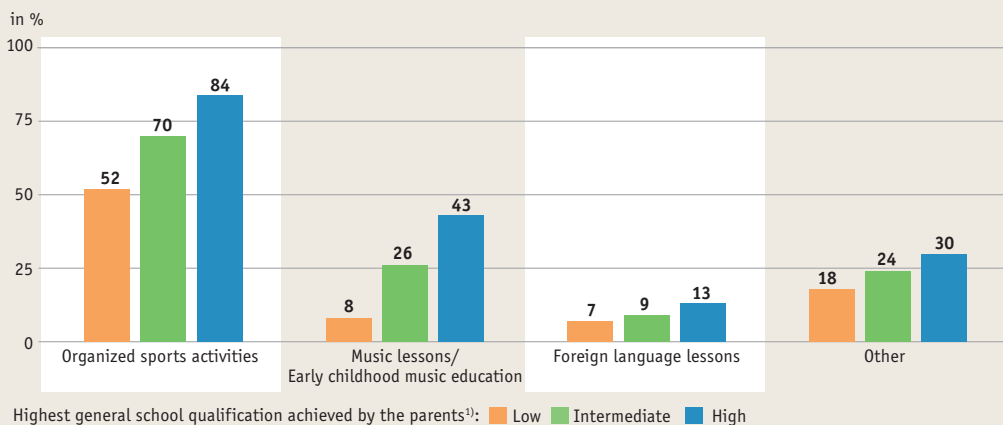
**Figure 5: Numbers of new entrants to the different sectors of vocational education and training from 1995 to 2013**



Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, Integrierte Ausbildungsberichterstattung (Schulstatistik, Hochschulstatistik, Personalstandstatistik – für Beamtenausbildung im mittleren Dienst) (Integrated reporting on training (school statistics, higher education statistics, staffing statistics – for middle grade civil servant training), Federal Employment Agency, Bestand von Teilnehmern in ausgewählten Maßnahmen der Arbeitsmarktpolitik mit SGB-Trägerschaft des Teilnehmers

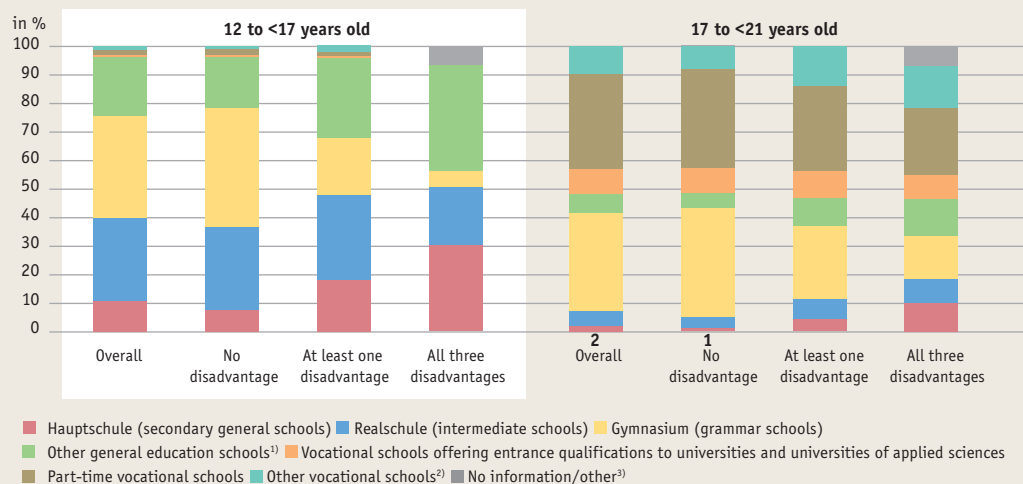
**Despite a slight improvement, there are still wide social disparities in education take-up:** Children who have parents with an interest in education and children who do not have a migration background not only have wider and earlier experience of non-parental care – whether in playgroups, family day care (with a child-minder) or in day care centres – before entering school, but receive more educational stimulus at home. It is still the case that school pupils with a low socio-economic status are much less likely to attend a Gymnasium (grammar school) than those with a high socio-economic status. The disparities are fewer after the lower secondary stage when socially disadvantaged school students make use of opportunities to achieve the Abitur (university entrance qualification). However, there is still no reduction in such disparities in the transition to universities. The training prospects for educationally disadvantaged young people remain precarious. More than 250,000 young people interested in training still ended up in the “transition system” (of programmes which aim to facilitate the transition from school to training) in 2013. As in previous years, this mainly involves young people who have at most attained a Hauptschule (lower secondary general school) leaving certificate in the west German states (not including the so-called city-states) as well as young people with foreign citizenship. Despite the overall increase in participation in continuing education, the disparities between the participating social groups have not been reduced significantly. In fact, the gap has become even wider for people with migration backgrounds.

