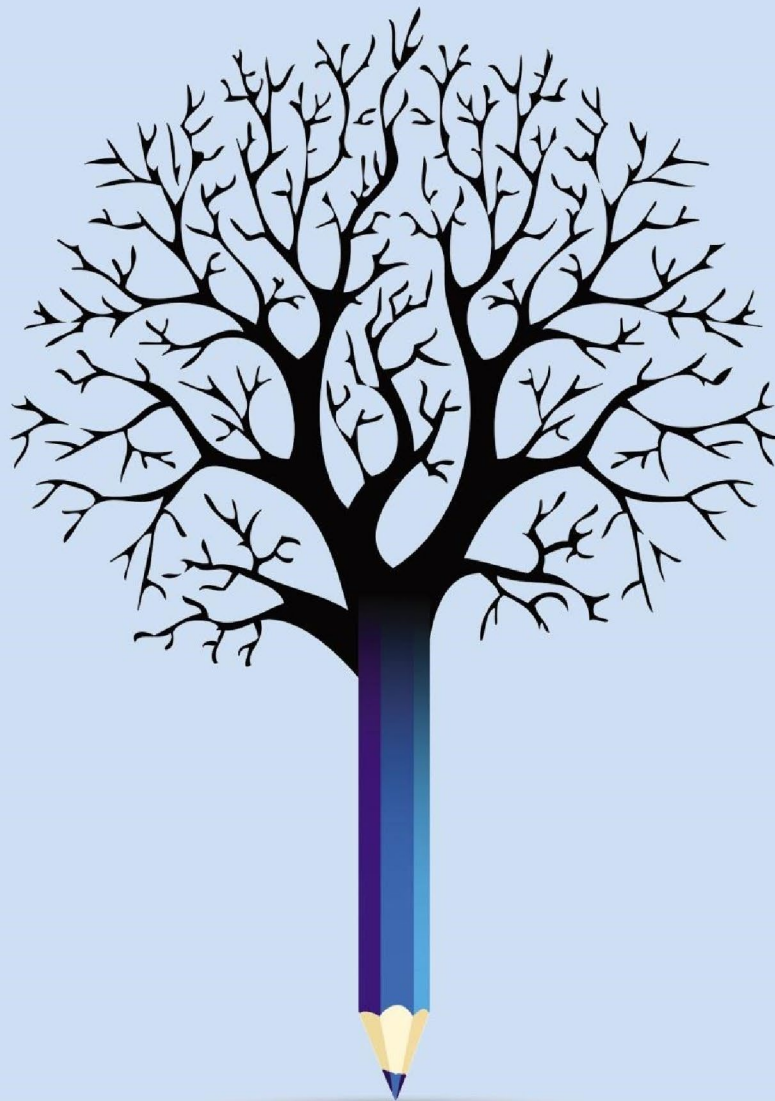# OECD Education Policy Perspectives

No. 17

EDUCATION POLICY OUTLOOK IN
GREECE

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EDUCATION POLICY OUTLOOK

This **policy profile on education** in Greece is part of the *Education Policy Outlook* series, which presents comparative analysis of education policies and reforms across OECD countries. Building on the OECD's substantial comparative and sectoral policy knowledge base, the series offers a comparative outlook on education policy. This country policy profile provides: analysis of the educational context, strengths, challenges and policies; analysis of international trends; and insight into policies and reforms on selected topics. It is an opportunity to take stock of progress and where the education system stands today from the perspective of the OECD through synthetic, evidence-based and comparable analysis.

In addition to country-specific profiles, the series also includes a recurring publication. The first volume, *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, was released in 2015. The second volume, *Education Policy Outlook 2018: Putting Student Learning at the Centre* was released in 2018. Its complement, *Education Policy Outlook 2019: Working Together to Help Students Achieve their Potential* was released in autumn 2019. Designed **for policy makers, analysts and practitioners** who seek information and analysis of education policy taking into account the importance of national context, the country policy profiles offer constructive analysis of education policy in a comparative format. Each profile reviews the current context and situation of the country's education system and examines its challenges and policy responses, according to six policy levers that support improvement:

- Students: How to raise outcomes for all in terms of 1) equity and quality and 2) preparing students for the future;
- Institutions: How to raise quality through 3) school improvement and 4) evaluation and assessment;
- System: How the system is organised to deliver education policy in terms of 5) governance and 6) funding.

Some country policy profiles contain spotlight boxes on selected policy issues. They are meant to draw attention to specific policies that are promising or showing positive results and may be relevant for other countries.

Special thanks to the Government of Greece and, in particular, the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, for its active input during consultations and constructive feedback on this report. We also thank the European Commission for its valuable analytical support for the development of this country policy profile.

Authors: This country policy profile was prepared by Marie Ullmann, Diana Toledo Figueroa, Christa Rawkins, Gillian Golden, Clément Dumont and Niklas Olausson from the Education Policy Outlook team, which is part of the Policy Advice and Implementation Division, led by Paulo Santiago. Editorial support was provided by Stephen Flynn and Rachel Linden. This profile builds on the knowledge and expertise of many project teams across the OECD's Directorate for Education and Skills, to whom we are grateful. Ulrike Pisiotis and Livia Ruszthy contributed on behalf of the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

Sources: Subject to country participation, this country policy profile draws on OECD indicators from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) and the annual publication Education at a Glance, and refers to country and thematic studies such as OECD work on early childhood education and care, teachers, school leadership, evaluation and assessment for improving school outcomes, equity and quality in education, governing complex education systems, school resources, vocational education and training, and tertiary education. This profile also draws on information in the OECD Education Policy Outlook National Survey for Comparative Policy Analysis completed in 2016 by the Government of Greece, as well as information provided by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs between 2018 and 2020 as part of the Education Policy Outlook's activities with countries.

Most of the figures quoted in the different sections refer to Annex B, which presents a table of the main indicators for the sources used throughout the country policy profile. Hyperlinks to the reference publications are included throughout the text for ease of reading, and also in the References and further reading section, which lists both OECD and non-OECD sources.

More information is available from the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills (www.oecd.org/edu) and its web pages on the Education Policy Outlook (www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm).

In the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, some information is provided about initial responses.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Note: Most of the content in this profile was written before the COVID-19 outbreak. As such, this document offers insight into pre-existing conditions that may influence the system's responsiveness in the context of the crisis and help inform longer-term efforts to strengthen resilience. Spotlight 1 summarises Greece's initial responses to the crisis. Its structure is based on work by the Education Policy Outlook in 2020 to support countries in these efforts.

Greece's educational context

Students: Educational attainment levels in Greece have increased considerably since 2008, as has participation in early childhood care and education for 3-5 year-olds. Early school-leaving rates are among the lowest in international comparison. However, high participation does not consistently translate into quality outcomes: Greek performance in PISA[1] 2018 and the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) 2015, was below the respective OECD averages. Several system-level practices may favour equity, such as low grade repetition and limited ability grouping. Performance gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students, as well as those related to immigrant status, were similar to the OECD averages in PISA 2018.

Institutions: Students in Greece reported a similar-to-average sense of belonging at school as their peers across the OECD, but perceptions of teacher support and classroom disciplinary climate were below average in PISA 2018. School leadership within the highly centralised system has traditionally been an administrative managerial role. According to school leaders' reports in PISA 2015, Greek principals engage in instructional leadership activities more regularly than their peers elsewhere in the OECD and, although the role requires further professionalisation, recent policy measures constitute an important step. Efforts to change the role of evaluation and assessment through constructive accountability processes are ongoing: Greece has improved data management and institutional capacity, as well as developing more formative approaches to student assessment.

System: The governance and funding arrangements of the Greek education system are highly centralised and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA) is responsible for every level of education from pre-primary to adult. In terms of governance, the Greek school network is complex and high numbers of small schools and remote areas, combined with low birth rates, socio-economic conditions and emigration to big cities and other countries, have led to mergers and consolidation to increase system efficiency. Well-planned restructuring of the support systems for schools and higher education institutions may strengthen regional and local bodies, which, with careful implementation, could be a positive step in shaping a system which will address local needs more efficiently.

Key policy issues

Helping all students in Greece to acquire basic skills, regardless of their background, calls into consideration the specificities of the Greek context – the economic crisis, high levels of humanitarian migration, and high geographic diversity. Youth unemployment is high and tackling it requires strengthening school and post-secondary education to reinforce the skills acquired and improve labour market relevance. Among other measures, this requires ensuring that the prominent shadow education sector does not affect the quality of public education and that all refugee and migrant children can access schooling. Quality teaching and leadership will be critical to realising these efforts but several previous reform efforts have not been fully implemented due to a lack of trust among various actors within the system. Therefore, rebuilding trust across the system is critical. Additionally, continuing to build an evaluation and assessment system that provides constructive accountability and improvement-focused feedback at system, school and student level is also important, as are the nascent measures to empower local- and school-level actors. As Greece's public budgets are under growing pressure, it is key that resources are managed and used efficiently, as well as being allocated transparently and fairly.

Strengthening adaptability and resilience in the context of COVID-19 **(see Spotlight 1)**

Pre-existing resources in the education system may have facilitated areas of Greece's response. Several of the digital resources previously developed through the Digital School Strategy (see "School Improvement") focused on developing digital solutions for synchronous and asynchronous learning. Previously used by a small number of teachers and students, these formed the educational background on which many further digital efforts were built. Furthermore, these solutions were realised thanks to collaboration with the private sector, allowing Greece to strengthen digital access and interactive resources despite considerable budget constraints. As Greece works to balance short-term responsiveness with longer-term strategic aims and resilience, the crisis has presented specific challenges. Greece's monitoring of participation in distance education provided a useful indication of the level of engagement and reach; however, further research is required to assess the impact on learning and the lived experience of teachers and schools. This is necessary to support students' return to face-to-face education. Furthermore, seeking the feedback of educational institutions and actors who were offered a certain amount of autonomy during school closures could help to inform future efforts to fortify the role of schools in their communities

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. Spotlight 1. The Greek education system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. Education systems across the world have felt the force of the crisis as confinement measures triggered widespread closures of education institutions. Following some localised closures, on 10 March, Greece announced the closure of all educational structures, with immediate effect. Greece progressively reopened educational institutions to students from 11 May. In light of work of the **Education Policy Outlook** in 2020 in the context of the pandemic, this spotlight offers an insight into system readiness and immediate responses across five key areas.

1. **Ensuring continued access to smooth and permeable pathways through the education system:** During closures, schools were expected to continue educating their students through synchronous and asynchronous methods. To support them, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA) issued Guidelines for Distance Education, and collated a list of available resources. Greece mobilised pre-existing digital resources, such as online libraries of digital textbooks, digital lesson plans and digital education platforms and introduced new digital platforms for synchronous online teaching, initially for upper secondary students and schools in regions first affected by closures. Distance teaching was quickly rolled out nationally across all school levels. Special online training was provided to teacher support groups, who were then tasked with disseminating training among the wider teaching community. The Greek branch of the eTwinning project ran regular webinars to support teachers in the transition to distance education. Greece also introduced educational broadcasting via state television, principally for primary level students. At tertiary level, students received free textbooks and two digital platforms for distance and interactive learning were made available. To minimise disruption to tertiary admissions procedures, the application process took place remotely and Greece limited the content of admissions examinations to the topics taught prior to closures. At tertiary level, examinations would take place remotely whenever possible.

2. **Strengthening the internal world of the student:** The Centre for Educational Psychology published multiple reports guiding parents and teachers on how to support children and foster emotional resilience during the pandemic.

3. **Providing targeted support and interventions for vulnerable children and families:** To facilitate access to digital education resources, the MofERA, in collaboration with mobile network providers, ensured free access through telephone landlines, mobile phones and tablets. The MofERA issued specific guidelines for providing distance learning to students with special educational needs and staff from the Educational and Counselling Support Centres continued to support schools and children with special educational needs remotely. Digital features to enable access for those with disabilities were added to the digital learning platform. To support refugees and asylum seekers living in Greece, the UNHCR and UNICEF provided educational material, essential items such as solar lamps and, in collaboration with the MofERA, translated the guidelines for distance education into 11 languages and dialects.

4. **Harnessing wider support and engagement at local and central level:** The MofERA secured commitments from several private companies to donate technological equipment to educational institutions, which in turn assigned them to students, prioritising those from low socio-economic backgrounds. In collaboration with three major technology companies, which provided services free of charge, the MofERA launched three digital platforms enabling institutions to run synchronous online lessons. Higher education institutions were granted the financial autonomy to spend EUR 60 000 on facilitating distance education.

5. **Collecting, disseminating and improving the use of information:** During the period of closures, the MofERA regularly published participation and engagement statistics.

| Selected indicators of system readiness (OECD)	Greece	Average	Min	Max
Students' readiness (according to students' self-reports in PISA 2018)				
1 Index of self-efficacy	0.05	0.01	-0.61	0.36
2 Percentage of students in disadvantaged schools with access to a computer at home that they can use for school work	80.2%	81.5%	23.5%	96.5%
Schools' readiness (according to principals' reports in PISA 2018)				
3 Percentage of students in schools with an effective online learning support platform available	34.2%	54.1%	23.9%	90.9%
4 Percentage of students in schools whose teachers have the technical and pedagogical skills to teach with digital devices	62.8%	64.6%	27.3%	84.1%

Note: The information presented in this spotlight covers key measures announced or introduced **before 14 May 2020**.

Sources for Table: OECD (2020), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*; OECD (2020), *Learning Remotely when Schools Close: How well are Students and Schools Prepared? Insights from PISA*.

KEY TRENDS IN PERFORMANCE AND ATTAINMENT

In PISA 2018, students in Greece performed below the OECD average in reading, with a mean score of 457 points compared to 487. In Greece, student performance peaked in 2009 and since then, reading scores have fallen steadily across PISA cycles. In 2015, literacy scores for Greek adults participating in the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), 2015 were below average, at 254 score points compared to the OECD average of 268 score points. Younger adults (25-34 year-olds) in Greece performed 8 score points lower than the older cohort (55-65 year-olds); on average across the OECD this trend was reversed with a performance difference of 16.

Figure 1. Trends and comparative performance of 15-year-olds in reading, PISA
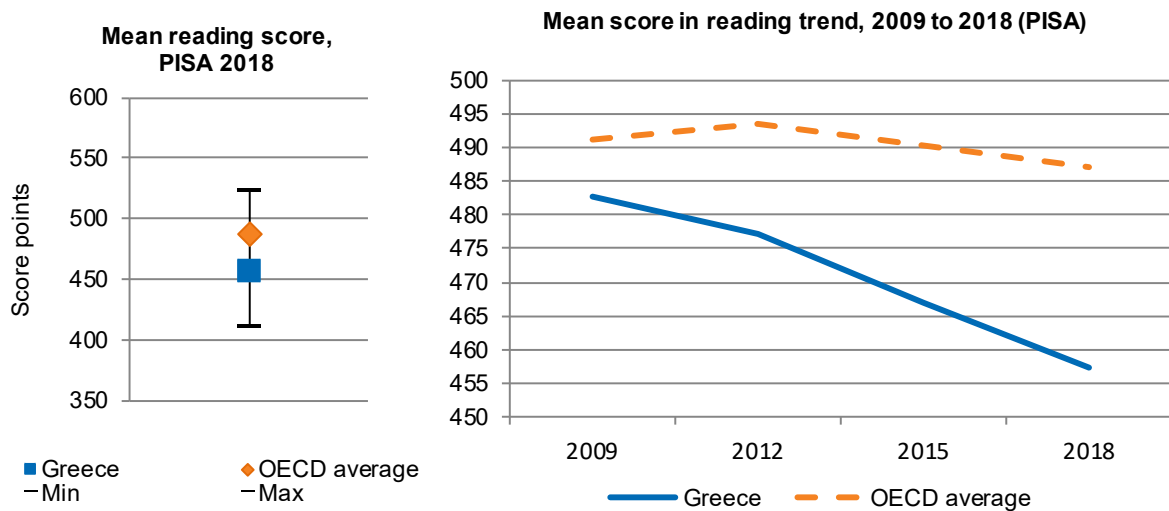
Note: "Min"/"Max" refer to OECD countries with the lowest/highest values.
Source: OECD (2019), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume I): What Students Know and Can Do*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris https://doi.org/10.1787/5f07c754-en.

In recent years, Greece has experienced one of the largest increases in educational attainment among OECD countries. In 2018, 87% of 25-34 year-olds had completed at least upper secondary education, which was a 12-point increase on the equivalent share in 2008. This surpassed the OECD average share for 2018 of 85%, and was three times the average growth rate over the same period. Among the same age group, in 2018, 43% of young Greek adults had completed tertiary education, compared to just 28% in 2008. Although the total share of tertiary graduates remained slightly below the OECD average of 44%, this was nearly double the growth rate experienced on average across the OECD.

Figure 2. Evolution of secondary and tertiary attainment among 25-34 year-olds, 2000-18
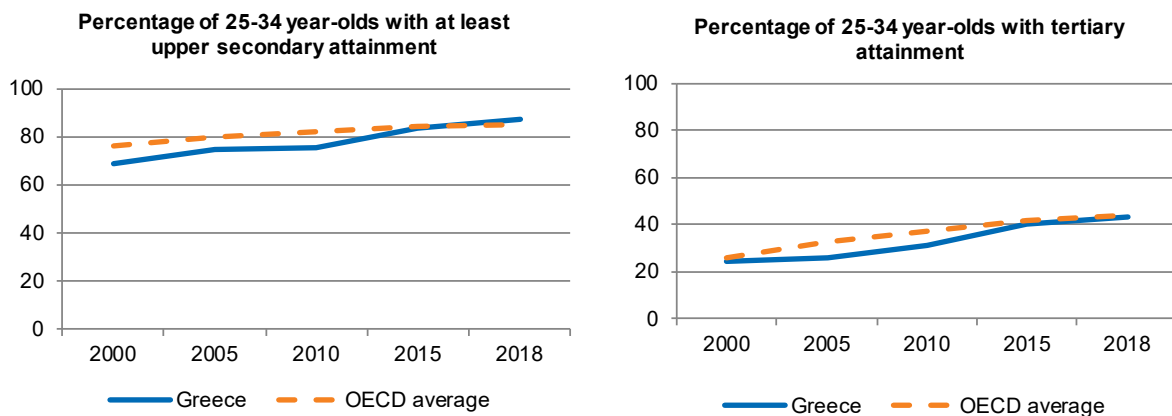
Source: OECD (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en.

Spotlight 1. Key policies, key challenges and previous OECD recommendations for Greece

Main education policies and practices included in this country policy profile	**Key challenges identified and recommendations previously provided by the OECD**
STUDENTS	
▪ Education Priority Zones (2010) ▪ ZEP reception classes for primary and secondary education (2019) ▪ Compulsory schooling for 4-year-olds (2018) ▪ Centres for Educational and Counselling Support (2018) ▪ Action Plan for the Education of Refugee and Migrant Children (2016/17) ▪ Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education (2016) and Reception Classes in schools (2015) ▪ Legislation for the mandatory enrolment of asylum-seeking children in the school system (2019) ▪ Department for the Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education within MofERA (2018) ▪ The Apprenticeship Class (2016) and Apprenticeship Quality Framework (2017) ▪ New beginning at EPAL project (2017-21) ▪ Standing Advisory Committee on the formation of a strategic cooperation plan between the General Secretariat for VET and Lifelong Learning and social partners (2019)	**Key challenges identified [2016, 2018]*:** The OECD identified the challenge of low average performance of 15-year-old students in PISA 2015 and thus, the need to ensure that all students reach higher levels of performance. Another related challenge identified is that the many years of schooling often do not translate into good educational results. In addition, few adults attend on-the-job training and there is often a mismatch between workers' skills and workplace needs, according to available evidence. **Summary of previous related OECD recommendations:** To support learning for all students, the OECD advised Greece to increase efforts to maintain and improve equity and quality across the board while focusing on the more disadvantaged. In particular, the OECD emphasised the need to ensure that all students reach higher performance levels through adapting the education system to the future, and building on the current curricular reform, as well as reducing the impact of the high-stakes Panhellenic examinations and reviewing the impact of shadow education on the public system. The OECD has also recommended that Greece continue to focus on targeted interventions for disadvantaged students and schools.
INSTITUTIONS	
▪ Professionalisation of school leader recruitment and appointment (2017, 2018) ▪ Changes to teacher appointment system (2019) ▪ The All-Day School policy (2002, revised in 2010 and 2016), expanded to special education primary schools (2017) ▪ The Digital School strategy (2013, updated in 2016) ▪ National Coalition for Digital Skills (2018) ▪ In-Service Education and Training of Teachers (2016) ▪ National Centre for Teacher Training (EKEPE, 2019)	**Key challenges identified [2016, 2017, 2018]*:** The OECD previously identified the challenges of improving the quality of teaching and educational leadership, cultivating a culture of accountability and increasing the attractiveness of the profession. This included strengthening initial education, induction and continuous professional development. Other identified challenges include ensuring an effective and efficient teacher allocation model and tackling the large number of adjunct teachers and teachers' role in shadow education. Furthermore, the OECD identified that the existing evaluation and assessment system required strengthening as a whole. **Summary of previous related OECD recommendations:** The OECD has recommended that, in Greece, strong school leaders have well-defined roles to which they are held accountable. The