**Figure 6: Percentages of 6-year-olds\* participating in additional educational activities in 2012 by parental school qualifications**



\* This refers to children who had an average age of 6 years at the time of the survey but of whom 99% had not yet started school.  
 1) Highest general school qualification of the parents: Low = no school qualification or year 9 lower secondary certificate (Hauptschulabschluss); Intermediate = year 10 lower secondary certificate (Mittlerer Abschluss); High = Entrance qualification to a university or university of applied sciences.  
 Source: LIfBi, NEPS, starting cohort 2, 2012, wave 2, doi:10.5157/NEPS:SC2:2.0.0, own calculations

**Figure 7: Distribution of school pupils aged 12 to 16 and 17 to 20 by type of school and level of disadvantage\* in 2012 (in %)**



\* Types of disadvantages: parents who were unemployed, at risk of poverty or with a poor level of education (ISCED 0–2)

1) Primary schools, orientation stages independent of school type (years 5 and 6 for the transition to the secondary stage), school types with a number of education paths, comprehensive schools, Waldorf schools, special needs schools

2) Vocational schools offering a year-10 intermediate school certificate (Mittlerer Abschluss), vocational preparation years, basic vocational training years, full-time vocational schools awarding qualifications in a specific occupation, one-year health schools

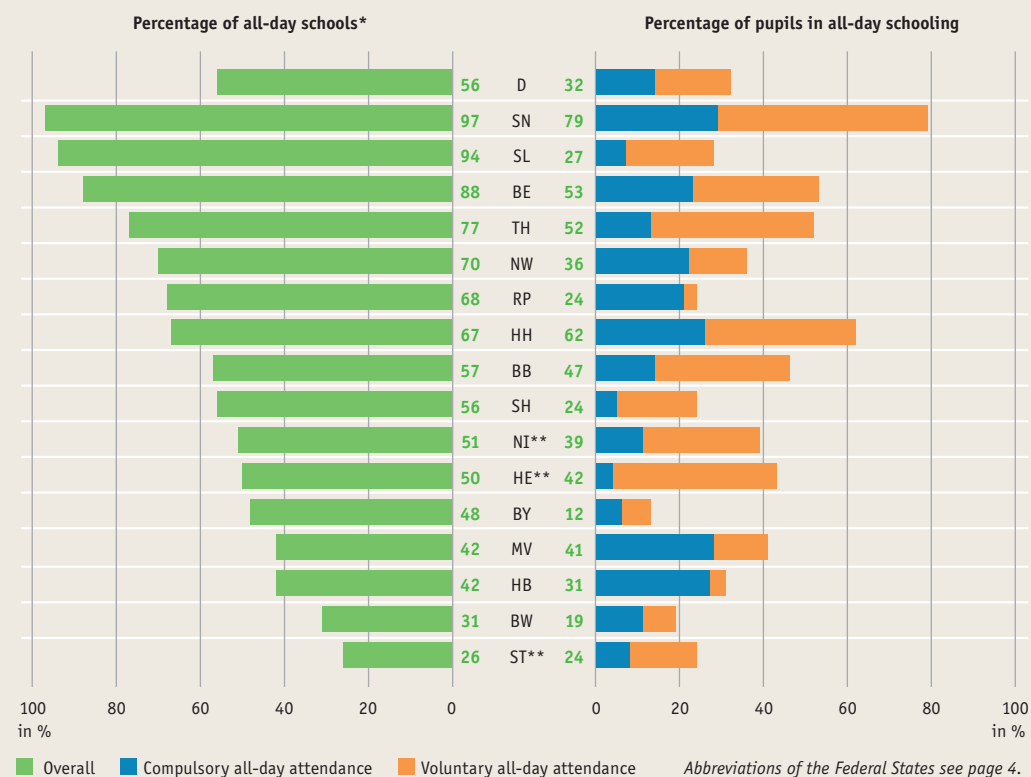
Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, Microcensus 2012

**The staffing of education institutions remains a great challenge particularly in view of the high average age of current staff:** In 2012, 37% of teaching or research staff in the education sector were at least 50 years old; in schools the figure is even higher at 48%. Thus, there is still a great need for new (replacement) teaching staff. However, in the area of early childhood education, there are still enough appropriately qualified personnel to fill the extra positions needed in child-care facilities due to the (legally required) expansion of child care availability for under-three-year-olds. This is due at least in part to a large increase in appropriate training capacities which can now provide approx. 30,000 newly qualified personnel each year. In higher education, staffing levels have roughly kept pace with increasing demand. However, this is accompanied by considerable changes in staff structures, in particular with many courses now taught by temporary lecturers and teaching staff with special assignments. But this has not led to an improvement in student-teacher ratios in higher education.

## Procedural Aspects

Education strategies essentially determine the success of all-day schools; models governing participation in all-day programmes as well as flexible time-use must be geared to this fact: More than half of all schools in Germany now provide all-day programmes. These are now used by a third of all pupils. The current debate about all-day schools very much reduces the question of the educational quality of such schools to their organizational model. Yet the latter can only provide the framework for appropriate educational goals. It seems necessary to examine more closely whether the currently dominant “open” model – i.e. voluntary participation by pupils in all-day programmes – can make full enough use of the educational possibilities offered by a flexible organization of learning over the whole (school) day. It is apparent that parents’ acceptance of all-day education depends greatly on the question of the reliability of the all-day programmes, meaning that this aspect should be given even greater consideration in schools just as it is in after-school care facilities.

**Figure 8: Percentages of all-day schools\* at primary and lower secondary level and of pupils in all-day schooling by state in 2012\*\***



\* All-day schools as administrative school units

\*\* The percentages for the states of Hesse, Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt refer only to state schools due to the lack of data available for private schools.

Source: Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) (2014): *Allgemeinbildende Schulen in Ganztagsform in den Ländern der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

**High numbers of young people dropping out or changing institution (or programme) in the school sector, in the dual training system and in higher education continue to pose a special challenge for these different education sectors:** In spite of structural changes in the schools system towards schools that offer more than one particular educational pathway under one roof and thus a choice of different school qualifications for pupils to aim for, the numbers of those changing schools remains high. Between years 5 to 9 there is an overall 10% decrease in pupil numbers at Gymnasien (grammar schools) due to pupils changing schools, while the numbers at other types of secondary school rise steadily over the same period.

An average 22% of contracts are terminated prematurely in the dual vocational training system; the rate varies widely for different occupations and areas of training. The rate also varies according to the level of previous school achievement: The contract termination rate for trainees with a Hauptschule (lower secondary general school) leaving certificate or less is more than twice as high as for trainees who hold a higher education entrance qualification.

The drop-out rate for undergraduate students remains at about the same level as for previous years; over a quarter of students on bachelor's courses still drop out. The drop-out rates in the MINT subjects (maths, informatics, natural sciences, technology), which had previously been well above average, have recently been falling but are still higher than the norm. By contrast, the drop-out rate for masters students is now less than one tenth.

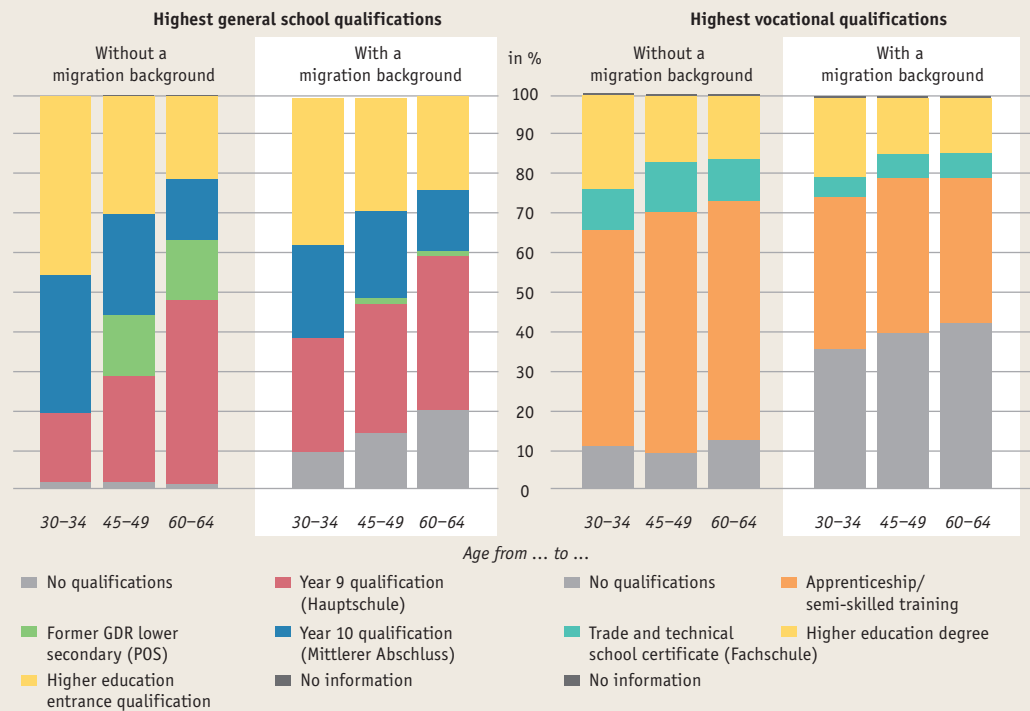
**For a small but growing number of students their studies have a connection with their prior vocational education:** Many new students who already hold a vocational qualification see studying at a higher education institution as a step to achieve a further relevant qualification. Although the percentage of such students has not risen in recent years, their absolute number has grown along with the rising numbers of new students overall. There is an increasing demand for dual (distance) courses which combine higher education and vocational education or employment.

# Results and Outcomes

**The level of educational attainment of the population is rising; the trend towards higher qualifications continues:** The proportion of people with university entrance qualifications is around twice as high for those aged 30 to 34 (43%) as those aged 60 to 64 (22%) according to the long-term cohort comparison. Short term comparisons also reveal a trend towards higher qualifications across all school types: There is a steady decline in the number of school-leavers without a Hauptschulabschluss (lower secondary school certificate attainable upon successful completion of year 9) (now down to 5.9%). Moreover, more and more pupils at Hauptschulen complete year 10 (Mittlere Abschlüsse). There is an increasing number of Mittlere Abschlüsse and university entrance qualifications being attained at schools offering various educational pathways and at integrated comprehensive schools.

The number of people who leave higher education institutions with a first degree has almost doubled since 2002. Young women are now more likely to obtain a degree than young men; 24% of women aged 30 to 34 have a degree, compared to 22% of men in the same age group. Bachelor's degrees have now become the most frequently awarded higher education qualification in Germany. There is also a rise in the number of masters graduates due to the high numbers of students moving on to a master's programme upon completion of their bachelor's degree. There is also a slight rise in the number of doctorates awarded.