▪ Restoration and strengthening of the Model and Experimental Schools (2019) ▪ Mandatory school self-evaluation and school leader appraisal (2018) ▪ Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE, 2013, modified 2018) ▪ MySchool – Diophantus (2013) ▪ Adjustments to school leaving examination (2018) ▪ EOPPEP's Study of VET graduate tracking (2018)	OECD also proposed that local education leaders play a greater role in transforming schools into learning organisations, opening up to community engagement, using data to assess performance and learning from others. For high-quality teachers, the OECD recommended strengthening the link between teacher appraisal and professional development, introducing assessment frameworks and giving teachers greater pedagogical and managerial autonomy. The OECD also recommended that Greece strengthen school leaders' appraisal, shifting the focus of their role from management to instructional leadership to improve student and school outcomes. Furthermore, the OECD recommended developing a long-term plan for an overall evaluation and assessment framework focused on student learning and well-being, and introducing a performance evaluation system for universities.
SYSTEM	
▪ Upgrading/merging of Technological Institutes (2018) ▪ Changes to internal governance of HEIs (2017) ▪ Expansion and enhancement of the Hellenic Agency for Higher Education (2020) ▪ Regional Centres for Educational Planning (2018) ▪ Sustainability Education Centres (2018) ▪ School networks of Educational Support (2018) ▪ Committee for National Dialogue for Education (2015) ▪ Three year plan on education (2016-2019) ▪ Central Directorate of Economic Affairs (2013) ▪ Expert Committee on the Economics of Education (2017) ▪ Strategy to map schools across the country (2011) ▪ Reform of funding mechanisms for Universities (2020) ▪ Reform to facilitate funding for research and development (2020)	**Key challenges identified [2013, 2016, and 2018]***: The OECD has previously identified the need to strengthen competencies and skills through an education system that can support long-term reform. In addition, the OECD has highlighted that school and post-secondary funding decisions are highly centralised which, along with lower capacity and financial constraints, has delayed the delivery of funds providing for national co-financing. School units have also been found to be fragmented with diffused responsibilities and finances. The OECD pointed to the lack of comparable funding data as hindering policy decisions tackling the potential underfunding of the system, and addressing challenges raised by the short-term recruitment and allocation of substitute teachers. For individual schools to thrive, the OECD recognised that governance and funding need better alignment. **Summary of previous related OECD recommendations:** The OECD advised Greece to work towards securing long-term reform by developing a clear vision for school education shared across a range of relevant actors, including teachers and students. The OECD also recommended defining profiles and standards for schools and principals. To increase the relevance of VET offers and anticipate future needs, the OECD recommended that plans be evaluated systematically, with more employer engagement and a system to detect current and future skills' needs. The OECD recommended that Greece make governance and funding more school-centred, specifically by providing financial clarity on available resources, and developing and supporting school funding organs. Furthermore, the OECD proposed that consideration be given to a new school funding formula with a reorganisation of school funding in the short term to allocate more funds to the neediest schools.

Note: The information on key challenges and recommendations contained in this spotlight draws from a desk-based compilation from previous OECD publications (subject to country participation). The spotlight is intended for exploratory purposes to promote policy dialogue and should not be considered an evaluation of the country's progress on these recommendations. Causality should not be inferred either: while some actions taken by a country could correspond to previous OECD recommendations, the OECD acknowledges the value of internal and other external dynamics to promote change in education systems.

Main sources: 2013, 2016 and 2018: *The Economic Survey of Greece*; 2017: *Education Policy in Greece: A Preliminary Assessment*; OECD (2018) *Reviews of National Policies for Education for a Bright Future in Greece*.

Spotlight 2. The European Union perspective

Greece's education and training system and the Europe 2020 Strategy

In the European Union's growth and employment strategy, *Europe 2020*, education and training is recognised as a key policy area in contributing to Europe's economic growth and social inclusion. The European Union set a twofold target in education by 2020: reducing the rates of early school-leaving below 10%, and reaching at least 40% of 3034 year-olds completing tertiary or equivalent education. Countries set their own related national targets. The Europe

2020 goals are monitored through the European Union's yearly assessment of the main economic and growth issues.

Greece successfully exited the European Stability Mechanism stability support programme in August 2018. It is now included in the European Semester for economic policy coordination, while being subject to the enhanced surveillance procedure.

The *European Semester Country Report 2020* identified a number of key issues for Greece in education and training:

- To provide the skilled labour necessary for the economic recovery, Greece needs to address poor educational outcomes, continue to upgrade vocational education and invest in lifelong learning. Skills — including digital skills — and competences need to be improved. Overall, low and inefficient funding of education and a general lack of accountability in Greece remain major challenges. Regarding the latter, the current government is aiming to strengthen school evaluation (see "Evaluation and Assessment"). Education spending is low, at 3.9% as a share of GDP in 2017, thus remaining well below the EU average (4.6%). Particular challenges, including an ageing population and the projected substantial reduction in the number of children over the next decades call for improving the use of resources and a shift from input-oriented to output-focused spending patterns. In 2019, the Council of the European Union issued a country-specific recommendation to Greece calling for investmentrelated economic policy on education and skills.
- Underachievement in basic skills remains high, and is heavily affected by the socio-economic background of students. PISA 2018 shows that the share of low achievers among 15-year-olds remains among the highest in the EU, having increased since 2009 in all three fields of reading, mathematics and science. Inequalities are evident through considerable performance gaps due to socio-economic status, migrant background, school form or location.
- Early school-leaving is among the lowest in the EU. At 4.1% in 2019, the share of early school-leavers aged 1824 was well below the EU average (10.3%) and the national target (10%), yet the national average masks significant variation between geographical regions, types of schools, gender and immigrant status. Youth unemployment has fallen considerably from almost 60% in 2013; at 35.2% in 2019, it remains one of the highest in the EU (14.4%), prompting young people to look for employment abroad and thereby limiting future potential growth.
- Vocational education and training (VET) continues to struggle with low attractiveness despite reform efforts. These include establishing common quality frameworks for apprenticeships and VET curricula, setting up new governance bodies and expanding the apprenticeship system. There is still room to better align vocational education and training with labour market developments, including by updating the occupational profiles and better utilising the national mechanism for diagnosing labour market needs.
- Tertiary educational attainment has risen further. Among 30-34 year-olds, 43.1% had a tertiary degree in 2019; well above the EU average (41.6%). Key challenges persist regarding the timely completion of first-cycle tertiary education degrees, employability of recent tertiary education graduates, strong outward mobility of students and graduates, and skills mismatches. Greece has started introducing measures to address these shortcomings in higher education, such as upgrading the quality assurance authority and expanding its role (see "Governance").
- Participation in adult learning remains low, at 3.9% in 2019 (EU average: 11.3%). Improving workers' skills is a challenge as the adult learning system continues to be highly fragmented.
- Improving digital skills is crucial in the face of digital transformation of the economy and society. In 2019, only 51% of Greeks aged 16-74 appear to have at least basic digital skills, putting Greece well below the EU average (58%). At 1.8%, Greece has the lowest share of information and communications technology specialists in total employment in the EU (EU average: 3.9%). This is partly due to outward migration, as the share of graduates in this field is comparable to the EU average. Shortages in advanced digital skills may delay the uptake of advanced digital technologies thus impacting productivity.

In May 2020, the Council of the European Union proposed the following country-specific recommendation to Greece, with regard to education: "Focus investment on the green and digital transition, in particular on [...] and very-high capacity digital infrastructure and skills..." Subject to its endorsement, this recommendation will be formally adopted in July 2020.

EQUITY AND QUALITY: ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FROM AN EARLY AGE, AND AS A FIRST ENTRY COUNTRY WITHIN THE EU

In PISA 2018, Greece combined performance in reading which was below the OECD average with close-to-average **PISA equity indicators**. Compared to other participating OECD countries, on average, Greece had a larger share of low performers, and a smaller share of high performers. Some 30.5% of students in Greece scored below the baseline level (PISA Level 2) in reading compared to an average share of 22.6%. At the same time, 3.7% of Greek students were considered high performers (PISA Level 5 or above) in reading compared to the OECD average of 8.7%. Similar patterns were evident in mathematics and science. Furthermore, although long-term trends in students' reading and mathematics performance show little change since first PISA participation, Greece's science performance has decreased by an average of 6 score points per three-year cycle. Socio-economic status explained a similar level of variance in reading performance in Greece to the OECD average of 12% in PISA 2018. However, gender differences in reading performance were among the highest in the OECD: girls outperformed boys by 42 score points in reading in 2018, whereas the average difference across the OECD was 30 score points.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) policies can increase the equity of education systems. In Greece, there is evidence of a growing reliance on informal childcare for 0-3 year-olds. However, recent efforts to increase participation among older children (4-5 year-olds) have brought their enrolment rate closer to other OECD countries. In 2017, although a smaller share of 3-5 year-olds were enrolled in ECEC than on average across the OECD (65% compared to 87%), enrolment rates for 5-year-olds specifically had caught up (93% compared to 94%). The participation of 4-year-olds is also set to increase with recent legislative changes (see "Recent policies and practices"). Within this, OECD statistics indicate notable regional differences in ECEC participation: some 78% of 3-5 year-olds were enrolled in ECEC in Western Macedonia in 2017, compared to just 57% in Attica.

According to OECD evidence, some **system-level policies** can favour equity, such as a longer period of compulsory education, delayed tracking, limited ability-grouping and low grade repetition. Compulsory education in Greece currently starts at age 5 with plans to extend to 4-year-olds in 2020/21 (see "Recent policies and practices"). Compulsory schooling ends at 15, when students are first tracked into different educational pathways, one year before the most common age for the OECD. In PISA 2015, only 5% of 15-year-olds in Greece reported repeating a grade during their education, compared to 11% on average. School choice is formally limited: students are assigned to schools based on residence and cannot apply to other public schools even if places are available. This does not apply to Model, Experimental, Music or Art Schools (see "School Improvement"). In practice, this may unintentionally reproduce or reinforce residential segregation. However, PISA 2018 indices of academic and social inclusion for Greece are in line with OECD averages, suggesting that school populations remain diverse. According to Greek principals' reports in PISA 2015, ability-grouping, both between and within classes, is less common than elsewhere in the OECD. Several of Greece's system-level practices thus appear conducive to equitable outcomes but, without careful oversight, may be undermined by a well-developed shadow education sector. Students who can afford it, supplement their education with private tuition. The OECD (2018) reported that the Panhellenic examination (see Evaluation and Assessment) and perceived low quality of public education are key drivers of this.

Greece is a country of first-entry within the European Union (EU) and experiences ongoing humanitarian migration. According to the European Commission (EC) (2017), the situation peaked in 2015 when around 10 000 migrants and refugees arrived daily. Greece has since taken policy measures to grant access to education for refugee and migrant children (see Spotlight 3). In PISA 2018, 12% of students in Greece were immigrants, up from 9% in 2015. Despite this, performance differences in reading between **immigrant and non-immigrant students**, although substantial, were similar to the average gap across OECD countries, with a mean score difference of 22 points after accounting for socio-economic status. This only captures immigrant students enrolled in the formal education system, thus potentially excluding a considerable share of refugee students. The OECD (2018) reported that, in 2016, the share of early school-leavers among 15-24 year-olds was nearly three times higher for foreign born students (15.2%) than for native-born students with native-born parents (5.3%).