**Figure 9: Education qualifications among the population in 2012 by age group and migration background (in %)**



Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, Microcensus 2012

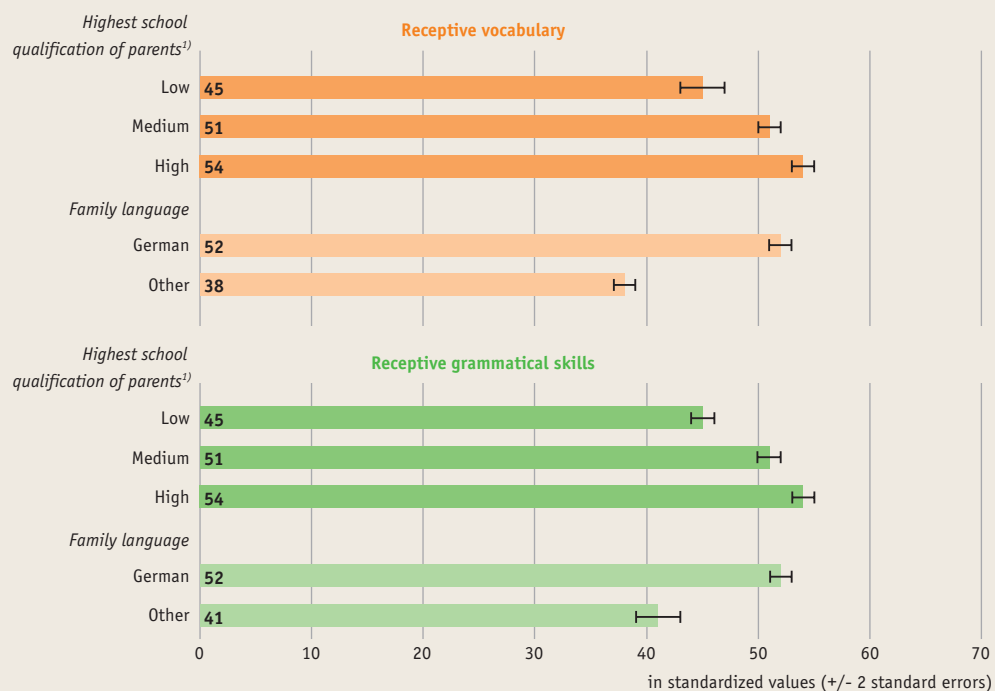


**Only partial success in the removal of social disparities in acquiring educational skills:** Differences in German vocabulary and grammar skills caused by different social backgrounds are already discernible at the age of five. Furthermore, the need for remedial language tuition is diagnosed in almost a quarter of children in this age group. This clearly shows that there are already manifest differences in linguistic competence at pre-school age, and that it remains an urgent task to overcome these differences.

While the educational skills of 15-year-olds have improved in the last decade, especially due to improvements among weaker pupils, a higher starting level at primary school has not led to a discernible trend towards a further rise in skills levels. There was a reduction of social disparities in maths skills among primary school pupils as well as in the reading skills of 15-year-olds. On the other hand, there was no reduction of social disparities in the reading skills of primary school pupils nor in the maths skills of 15-year-olds. Overall, the dependence of academic performance on social factors is still average or higher than the international average.

Adults in Germany are revealed to have average skill levels in international comparison. While the participation of adults in continuing education activities shows a positive correlation with skills levels, such activities have far less influence than the level of educational attainment of these adults and learning achieved through employment.

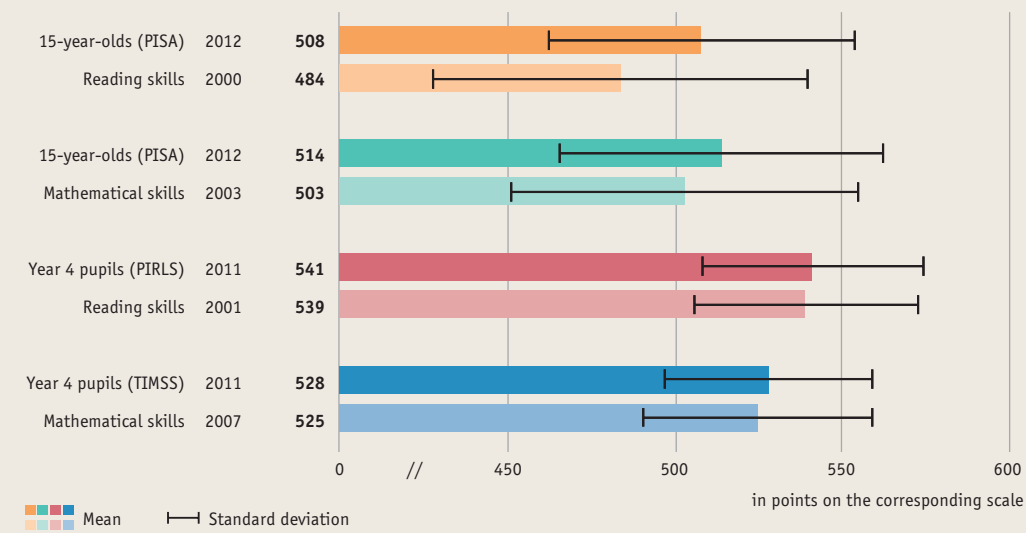
**Figure 10: Mean values for the receptive vocabulary and grammatical skills of 5-year-olds according to the highest school qualification of their parents and family language in 2011 (in standardized values)**



1) Highest general school qualification of the parents: Low = no qualification or Hauptschulabschluss (year 9 lower secondary school certificate), Medium = Mittlerer Abschluss (year 10 lower secondary school certificate), High = entrance qualification to a university or university of applied sciences

Source: LIfBi, NEPS, starting cohort 2, 2011, wave 1, doi:10.5157/NEPS:SC2:2.0.0, own calculations