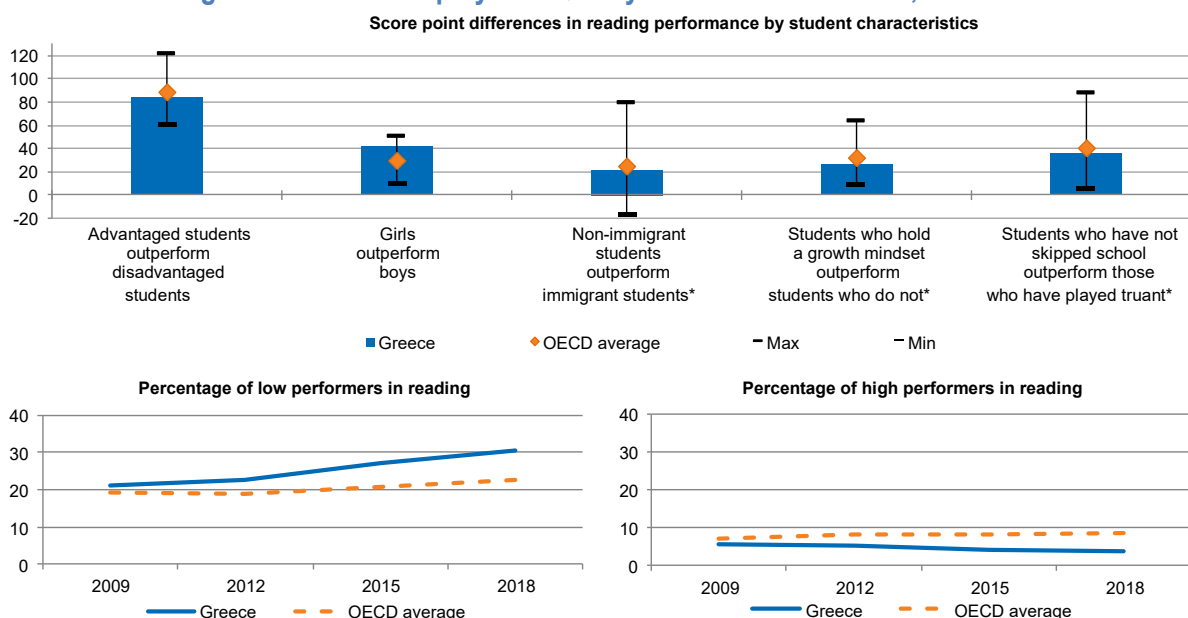| Key strengths and challenges in equity and quality (pre-crisis analysis)	
Key strengths	**Key challenges**
▪ Among older children, enrolment in ECEC has grown considerably to meet OECD average rates. ▪ Evidence from PISA 2018 suggests that school populations are academically and socially diverse. ▪ PISA 2018 performance differences in reading between immigrant and non-immigrant students were similar to the OECD average.	▪ A comparatively small share of students reached the minimum level of proficiency in reading, science and mathematics in PISA 2018. ▪ As ECEC coverage expands, Greece must ensure access to quality provision for all. ▪ An extensive shadow education sector may undermine public education provision and equity.

Recent policies and practices

Since 2010, the Education Priority Zones (*Zones Ekpaideftikis Proteraiotitas*, ZEPs), co-funded by Greece and the EU, have aimed to improve access to education and combat school failure by providing additional funding and human resources to participating schools. The zones are determined according to various socio-economic and educational indicators and cover schools from pre-primary to upper secondary level. For the school year 2019/20 almost 1 700 ZEP classes had been established in primary and secondary education. In 2019, further opportunities to introduce ZEP Reception classes with a focus on language acquisition and integration in primary schools (see Spotlight 4), or on reducing school drop-out and enhancing basic literacy and numeracy skills in secondary schools were announced. As of 2020, no systematic review or evaluation of the impact of ZEPs on student outcomes had taken place. The OECD (2018) previously noted that, where ZEP schools have a positive influence, co-operation among staff, coherence in teaching and strong school management have been key. Similar policies in other OECD countries have had mixed results though, and so careful evaluation is critical. The government envisages to replace the ZEPs by thematic zones in 2020/21.

In 2018, the government extended compulsory schooling to 4-year-olds. A gradual implementation approach has been planned and, as of 2019/20, MofERA reported that 289 of the 332 municipalities already had 2 years of compulsory ECEC in place for 4-5 year-olds. Full implementation is expected by 2021. The EC (2018) has identified two potential challenges to realising this: some municipalities already experience a shortage of places and the current system of subsidies to low-income families may not prove sufficient as coverage expands. The OECD (2016) has also previously highlighted the importance of providing affordable ECEC for all families in Greece to encourage women's labour market participation and address inequities.

In Greece, the majority of students with a disability and/or special educational needs attend mainstream schools although there are some shortages in specialised support. In 2019, Greece approved the legislative framework for establishing Centres for Educational and Counselling Support (KESY), increasing their number and staffing compared to their predecessor institutions. KESY support schools in ensuring equal access and positive psychosocial development for all students. By increasing capacity, Greece aims specifically to reduce waiting times for needs diagnosis, which can currently be up to 3 years. In 2019, MofERA also opened 4 500 positions in the special education sector for permanent teachers, psychologists, social workers and other specialists. The appointment of these professionals is currently in progress; it is the first time that permanent contracts have been available for special education teachers.

Figure 3. Selected Equity and Quality Indicators for Greece, PISA 2018

Score point differences in reading performance by student characteristics

Percentage of low performers in reading

Percentage of high performers in reading

Note: "Min"/"Max" refer to OECD countries with the lowest/highest values; [*] Score point difference after accounting for students' socioeconomic status and language spoken at home.
Sources: OECD (2019), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume I): What Students Know and Can Do*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/5f07c754-en; OECD (2019), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where All Students Can Succeed*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/b5fd1b8f-en; OECD (2020), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en.

Spotlight 3. Providing access to education for refugee and migrant children in Greece

Since 2016, the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA) has taken several measures to open up access to educational pathways for refugee and migrant children. In accordance with international commitments, all children of school age in Greece are legally entitled to access education, regardless of refugee or migrant status. However, with the increased arrival of refugee populations in 2015, the Greek education system has been under unprecedented pressure to uphold these commitments: in 2016, the Greek Asylum Service received just under 20 000 asylum applications from children aged 0-17, including around 2 500 unaccompanied minors.

In response, MofERA developed an emergency Action Plan for the Education of Refugee and Migrant Children (2016/17) based on the recommendations of a Scientific Committee for the Support of Refugee Children, established by MofERA in early 2016. The Committee undertook a survey of current provision in accommodation centres to inform its proposals, identifying various challenges including insufficient infrastructure to provide safe education and a heterogeneous set of actors and providers. The plan introduced two key measures:

- Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education (DYEP, 2016) were established for refugees aged 5-15 years old. DYEPs offer introductory classes to children residing in Refugee Accommodation Centers to facilitate gradual integration into the Greek educational system. These structures operate within primary and secondary level public schools neighbouring Accommodation Centers, from 2-6pm. The curriculum and course schedules were set by the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) and the Scientific Committee. By 2017, DYEPs had been established to serve 33 Accommodation Centers across the country, receiving over 3 000 children aged 6-15 years old. At pre-primary level, refugee children aged 5-6 years old living in Accommodation Centres were able to attend Reception School Annexes operating within the Centers

- Reception Classes (RCs) were established for children living "off-site" (i.e. those receiving accommodation benefits from the UNHCR, NGOs or municipalities, or living in flats or hotels). These children are expected to attend Greek public schools close to their residence, and Reception Classes provide supplementary teaching and tutorial support to facilitate integration into mainstream education. They are designed specifically for children who are learning Greek as a foreign language and cover the core-curriculum.

To implement the plan, MofERA established a Working Group for the Management, Coordination, and Monitoring of the Refugee Education and introduced the Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs) deployed at regional level, who mediate between the Ministry, the Refugee Accommodation Centers and Greek schools.

In 2017, MofERA published the Scientific Committee's assessment of the 2016/17 action plan. The report noted significant achievements given the demanding and unstable conditions under which the plan was implemented. However, it also highlighted a failure to provide adequate pre-primary level education in Accommodation Centres and an ongoing challenge of integrating students aged over 15 into non-mandatory education. In terms of the DYEPs, there were issues relating to teacher quality and student attendance. The same report delivered proposals for a revised plan for 2017/18. Due to the high instability in the refugee population, it suggested setting 2017/18 as a further transitional year to conclude integration processes by continuing to apply a flexible system with different scenarios according to location and age group. Further proposals included more emphasis on sport, art, and technology, as well as a system to monitor children's progress and measures to better involve parents.

Following this, in 2017/18, RECs were seconded to urban settings due to an increase in refugees living outside Accommodation Centers, the number of RCs in primary schools increased and they were introduced in upper secondary schools, and 23 pre-primary schools opened up in Accommodation Centers. In 2019/20, a considerable number of new RCs in ZEPs (see "Equity and Quality") were established at primary level, and 50 new classes at secondary level were planned, in addition to the 39 already in operation. By the same academic year, there were 1 266 refugee children in primary RCs and 2 338 in secondary.

In 2019, Greece introduced into legislation the mandatory enrolment of asylum-seeking children in the school system. A Department for the Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education (2018) was established within MofERA. It takes over from the Working Group and is mandated to respond systematically to the planning, management and monitoring of refugees' educational issues. In collaboration, the IEP monitors refugees' reception, enrolment and educational needs, as reported via the RECs' monthly reports. MofERA also introduced preparatory afternoon classes (2018/19) for refugee students in primary and secondary education on the islands, and made a first effort to record refugee children with special educational needs. Nevertheless, Human Rights Watch (2019) estimated that less than half of Greece's refugee children were enrolled in formal education by 2019, with particularly low enrolment rates for those in Accommodation Centres. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MofERA collaborated with international organisations to enable refugee children to continue accessing education (Spotlight 1); such targeted efforts must continue as the diverse impacts of the pandemic on refugee communities become clearer.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE: HIGH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, BUT ALSO COMPARATIVELY HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The capacity of a country to develop **skills and labour market perspectives** can play an important role in the educational decisions of its population. This is especially important for Greece, given its high unemployment rate. Educational attainment among the wider adult population is comparable to the OECD average: only 12.5% of Greek 25-64 year-olds had lower secondary education as their highest level of attainment in 2018, compared to an OECD average of 14.4%. This does not necessarily translate into high skill levels. Greek adults performed below the OECD average in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) 2015 in terms of both literacy (254 points compared to 268) and numeracy (252 points compared to 263). Furthermore, regardless of attainment level, the economic crisis has particularly affected the younger population. In 2018, the unemployment rate for 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary education or post-secondary non-tertiary education was 25.1%, over three times the OECD average of 7.3%, and the highest among all OECD countries. In addition, at 22.3%, the share of 18-24 year-olds not employed or in education or training (NEETs) was well above the OECD average of 14.3% (see Figure 4). Indeed, between 2008 and 2018, Greece's share of 15-29 year-old NEETs grew more than anywhere else in the OECD.

Upper secondary education in Greece includes general programmes in General Lyceum and vocational programmes in Vocational Education and Training schools (EPAL). Graduates from both tracks obtain a certificate after three years; EPAL graduates also receive a Vocational Education Training and Specialisation Certificate. Both pathways provide access to universities. Participation in upper secondary education is high in Greece, although this may be driven in part by limited employment opportunities for young people. Educational attainment has increased considerably since 2008 among 25-34 year-olds in Greece (See Figure 2). In addition, according to Eurostat, Greece has one of the lowest rates of early leavers from education and training in the EU: in 2019, only 4.1% of 18-24 year-olds left school before graduating from upper secondary education, compared to an EU average of 10.3%.

Vocational education and training (VET) can ease entry into the labour market, yet across the OECD, many VET programmes make insufficient use of workplace training. In Greece, as well as the upper secondary VET programmes offered in EPAL, VET is provided at post-secondary, non-tertiary level through the Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK), open to all upper secondary graduates, and apprenticeships (see "Recent policies and practices"). VET pathways are less popular than general education and face some quality issues. In 2016, 29% of students in Greece followed a vocational upper secondary programme, compared to 44% on average. PISA 2018 data also indicate that the basic skills of vocational students assessed are less strong than those of students in general or modular programmes, with a 116 score-point gap in reading performance between the two groups. The OECD (2018) previously reported as well a much higher share of early leavers from VET in comparison to general programmes. From 2014, various measures aim to make VET more attractive (see "Recent policies and practices"). More recently, the OECD (2018) recommended that Greece scale up post-secondary VET and adult education, linking them with labour market needs, and improving quality to expand employment opportunities for young people.

Since 2018, all **higher education** programmes in Greece are offered in universities (see "Governance"). Admissions are competitive, based on a centrally-determined *numerus clausus* with upper secondary graduates admitted according to their grades in the Panhellenic examination. However, economic advantages for tertiary graduates are comparatively small: in 2017, holders of a tertiary qualification in Greece earned a wage premium of 37% relative to their peers with upper secondary education only, compared to an OECD average of 57%. While having a tertiary qualification, as opposed to upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary, reduced the risk of unemployment by 25% on average across the OECD, the equivalent was just 8% in Greece. Despite this, according to students' self-reports in PISA 2018, a larger-than-average share of Greek students expect to complete tertiary education (74% compared to 70%). This varies by socio-economic background, reaching 90% among advantaged students and only 56% among disadvantaged students. The OECD (2017) reported that adapting post-secondary education to the needs of both students and the labour market is an ongoing challenge for Greece. Recent efforts to make admission to low-demand university departments less selective have since been suspended.

Key strengths and challenges in funding (pre-crisis analysis)	
Key strengths	**Key challenges**
▪ High levels of education attainment, with increases at upper secondary and tertiary levels. ▪ Early school-leaving rates are among the lowest in the European Union.	▪ Connecting higher attainment with higher skill levels and employment opportunities, particularly for youth. ▪ Increasing the number of students enrolled in VET programmes and the quality of the VET offer. ▪ Strengthening the mechanisms connecting postsecondary and tertiary education with labour market requirements and employment opportunities.

Recent policies and practices

The Apprenticeship Class (2016) aims to improve VET's labour market relevance and increase work-based learning. It is a one-year, optional post-secondary study cycle, consisting of 28 hours of paid workplace training and 7 hours of schooling per week. The scheme was piloted in 2016 and is supported financially by the EU. An evaluation
(2018) revealed that most stakeholders agreed that ACs upgraded students' professional, personal and social skills, facilitating their transition to working life. Areas for development included increasing teacher training, decreasing the administrative load, and strengthening links between employers and educators. An Apprenticeship Quality Framework (2017) clarified contractual obligations, accreditation and professional development requirements for trainers and quality assurance measures. New bodies were created to support implementation: the National Education and Human Resource Development Council (2017) to advise policy makers, particularly regarding the alignment of education, training and labour market needs; the National VET Committee to monitor the implementation of the Framework and the National Apprenticeship Coordinating Body (2018) bringing together various stakeholder representatives. By 2019, Apprenticeship Classes were available in 21 specialisations, with more planned for 2020. As of 2018, Apprenticeship Classes are also available to graduates from Special Vocational Schools, on certain conditions. In 2018, the EC reported that these reforms have provided an integrated system for apprenticeships with common standards and governance structures; to make this fully functional, the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders need to be clear and cooperation between them must be prioritised.

In 2017, Greece launched the New beginning at EPAL project (2017-21), with financial support from the EU, aiming to improve the quality of EPAL institutions and strengthen foundational skills among students. Planned actions include recruiting psychologists and teacher advisors to support all students, upgrading digital infrastructure, providing teacher professional development, facilitating institutional action planning focused on building links with local communities and other schools, and establishing alternative learning methods for Greek language and mathematics. The latter is the key focus of the project and consists of supporting teams of teachers, within and between schools, to co-plan and co-teach differentiated lessons for first-year students who need to improve their core literacy and numeracy skills. Following a pilot in 9 schools in 2017, the project now covers all EPAL schools (around 400). Key to success in the pilot was the creation of steering groups in each school where the three members took responsibility for the teacher advisors and psychologists, the school action plans, and alternative teaching methodologies. Steering groups across EPALs were encouraged to share experiences and collaborate. To support such good practices to continue, MofERA has a dedicated website for EPAL and runs workshops.

The current government's main objectives for VET policy include joint strategic planning at upper secondary and post-secondary levels, greater autonomy for EPALs and IEKs, stronger collaboration with social partners; certification of non-formal and informal learning, and career guidance and entrepreneurship at lower secondary level.

   In this regard, the new Standing Advisory Committee on the formation of a strategic cooperation plan between the General Secretariat for VET and Lifelong Learning and social partners (2019) is an important step. Other actions include the establishment of Model Vocational High Schools (model EPAL schools) (see "School Improvement") to act as centres of innovation and excellence, and help boost the status of VET. During 2018-22, the IEP, with financial support from the EU, is implementing two further VET projects to deliver training programmes to 4 200 VET teachers and to upgrade and reform curricula.

Figure 4. Percentage of 18-24 year-olds in education and not in education, by employment status (2018)
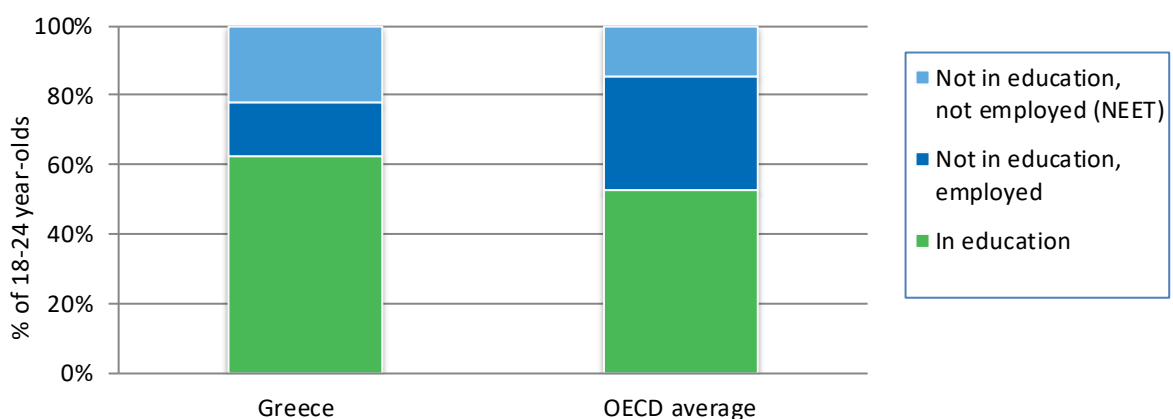
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, WITH A NEED TO ENSURE A CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING

Developing **positive learning environments** for students, which enable school leaders and teachers to succeed, is essential in raising achievement in schools. According to self-reports in PISA 2018, Greek students feel that they belong at school slightly more strongly than on average across the OECD with a sense of belonging index value of 0.02 compared to 0.00. However, the classroom environment, specifically, appears more challenging: in PISA 2018, students in Greece reported a less positive disciplinary climate in language-of-instruction classrooms than on average across the OECD (-0.26 compared to 0.04) and perceived their teachers to be less supportive than elsewhere in the OECD (-0.17 compared to 0.01). OECD (2019) research shows that higher levels for both these indicators create conditions which favour quality teaching and learning. Student truancy, measured as the share of 15-year-olds who reported skipping at least one day of school in the two weeks prior to the PISA 2018 test, was 29% in Greece, compared to an OECD average of 21%.

Attracting, retaining and developing good-quality **school leaders** is key to improving learning environments and promoting effective school leadership. In Greece, school leaders are appointed for a 3-year term according to academic qualifications (4-year bachelor's degree, plus additional studies), experience (10 years' educational or administrative service, with at least 8 years' teaching) and an interview with the selection board. Greek principals have a rather administrative managerial role, partly due to a lack of autonomy (see "Governance"). However, research (2019) suggests that policy efforts appear to be helping strengthen instructional leadership practices. In PISA 2015, based on principals' reports, Greece's index of instructional leadership, at 0.24, suggested greater engagement in the leadership of teaching and learning than on average. Previous OECD (2018) work pointed to a need for greater professionalisation of the role through introducing career development structures, targeted training and appraisal against a framework of professional standards. Since 2012, some specialised training programmes for principals have become available and, in 2018, a legal framework for appraisal was approved as part of changes to school self-evaluation. The latter is currently under review (see "Evaluation and Assessment"). Over recent years efforts to professionalise recruitment (2017) and the appointment of school leaders (2018) have been made. The current government is revising this legislation to adjust more to an educational system based on school autonomy.

A strong supply of highly qualified and engaged **teachers** is vital in every education system. In Greece, fully qualified, permanent teachers must hold a bachelor's degree. A certificate of pedagogical competence, awarded following initial teacher preparation, is not required but is an advantage. Teachers supporting students with disabilities require additional qualifications. New teachers complete a 2-year probation. From 2019, teacher appointments occur via a centralised points system determined by academic credentials, years of service and social criteria. This replaces the previous examination-based system and aims to solve staffing issues in remote schools, although it is unclear how it directly addresses this. A freeze on permanent teacher hires during the economic crisis (2009-18) increased reliance on substitute teachers, who constituted over one-fifth (22%) of the workforce in 2018/19, according to national data. Substitutes can only be employed for 10 months per year, impeding school strategic planning. In 2019, the government announced 15 000 new positions for permanent teachers, including for special education (see "Equity and Quality"). A further 10 500 permanent teacher appointments are expected in general primary and secondary education by 2022.

Teaching conditions in Greece combine comparatively small class sizes, low teaching hours, and low salaries. In 2017, Greece had 17 students per class, on average, in primary education and 21 students in secondary, compared to OECD averages of 21 and 23. Between 2000 and 2018, annual teaching hours[2] rose from 426 to 614 hours, remaining below the average of 700 hours for lower secondary. Teachers' career trajectories in Greece are relatively flat; years of service are rewarded with salary increases and a reduction in hours. Given that just over half of lower secondary teachers were aged 50 or over in 2017, Greece may face efficiency challenges in the near future.