**Figure 11: Reading and mathematical skills of pupils in Germany at different stages (in score points)\*\***

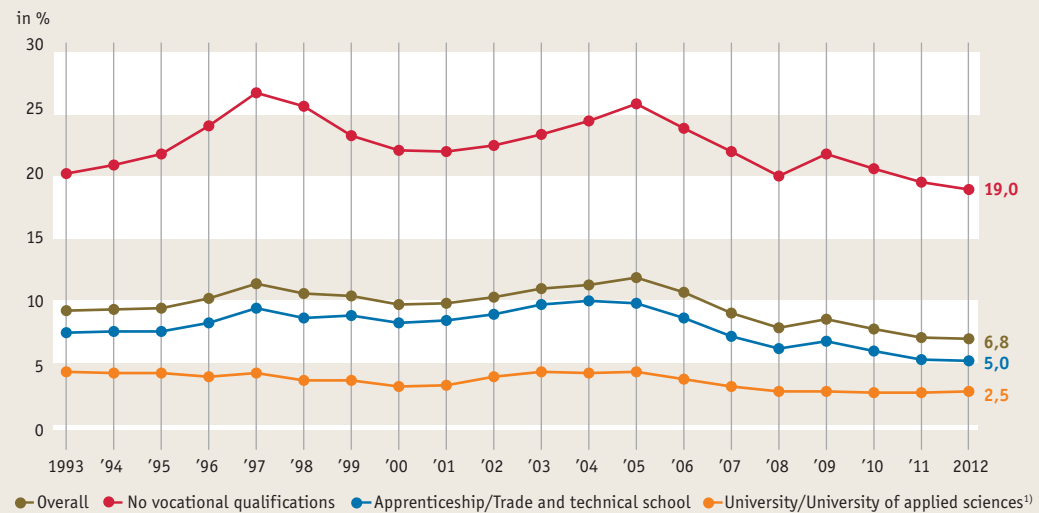


\* The chart shows the results of the first survey compared to the results of the most recent study in each case.

\*\* Direct comparisons cannot be drawn between the points scales of the international PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS studies.

Source: PIRLS 2001 and 2011; TIMSS 2007 and 2011; PISA 2000 and 2012

**Most people are still successful at finding employment following dual training or higher education; however, youth unemployment continues to pose a challenge:** The percentage of trainees being taken on as employees by companies providing training has risen in recent years, particularly in eastern Germany. At the same time, youth unemployment has fallen but remains well above the general unemployment rate. The integration of young people into the labour market works much better in countries with dual training systems (as in Germany) than in other countries. However, the economic performance of each country also has an important role. In contrast to other European countries, higher education graduates in Germany have had a lower risk of unemployment to date: Initial surveys of graduates of the newly introduced bachelor's and master's degree system in Germany indicate that master's degrees are, as expected, regarded as equivalent to the old Diplom or Magister, and bachelor's degrees in some subjects from Fachhochschulen (universities of applied sciences) are seen as comparable to the old Fachhochschuldiplom. What is still unclear is to what extent bachelor's degrees from a university (Universität) lead to employment positions which had not previously required a higher education qualification.

**Figure 12: Unemployment rates by level of qualifications held\* between 1993 and 2012 (in %)**

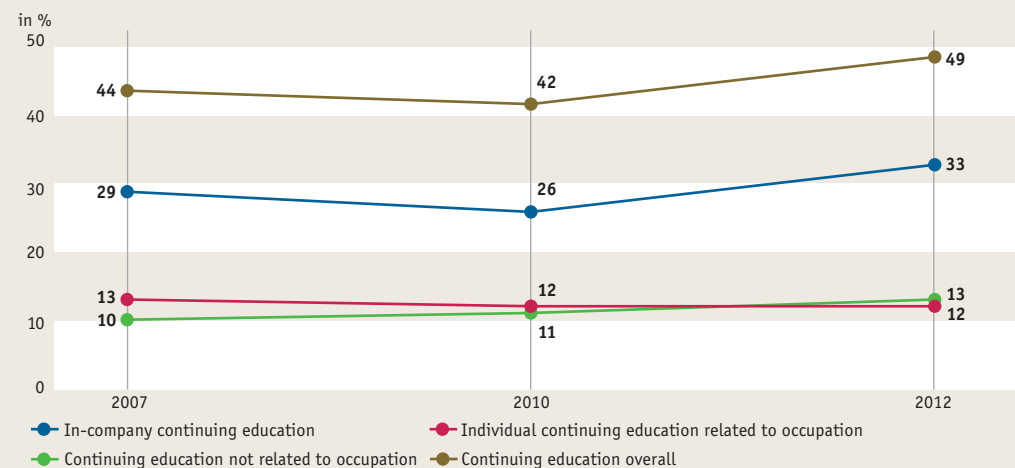
\* Unemployed persons as a percentage of all working-age civilians (not including trainees) with the same level of qualifications. Employed people for whom no vocational qualification is specified are distributed proportionately according to their age groups based on the Microcensus statistics. The data for employed people was valid for April each year until 2004; as of 2005 this data has been based on the yearly average.

1) Including universities of applied administrative sciences

Source: IAB, Qualifikationsspezifische Arbeitslosenquoten (14 October 2013)

### Continuing education can make a contribution to securing employment, but it is under-used:

In 2012, people with a high level of education were about 30% more likely in all age-groups to be in work than those with a low level. However, the proportion of people in work decreased significantly the older the age group. People in work tend to consider the informal learning opportunities connected with working experience to be far more important in dealing with the everyday demands of work than participating in formal continuing education.