Teachers' salaries were affected by the economic crisis: statutory salaries for primary and secondary education teachers fell by 29 percentage points from 2005-18. In 2017, lower secondary teachers in Greece earned 83% of the average earnings of other tertiary-qualified full time, full-year workers, compared to the average OECD ratio of 88%. The OECD (2018) has previously reported low teacher morale and trust in the system, yet teaching remains an attractive profession in Greece; permanent positions are over-subscribed.

| Key strengths and challenges in governance (pre-crisis analysis)	
Key strengths	**Key challenges**
▪ Nascent efforts to professionalise the school leader role, including clearer appointment procedures. ▪ Greece has undertaken efforts to solve staffing issues in remote schools and restoring more stability in the profession through permanent appointments.	▪ Strengthening classroom environments to facilitate learning and student engagement. ▪ A need for stronger teacher career pathways with clear progression opportunities.

Recent policies and practices

From 2016/17, Greece required all primary schools with 4 teachers or more, and all pre-primary schools to adopt the "unified" all-day school model, with compulsory hours from 8am to 1.15pm, and optional provision until 4pm. A daily school meal would also be provided. From 2017/18, primary schools with fewer teachers could also become all-day schools and administrative procedures were simplified to facilitate transition, including in special education. Greece has experimented with all-day models since the 1990s to support women's labour market participation, enhance student outcomes, counteract disadvantage and restrict shadow education. The "classic" model (2002) saw schools providing services such as supervised rest or homework beyond 2pm. The "cohesive" model (2010) had a more educational focus, with compulsory attendance until 3.30pm and an enriched curriculum. The OECD (2018) reported that in 2016, 61% of primary schools followed the "classic" model, 29% the "cohesive" model and 10% did not offer all-day provision. Since then, the "unified" model has expanded to the vast majority of primary and preprimary schools. However, qualitative research into this model (2018) has found that it reduces the core curriculum hours and neglects the compensatory effect of the "cohesive" model for disadvantaged students. A historical review (2015) of policy in this area reveals that a lack of continuity and consistency has inhibited implementation over the long term.

The Digital School strategy (2010, updated 2016) aimed to digitally transform primary and secondary education through developing digital educational content, providing teacher professional development, enhancing digital classroom infrastructure, and strengthening electronic administrative systems. Digital classrooms were initially established in 800 primary and 1 250 secondary schools. Between 2014 and 2020, a further 7 350 schools were expected to benefit from an ongoing programme providing digital equipment, with financial support from the EU. Through the strategy, some 7 500 Open Educational Resources (OERs), 100 digital textbooks with interactive resources, a digital educational platform (e-me) for students and teachers, and five national online repositories of digital learning resources have been established. These resources and tools proved useful during the shift to distance learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Spotlight 1). Efforts have also been made beyond the school level: the National Coalition for Digital Skills (2018) runs several initiatives to upgrade adults' digital skills.

IEP implemented In-Service Education and Training of Teachers (INSETT, 2016) to provide professional development for teachers on topics including curriculum, digital tools, refugee students, formative assessment and VET-apprenticeships. Many of these programmes are co-funded by the EU and support the implementation of wider policies. INSETT also offers professional development during induction for newly appointed and substitute teachers. In 2019, the National Center for Teacher Training (EKEPE) was created as a distinct academic unit affiliated with the Hellenic Open University and obtained responsibility for identifying educators' ongoing development needs, designing programmes and offering relevant provision, both in-person and distance. However, the current government considers that there is considerable overlap between the work of INSETT and EKEPE, prompting reflections on the latter's future.

Recent legislation (2019) restores and strengthens the Model and Experimental schools (2011) as a first step towards expansion from 2020/21. These schools aim to serve as both centres of excellence and innovation hubs to contribute to the development and dissemination of improved models of education across the school network.

Figure 5. The learning environment according to students, PISA 2018
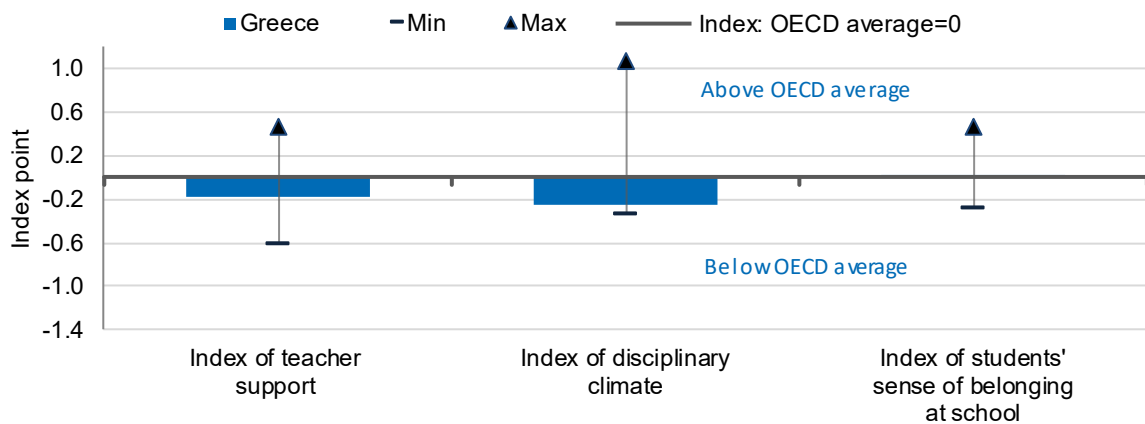
Note: "Min"/"Max" refer to OECD countries with the lowest/highest values.
Source: OECD (2020), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT: A SYSTEM IN THE MAKING

Defining strategies for evaluation and assessment is important for improving student outcomes and developing a higher-quality and more equitable school system. **System evaluation** can provide evidence to help decisionmakers craft informed policies and increase the transparency of education system outcomes. In Greece, the use of data to support system improvement is an emerging practice thanks to several new initiatives (see "Recent policies and practices"). The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP, 2011) carries out focused evaluation studies at national or regional level. The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE, 2013) assesses educational quality, evaluates implementation processes and reports on system priorities to MofERA. Schools must regularly submit student, teacher and school data to the MySchool database (Diophantus, 2013). Greece participates in some large-scale international studies such as PISA and the Survey of Adult Skills, but there is no national standardised assessment scheme to provide regular information about students' learning outcomes.

Until recently, Greece had no formal internal or external **school evaluation** processes. In PISA 2015, school leaders' reports indicated that schools in Greece are less likely than average to conduct self-evaluations (81%, compared to 93%) and to receive external inspections (21%, compared to 75%). External evaluation has not been implemented, but several mechanisms for school self-evaluation have been introduced and tested since 2010. Mandatory internal evaluation was introduced in all pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in 2013, after a pilot phase from 2011-13, but was subsequently suspended in 2015, following opposition from teacher unions. In 2018, Greece approved legislation for a new mandatory internal evaluation procedure. Whereas previous measures had been top-down, this legislation encouraged teachers to collectively evaluate the school according to a set of broad themes and then form a school development plan. Educational Coordinators based in the Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKEs) would provide formative feedback and support. Such components are in line with best practice in school self-evaluation, as identified by the OECD (2013). PEKES would also synthesise individual school plans delivering a regional report to the IEP. However, following opposition from teachers and school leaders the current government is developing new legislation aiming to establish a system accepted by all. This experience is indicative of wider challenges for policy implementation in Greece (see "Governance"); further efforts, currently in development, will require concrete and consistent efforts to engage stakeholders throughout the policy process.

According to OECD research, **teacher appraisal** can strengthen professionalism and performance, provided it includes an improvement component emphasising developmental evaluation, and a career progression component. Teacher appraisal does not exist in Greece. A mechanism introduced in 2013, linking appraisal and professional development, was subsequently frozen, then formally abolished in 2018 due to the majority of schools' refusal to take part and opposition from teacher unions. Greek teachers also rarely receive informal feedback on their practice: school leaders do not have the right to observe teaching and support staff from regional and local administrations can only do so on invitation. This is relatively unusual among OECD countries. In PISA 2015, only 14% of 15-yearolds in Greece were in schools whose principal reported regular teacher classroom observation, compared to an OECD average of 81%. Furthermore, only 16% were in schools whose principals reported that standardised tests are used to make judgements about teachers' effectiveness, compared to an average of 37%.

The extent and ways in which a system uses **student assessment** can vary depending on need. In Greece, due to an absence of national standardised assessments, the evaluation of students' learning is exclusively performed by schools. The Panhellenic examination for university entrance is a trusted measure of student outcomes among parents; however, the OECD (2018) found that its high-stakes nature contributed to curriculum distortion and the shadow education sector (see "Equity and Quality"). School-level standardised assessments are employed at the end of each school year; these appear to have a largely summative focus. In PISA 2015, a lowerthan-average share of 15-year-olds in Greece were in schools that use standardised assessments to monitor school progress (47% compared to 69%), or to identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved (48% compared to 59%). However, a larger-than-average share were in schools where these assessments informed retention or promotion (61% compared to 31%). A similar pattern appeared for teacher-designed assessments. Furthermore, according to students' reports in PISA 2018, teachers in Greece provide feedback to students on their learning less frequently than on average across the OECD with an index value of -0.10 compared to 0.00 on average. Recently, there have been efforts to make student assessment more formative (see "Recent policies and practices").

Key strengths and challenges in governance (pre-crisis analysis)

| Key strengths	Key challenges
▪ Recent initiatives point to efforts to develop the use of system-level data to support improvement. ▪ Efforts to establish an improvement-focused self evaluation process for schools are ongoing.	▪ Securing stakeholder support for improvement focused quality management across the system. ▪ Ensuring accurate system-level information on student outcomes.

Recent policies and practices

The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE, 2013) is an administratively autonomous body, supervised by MofERA. It aims to ensure quality in primary and secondary education, through monitoring and evaluation, and to support MofERA with national education strategy. Following initial resourcing challenges, in 2018, efforts to strengthen ADIPPDE included defining a new role based on three action lines: 1) conducting ex-post evaluation in primary and secondary education; 2) supervising schools' strategic planning; and 3) formulating and standardising school self-evaluation and other evaluation processes. A governing council, including academics and school representatives, was also introduced for a four-year term. ADIPPDE publishes annual reports on selected aspects of system evaluation offering policy recommendations. The OECD (2018) identified ADIPPDE's work as an indicator of the nascent culture of accountability and improvement-focused use of data. However, with ongoing changes to school evaluation, ADIPPDE's role will need to be re-examined.

As part of a wider e-governance drive, MySchool - Diophantus (2013) is the Greek education information system established to centralise educational data and enhance system-level governance. MySchool collates data about students, teachers, schools and curriculum for pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, both in the public and private sectors. In this way, it provides everyday administrative support to educational actors at school, as well as at local, regional and central levels. It also aims to support their decision-making through various tools, such as data processing tools, reporting tools and Business Intelligence mechanisms. Furthermore, the database is used to tackle key thematic concerns such as early school-leaving. For example, since 2016, relevant datasets regarding early school-leaving have been regularly provided to the Observatory of Student Dropout within the IEP, to produce accurate indicators on student dropout. Using this data, IEP publishes annual reports. According to Eurostat, Greece has dramatically decreased the rate of early school-leaving since 2009.