**Figure 13: Participation in continuing education by type of continuing education between 2007 and 2012 (in %)**

Source: TNS Infratest Sozialforschung/DIE, AES, own calculations

## In Focus: Education and People with Special Needs

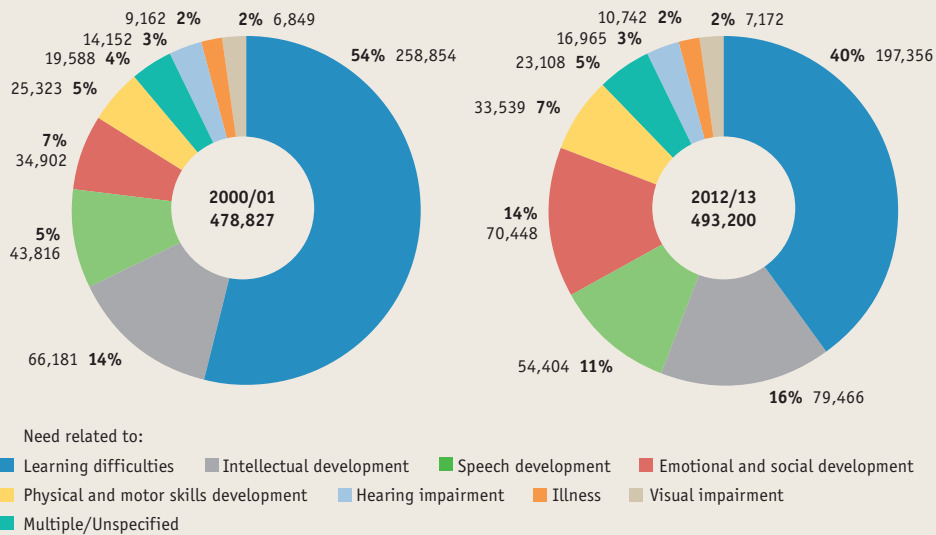
**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is legally binding:** It requires the establishment of an inclusive education system at all levels. In implementing this, the German education system is confronted with the requirement of developing heterogeneity and individuality as its guiding principle for action. This changes the roles, duties and functions of all the players involved.

**Implementing an inclusive education system means overcoming a range of structural problems:** The inclusion process faces difficulties caused by structural contradictions resulting from differing classifications and definitions, from traditional institutional conditions, from the different self-perceptions of the various professionals as well as from the differences in the legal systems.

**At present, fundamental differences between the education system and the social system affect the recognition of a disability and the corresponding support measures:** The different procedures used to diagnose disabilities lead to different results which are very difficult to compare. As a rule, these procedures comprise: developmental diagnosis at the pre-school stage; the pedagogically oriented ascertainment of special educational needs for schoolchildren; and predominantly occupational health-oriented procedures to obtain official opinions during vocational education and training. Furthermore, these different diagnoses also differ greatly between different states, regions and the types of disabilities; consequently there are also great differences between the corresponding support measures.

**Special educational needs have been identified for around 493,000 schoolchildren in Germany:** With the effects of demographic change, the proportion has risen to 6.6% of all schoolchildren; this figure ranges widely from 4.9% to 10.5% between the different German states. 3.3% of all new schoolchildren start directly at special needs schools. Children with learning difficulties continue to make up the biggest group of children with special needs (40%) although there have been significant shifts between the focal areas of support in recent years. 57% of people with a learning disability receive support as part of their integration into vocational training.

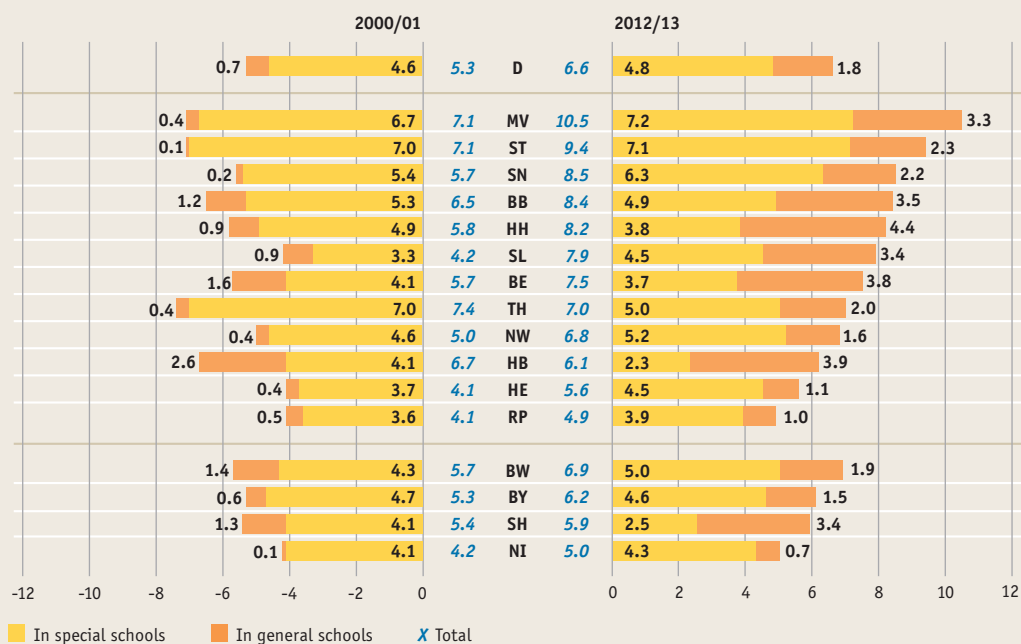
**Figure 14: Pupils with special needs support in general schools by need in 2000/01 and 2012/13**



Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, school statistics; Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK): Sonderpädagogische Förderung in Schulen

**More and more children and young people with and without disabilities are attending the same child-care facilities and schools; however, the numbers decrease significantly the older the age group:** More than two thirds of children receiving integration assistance or with special educational needs attend early childhood learning centres together with children without disabilities. The proportion of children with special educational needs at primary school who are taught together with children without such needs is 44%; at the lower secondary stage the share is only approx. 23%. The figures show that at each successive educational stage the percentage of children or young people in inclusive education decreases significantly. A unified strategy across all the stages of the education system should also react to the large regional differences.

**Figure 15: Pupils with special educational needs\* in 2000/01 and 2012/13 by state and type of school (in %)**



Abbreviations of the Federal States see page 4.

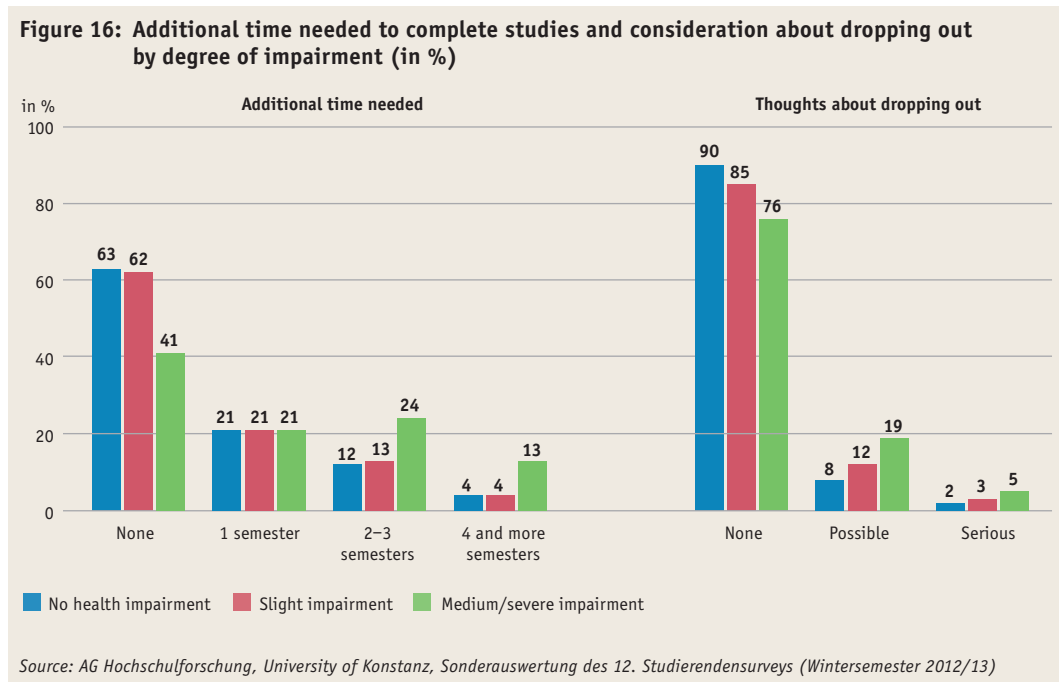
\* In most of the states, this refers to pupils whose special educational needs have been formally recognized. However, in four states relevant data is recorded irrespective of whether such formal recognition has been given.

Source: Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder, school statistics; Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK): Sonderpädagogische Förderung in Schulen (statistics on special educational needs in schools)

**General education qualifications are in some cases not fully attainable for school-children with special educational needs; furthermore, skill levels vary depending on where special needs education is provided:** Across Germany, nearly three quarters of those who leave special needs schools do so without having obtained a general school qualification, but merely a leaving certificate from the special school; in some cases this is due to the fact that a particular state’s education regulations do not provide for the acquisition of a general school qualification. In addition, initial findings indicate that children with special educational needs in the areas of “speech” and “learning” develop higher skill levels at inclusive schools than at special schools; there needs to be further clarification of whether this is due to schooling or to selectiveness in the admissions process.

**In vocational training there are separate training courses for people with disabilities; however, there is a decrease in the inclusion of people with disabilities in standard training courses:** Approx. 10,000 young people go into the relevant separate training courses; of these 57% hold a Hauptschule (lower secondary general school) leaving certificate, while 40% have taken up the training course without such a qualification. The drop-out rate from training is significant.

**In higher education, students with and without disabilities have to meet the same requirements; students with disabilities need particular support which is not always provided by universities:** Students who suffer health impairment frequently take longer to complete their studies and have a higher risk of dropping out.



**At present, the personnel deployed for the education and support of people with disabilities are not always appropriately qualified:** Pedagogical support staff who are deployed in child day-care facilities to provide integration assistance are far more appropriately qualified than the staff in other areas. At special needs schools, a third of teaching staff do not hold a relevant teaching qualification for special needs. No information can be given with regard to the qualifications of staff for dealing with people with disabilities in the areas of vocational training and teaching at higher education institutions.