Greece has been making efforts to reduce the high-stakes nature and summative focus of student assessment. In compulsory education, MofERA has started introducing formative student assessment. In the first phase, the IEP, with financial support from the EU, developed a bank of relevant training material for teachers. A pilot scheme followed with 81 pre-primary, primary and secondary schools (2017/18), and the results informed revisions of the training materials. The final documents include a theoretical framework and methodology for each educational level along with descriptive evaluation criteria for primary and secondary education. However, after project completion, the new system was not implemented in schools. In 2018, Greece legally reduced the number of subjects assessed (from 12 to 4) in the school-leaving examinations, increasing the use of continuous assessment for non-examined subjects. This is set to change again in 2020/21, as it was seen to impact the perceived value of some subjects. ADIPPDE (2019) noted that progress in this area is slow because of a need for appropriate teacher training, although improvements can be noted within initial teacher preparation.

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) conducted a study of graduate tracking (2018), focusing on transitions to the labour market from post-secondary VET (IEK). Indicators include the placement rate of VET graduates and skills used in the workplace, as well as the position of graduates within the labour market and satisfaction levels among graduates and employers. The study covered 430 employers and 4 780 graduates. Findings emphasise the importance of certification which increased employment rates threefold. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) praised the initiative as the first step in developing more comprehensive and sustainable graduate tracking for the VET sector as a whole. EOPPEP has maintained and is further strengthening the system.

Figure 6. Percentage of students in schools where the principal reported assessments of students in national modal grade for 15-year-olds, PISA 2015
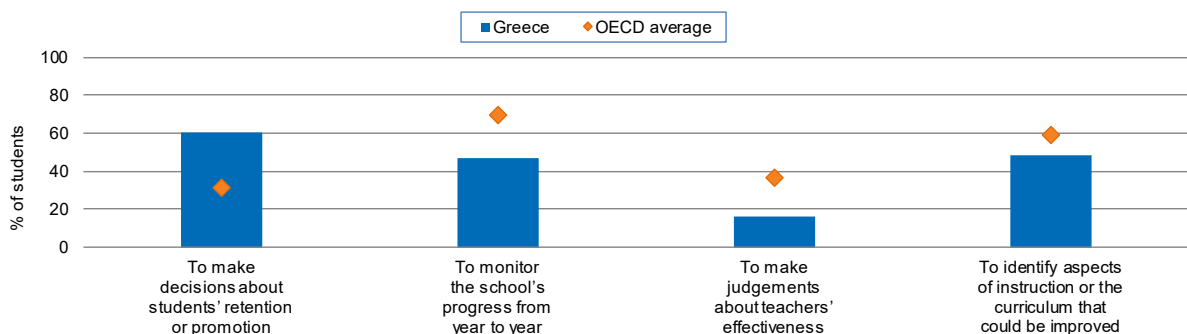
Source: OECD (2016), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume II): Policies and Practices for Successful Schools*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en.

GOVERNANCE: A HIGHLY CENTRALISED SYSTEM

The Greek education system is among the most centralised in the OECD. The government sets out the general strategic goals of the system and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA) shapes education policy, monitors its implementation and administers the education system. MofERA has responsibility for the entire education system from pre-primary to adult education, although higher education institutions have greater autonomy. Other central bodies which shape education policy include:

- The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (*Εθνική Αρχή Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης,* HAHE, 2020) leads quality assurance in higher education, replacing the former Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (2005).
- The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (*Αρχή Διασφάλισης της Ποιότητας στην Πρωτοβάθμια και Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση,* ADIPDE, 2013) aims to ensure high-quality educational work in primary and secondary education.
- The Institute of Educational Policy *(Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής*, IEP, 2011), took over the work of the Pedagogical Institute and other bodies responsible for educational research and teacher professional development. IEP also provides ongoing technical support for policy planning and implementation.
- The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP, *Εθνικός Οργανισμός Πιστοποίησης Προσόντων και Επαγγελματικού Προσανατολισμού*, 2011) aims to promote better quality and more efficient and reliable lifelong learning services in Greece.
- The Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation *(Ίδρυμα Νεολαίας και Δια Βίου Μάθησης*, 2011), implements actions, programmes and projects on lifelong learning and youth, and student welfare.

Other education **stakeholders** include the 13 Regional Primary and Secondary Education Directorates and the local Directorates of Education. Teacher unions, including the Primary School Teachers' Union (DOE) and Federation of Secondary School Teachers (OLME), formally participate in central and local Education Administrative Boards and selection boards for school leaders. However, the OECD (2018) reported that tense relationships have previously stalled dialogue and, in some cases, inhibited policy implementation (see "Evaluation and Assessment"). Parents have a limited role in the system. Greater stakeholder involvement and government accountability mechanisms could promote better trust in it. The OECD (2019) reported that Greece had one of the lowest levels of citizen satisfaction with education and schools in the OECD in 2019.

Schooling decisions in Greece are largely taken at the central level. In 2017, central authorities were responsible for 52% of decisions taken in lower secondary education, over twice the OECD average share. Highly centralised education administrations must ensure that the system remains locally responsive. In Greece, the school network is complex and varied: due to the remoteness of some schools and demographic changes, the student population is disproportionately concentrated around two centres (Athens and Thessaloniki). This has led to mergers and consolidation to improve efficiency, but ensuring that all school units cater adequately for students and communities remains a challenge. The OECD (2018) suggested that greater school autonomy, balanced by enhanced local capacity and accountability, could help improve schools' efficiency and responsiveness. The government has made efforts in this direction including regional support bodies for schools and school networks (see "Recent policies and practices"). The educational response to COVID-19 required greater autonomy from teachers and schools (see Spotlight 1); seeking feedback from actors across the system about this experience and evaluating the impact of responses could offer valuable information for future efforts to increase responsiveness.

Higher education in Greece is provided mostly through public universities[3]. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are self-governing entities supervised by MofERA. All HEIs must conform to quality standards set by the HAHE, perform periodic internal evaluation and undergo periodic external evaluation to obtain and maintain their accreditation. Internal Quality Assurance Units in HEI support these actions, but according to national information, many struggle due to pressure on resources. The Hellenic Open University (HOU, 1997) offers undergraduate and postgraduate distance education and promotes scientific research and development in the area of distance learning. HOU plays an important role in providing tertiary education in remote areas: 30 000 students were enrolled in 2019. The OECD (2018) reported a persisting need to develop a clear vision and institutional autonomy remains limited; some efforts are being made in this regard (see "Recent policies and practices").

Key strengths and challenges in governance (pre-crisis analysis)

| Key strengths	Key challenges
▪ Responsibility for the education system is integrated under MofERA's authority, which can strengthen coherence. Newly established regional and local bodies may help improve local capacity and responsiveness.	▪ Both stakeholder engagement and trust in the system need strengthening. ▪ Restricted autonomy may limit schools and universities' capacity to address students' and communities' needs.

Recent policies and practices

During 2018/19 changes took place to consolidate Greek higher education through the merging of Technological Education Institutes (TEIs), which had provided professional and vocational education and focused on applied sciences, technology and art, with universities. New departments and degree-level study places were planned and staff appointed to facilitate the transition. However, the EC (2019) noted that a lack of strategic planning and prior evaluation may inhibit the positive impact of this reform. Furthermore, the reform could exacerbate skills mismatches by expanding the availability of degree-level qualifications despite research suggesting that Greece already has an oversupply of highly qualified workers. In response to this, and other challenges in the tertiary sector, the current government introduced new legislation (2020) regarding the governance of higher education institutions (HEIs). To strengthen strategic planning, the legislation introduced the expectation for HEIs to design and implement four-year action plans and establish institutional development agreements with MofERA. Greece also repealed previous commitments to establishing a number of new HEIs and delayed the ability of the university departments newly founded through mergers to admit new students, with the intention of ensuring enough time for proper accreditation processes to take place.

To support implementation of these measures, Greece also addressed quality assurance in higher education by expanding and enhancing the role of the Hellenic Agency for Higher Education (HAHE, 2020). Updated responsibilities include supporting MofERA in national-level strategic planning, support and oversight of the new procedures for institutional planning, institutional development agreements, and performance-based institutional funding (see "Funding"). The law also introduced new evaluation and accreditation procedures, particularly for recently merged academic units and institutions, to ensure that they meet the necessary standards to award degrees for all three cycles. Finally, HAHE will also undertake thematic evaluations of the sector, with planned themes to include internationalisation, gender equality, access for people with disabilities, labor market transitions and the development of e-learning digital skills among students and staff. HAHE has administrative autonomy.

In an effort to streamline the school network and improve efficiency, Greece passed legislation restructuring school support bodies (2018), introducing four decentralised support bodies to work with schools. At the regional level, Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKES) focus on supporting schools with strategic planning and self-evaluation, pedagogical guidance and teacher training. Educational Coordinators, who replaced the previously school-based school advisors, operate from within PEKES. A comprehensive training programme was implemented for the Educational Coordinators, with financial support from the EU: each of the 540 Coordinators received 18 hours of mandatory training. At the local level, Educational and Counselling Support Centres (KESY) and Sustainability Education Centres (KPE) were established. The former aim to support inclusion-related measures and career guidance (see "Equity and Quality") while the latter strengthen links between schools and their local environments in the interest of building sustainable communities. At school level, School Networks of Educational Support (SDEY) foster more collaboration and networking between schools, aiming to ensure equal access for all. Following initial implementation, the role of Educational Coordinators is currently under review due to concerns that, by being fewer in number and no longer school-based, their impact has been limited.

Figure 7. Percentage of decisions taken at each level of government in public lower secondary schools (2017)
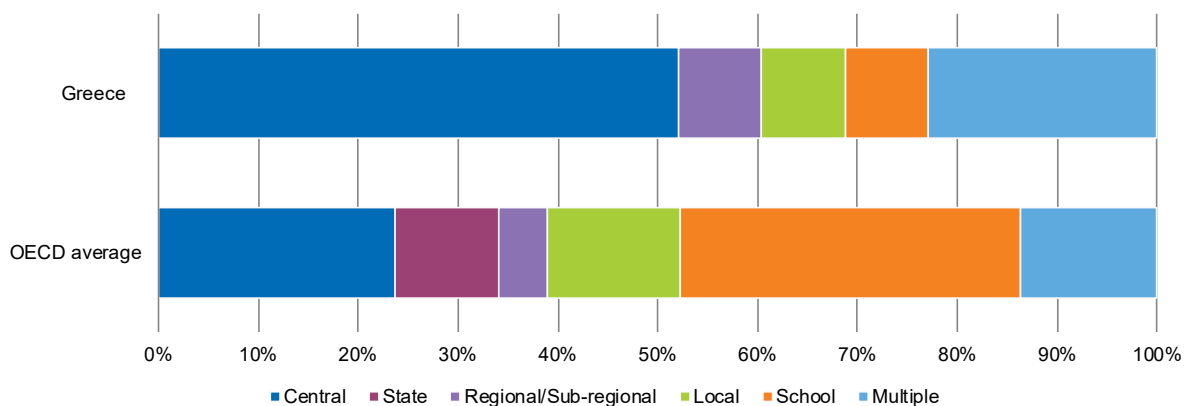
Note: This figure considers four domains of decision-making: 1) Organisation of instruction; 2) Personnel management; 3) Planning and structures, and; 4) Resources.
Source: OECD (2018), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en.