**Providers of initial and in-service training courses for teachers increasingly state that inclusion forms part of the training; however, training does not yet meet this requirement:** With regard to the training of specialized staff who teach people with disabilities, efforts are clearly being made to change the training content in both initial and in-service training, however the stated demand for the relevant training is not currently being met.

**Resources are currently available from different sources; there is a lack of a coordinated strategy for their use:** With regard to how the social and education systems interact concerning measures for the education and support of people with disabilities, the differences in the responsibilities and approaches have a negative impact on the approval and allocation of resources. Allocations of resources related to individual persons and systemic allocations need to be clearly coordinated.

## Central Challenges

The findings set out in this National Education Report show that there has been a lot of movement in the education system in the last few years, and that a whole range of reforms have been started. This is clearest in the expansion and the institutional differentiation of early childhood education and care, in the further differentiation in the general and vocational school system, as well as in the expansion of all-day school provision, but also in the significant increase in the percentage of persons qualified to enter higher education, and finally also in the number of university graduates. The areas that provide the least evidence of such movement are vocational training and continuing education, if one ignores the increase in overall participation in the latter. A problem that can be identified in the increased dynamism in the education system is that the various activities are strongly connected to certain educational institutions and/or regions. In view of such vast numbers of activities, this poses the question of how adequate transparency and clarity can be created within and across German states and across different sectors of education. In many areas of education, the focus was on the quantitative expansion of the education institutions, given the pressure of increased demand. Even against the background of the demographic perspective, which makes better development and utilization of all educational potential urgently necessary, qualitative aspects regarding the shaping of education institutions and education processes are gaining increasing importance. These aspects can be clearly illustrated as challenges for policy-makers in five fields of action set out in the National Education Report:

- The first field of action is early childhood education and care. As early childhood education and care has been expanded, questions about quality have largely been left unanswered, for example regarding the appropriate staff ratios for young age groups or regarding the most suitable age structure of childcare groups to provide the best education and care. Attention also needs to be paid to the striking regional and local differences in the provision and organization (including the available hours) of early childhood education and care.
- A second field of action is the design of all-day schools. The desire for all-day schooling has grown significantly among the population in recent years and follows an international trend. Parents who relinquish part of their duties of education and care to an all-day school will monitor such schools with a critical eye. A clear pedagogical vision for the organization of all-day schools, which requires binding common standards for all regions and for all types of school but which also deals with and makes use of the specifics of the individual schools, appears to be a top priority. This requires agreement about the future relationship between the various school types and educational pathways of the general education system, particularly at the lower secondary stage. It also requires agreement about the systematic involvement of non-school stakeholders.
- A third field of action is the continuing challenge of the organization of the transition from general schools to vocational training. Given that, in spite of the decrease in demand for training due to demographic change and a relative relaxation in the training market, more than a quarter of a million school-leavers still end up in one of the many measures of what is known as the transition system (of programmes providing



basic vocational pre-training) there is an increasing need to systematize the content and achieve political coordination of the transition system. These issues were already the subject of previous National Education Reports with regard to the financial efficiency of the transition system. The question today is how to ensure the development of strategies across all types of institutions; the reference to all types of institutions covers a wide spectrum since, in addition to different education institutions (general and vocational schools), institutions of the social system (youth welfare services) and of the employment market (businesses and employment offices) are also involved and make their own contributions, each with their own guiding principles.

- A fourth field of action, which also covers a wide spectrum, is the interface between vocational training and higher education. As a result of the shift in the flow of school-leavers towards higher education, a new relationship has arisen in recent years between the two major training sectors, namely the dual vocational training system and higher education. This shift in the relationship is currently leading more or less spontaneously with no overall plan to new hybrid forms of vocational training and studying, where there is little clarity about how they will develop. The only thing that seems clear is there is a need for a new policy strategy covering both vocational training and higher education to prevent a situation of dysfunctional competition developing between these two sectors for a decreasing number of school-leavers due to demographic change. However, it seems that it will be extremely difficult to introduce such a policy strategy due to the fundamental institutional difference between these two sectors. At present it is very difficult to see how the controlling structures – which are market-based and corporatist in the case of dual training and political in the case of higher education – can come together to produce common strategies, but the fact remains that it will be necessary.
- The problems of cross-cutting concepts of education cumulate in the fifth field of action, namely the inclusion of people with disabilities at all levels and in all sectors of the education system. In addition to the institutional issues that are described in this report concerning education for people with disabilities, we must not lose sight of issues concerning the quality of the educational programmes being developed.

These sample fields of action cannot be designed appropriately without overarching education strategies, because institutional changes in one area of education can have unintended consequences in other areas of education. This gives rise to the question of how the necessary processes of coordination between different educational levels and stakeholders can be organized. What appears important is that the Federal Government and the Länder (states) agree on generally accepted, operationalizable objectives so that it will at least be possible to bring together the stated fields of action in the medium term.



**The members of the Authoring Group Educational Reporting represent the following institutions:**

Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung  
(DIPF – German Institute for International Educational Research)

Deutsches Jugendinstitut  
(DJI – German Youth Institute)

Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung  
(DZHW – German Centre for Research on Higher Education and Science Studies)

Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut an der Universität Göttingen  
(SOFI – Sociological Research Institute)

Federal Statistical Office and statistical offices of the Länder

The German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) is responsible for coordination.