Spotlight 4. Engaging stakeholders through dialogue and participation

The Committee for National Social Dialogue for Education (CNSDE, 2015) began its work in late 2015 and ran until mid-2016 with a temporary mandate to develop recommendations for future education policy developments. Among others, it also aimed to provide a formal opportunity for stakeholder engagement, an area of ongoing challenge in the Greek education system (See "Governance"). Practitioners, social partners, educational experts and representatives from relevant central bodies were divided into several subcommittees and working groups to discuss and develop proposals on various thematic areas of education, including digital education, the quality of VET, teacher training and the reform of compulsory education. These subcommittees aimed to draw on both the experience of stakeholders and the knowledge of experts. Weekly public debates were held in liaison with these sub-committees; the public also had the opportunity to contribute proposals via online submissions to MofERA's online platform dedicated to the CNSDE. This platform also acted as a repository for results of previous national dialogues and commissions, documentation from the current dialogues and relevant international research.

The final report of the CNSDE (2016) proposed a national action plan for education with greater focus on equity and better recognition of Greece's geographic diversity. A three-year education plan (2017-19) followed then, with guidelines and proposals in priority policy areas (e.g. improving the quality of teachers, school leaders and schools through self-evaluation; updating the curriculum; ensuring all-day school provision in primary and pre-primary schools; and undertaking further policy efforts targeting the specific education levels from early childhood education to tertiary education. The 2016 political MofERA administration has taken into consideration some aspects.

Alongside this, two parallel committees discussed similar topics: the Standing Committee on Education of the Greek Parliament and the Committee on the Economics of Education. The former brought together experts from international organisations, formal representatives of parents, teachers, school counsellors, university rectors and other practitioners, as well as ministerial and parliamentary representatives. The final report of the Standing Committee on Education (2016) analysed existing problems in the education system, proposed solutions and presented a possible timetable for implementation over the short, medium and long term (up to 2022). The Committee on the Economics of Education collected data regarding the costs of education from pre-primary to university in order to identify areas for improvement and estimate the cost of potential changes.

The OECD (2018) previously observed that the CNSDE undoubtedly provided an important opportunity for formalised discussions between various stakeholder representatives. This is particularly valuable given the structure of Greece's administrative pyramid, which means that stakeholders have had limited opportunities for engagement in education policy development at the national level, and even less at the local level. However, given the temporary mandate of the CNSDE, and the continued emphasis on centralised governance structures, channels and procedures for permanent public policy dialogue still do not exist. MofERA has hence recently enhanced efforts to gather stakeholder feedback on reform proposals.

Regarding the national education plan that grew out of the process, the OECD made suggestions of priority areas to be addressed for further improvement. These included establishing clear links to an overall national vision for education in the longer term which is focused on student learning and well-being. It was also found that the initiatives included in the plan would require clearly defined benchmarks to ensure that progress can be monitored. Finally, the OECD advised that successful implementation would require school-level capacity building.

For the current administration, building trust with social partners by supporting dialogue and stakeholder representation, as well as sharing information and best practices is an ongoing process. This is reflected in policy work already underway in the VET sector. Representation of employers' and employees' organisations in the development of EOPPEP (see "Evaluation and Assessment") is considered critical for the stage of VET accreditation policies (namely learners' accreditation, VET occupational profiles and curriculum accreditation). In addition, the Standing Advisory Committee on the formation of a strategic cooperation plan between the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning and social partners (2019) has a strong mandate which includes the preparation and updating of the Strategic Plan for VET, developing proposals for innovative actions to improve the quality of VET and monitoring and evaluation responsibilities.

FUNDING: WITH COMPARATIVELY LOW LEVELS OF SPENDING, GREATER EFFICIENCY IS NEEDED

Overall public expenditure on education in Greece was deeply affected by the economic crisis. According to the Council of Europe (CoE) (2018), the education budget did begin to increase again as of 2016, however, the system continues to face considerable challenges of underfunding. In 2015, at 3.8%, expenditure on primary to tertiary education in Greece as a proportion of GDP was below the average of 5% across OECD countries. In addition, the percentage of total government expenditure devoted to education was among the lowest in the OECD (7.8% compared to the OECD average of 12.6%). In 2016, expenditure per student also remained below the OECD average for all education levels from pre-primary to upper secondary and, in 2015, was also below average for tertiary students. At pre-primary level, Greece spent USD 5 697, compared to an OECD average of USD 8 349 in 2016, and at primary level per-student spending was USD 5 973, compared to USD 8 470. For secondary education, at lower secondary level Greece spent USD 6 589 per student compared to USD 9 884 on average and at upper secondary level Greece spent USD 6 704 compared to USD 10 368. However, relative to other OECD countries, the largest deficit in perstudent spending for Greece is at tertiary level: in 2015, Greece spent USD 4 095 per student (including R&D activities) compared to the OECD average of USD 15 656.

As is the case in most OECD countries, education in Greece is primarily financed through public funds. However, in Greece, **private sources** of educational funding account for a smaller share of overall expenditure than on average across the OECD. In 2015, public funds accounted for 93% of spending on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education compared to 90% on average across the OECD. Privately-sourced funds came almost exclusively from households. Furthermore, although not captured in this data and while fully reliable data is not available, the OECD (2018) previously reported that due to the large shadow education sector, household expenditure in Greece is probably the highest in the EU and among the highest in the world at this level of education. In the tertiary sector, public sources accounted for 73% of funding in 2015 compared to an OECD average of 66%. However, in large part due to the austerity measures in place since the financial crisis, the share of public expenditure on educational institutions fell by 6 percentage points in Greece between 2005 and 2015, twice the average rate of decrease. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MofERA worked with several private sector companies to help ensure access to quality learning for all students (see Spotlight 1); such collaborative initiatives in key areas may help drive education forward in the future despite budget constraints.

Funding decisions for **primary and secondary schools** in Greece are highly centralised. Furthermore, the funding system is fragmented, being composed of five expenditure streams: 1) the Ministry of Finance funds teachers' salaries; 2) municipal budgets (transferred by the Ministry of Internal Affairs) cover technical staff and operating costs; 3) the Diophantus Computer Technology and Press Institute (a national agency subordinated to MofERA) funds textbooks; 4) KYSA (an agency under the Ministry of Infrastructure Transport and Networks) pays for new school investments; 5) municipal budgets (locally-raised funds) and KYSA (central funds) cover school maintenance costs. Previously, the OECD (2018) found that mechanisms for determining the amounts allocated to each funding stream are often not transparent or, in some cases, not systematised. This, alongside the fragmentation of expenditure, inhibits MofERA's ability to finance education in a strategic manner. Schools also experience funding-related issues: in PISA 2018, Greece had one of the highest shares of school principals reporting that a lack of educational material hindered student learning, at 60%, more than twice the OECD average share. Unlike in many other countries, such shortages do not disproportionately affect disadvantaged students.

Higher education institutions (HEIs), are centrally financed by the state budget, based on a four-year development plan, and the Public Investments Programme for Higher Education. HEIs can also generate their own income but cannot charge tuition fees to full-time undergraduate students, domestic or international. Postgraduate students may pay tuition fees. Students of the Hellenic Open University pay annual fees of up to EUR 1 500. Student support mechanisms are available, such as scholarships, merit-based grants, loans and family allowances. According to the EC (2018), around 1% of students received a needs-based grant in 2018/19; these generally carry merit-based requirements. The tertiary sector was the most affected by funding cuts from austerity measures despite growth in student numbers; however, in 2019, after eight years of reductions, public funding increased for tertiary education. The OECD (2018) previously found that funding allocation mechanisms for higher education need greater transparency and should provide incentives for HEIs to efficiently meet student demand or needs.

Key strengths and challenges in governance (pre-crisis analysis)

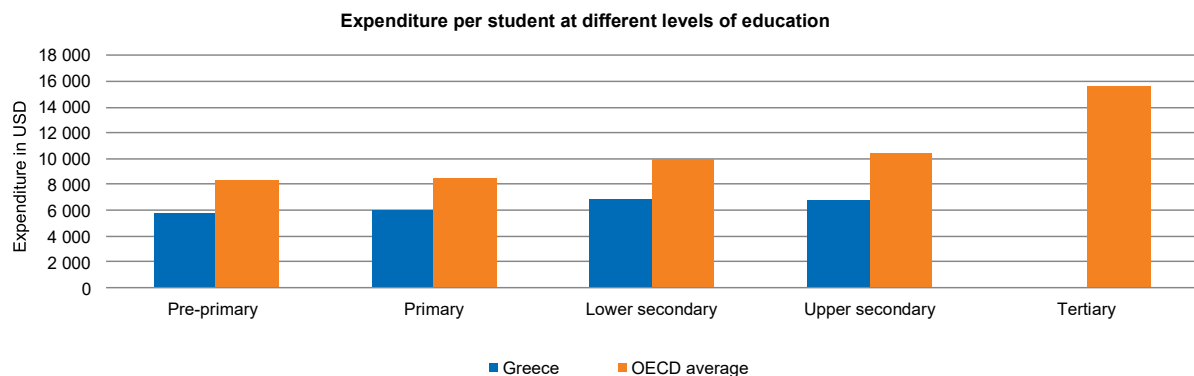| Key strengths	Key challenges
▪ In a highly diversified geography, the completed efforts to map schools can help to improve system efficiency.	▪ Fragmented funding streams for schools appear to inhibit efficiency and equity. ▪ More systematic and transparent funding allocation mechanisms could ease strategic decision making.

Recent policies and practices

The new MofERA Organizational Chart, the 2018 Presidential Decree (18 /23.2.2018 (G.J.31, v. A')), provides for the establishment of the General Directorate of Economic Affairs within the Ministry. In 2011, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs presented a strategy to map schools across the country in order to enable mergers and consolidation of the school network. By 2011, over 1 930 schools were consolidated to form 877 schools, in the context of the particular geomorphology of the country (remote islands and villages), which resulted in the reduction of around 2 000 teaching positions. Changes in the way school boards at the municipal level operate were also implemented, leading to a reduction by around one-quarter (24%) in human resources and operational costs. The mapping of all school units of the country has now been completed by Myschool, Diophantus of the MofERA.

In 2020, a new law has reformed funding mechanisms for Universities, in an effort to increase transparency, better incentivise performance improvements and strengthen labour market outcomes. The law provides that 80% of public funding will be allocated to institutions based on input-related criteria such as the number of students, graduates, programmes, and the institution's geographic location. The other 20% will be allocated based on performance targets such as international profile and activities, research production and impact of research publications. These performance targets will be established in the 4-year institutional programmes agreed with MofERA (see "Governance"). Full implementation is planned to be achieved by 2022.

Also, legislation introduced in 2020 to facilitate funding for research aims, alongside complementary regulatory reforms, to make funding and managing research projects more flexible by removing bureaucratic processes.

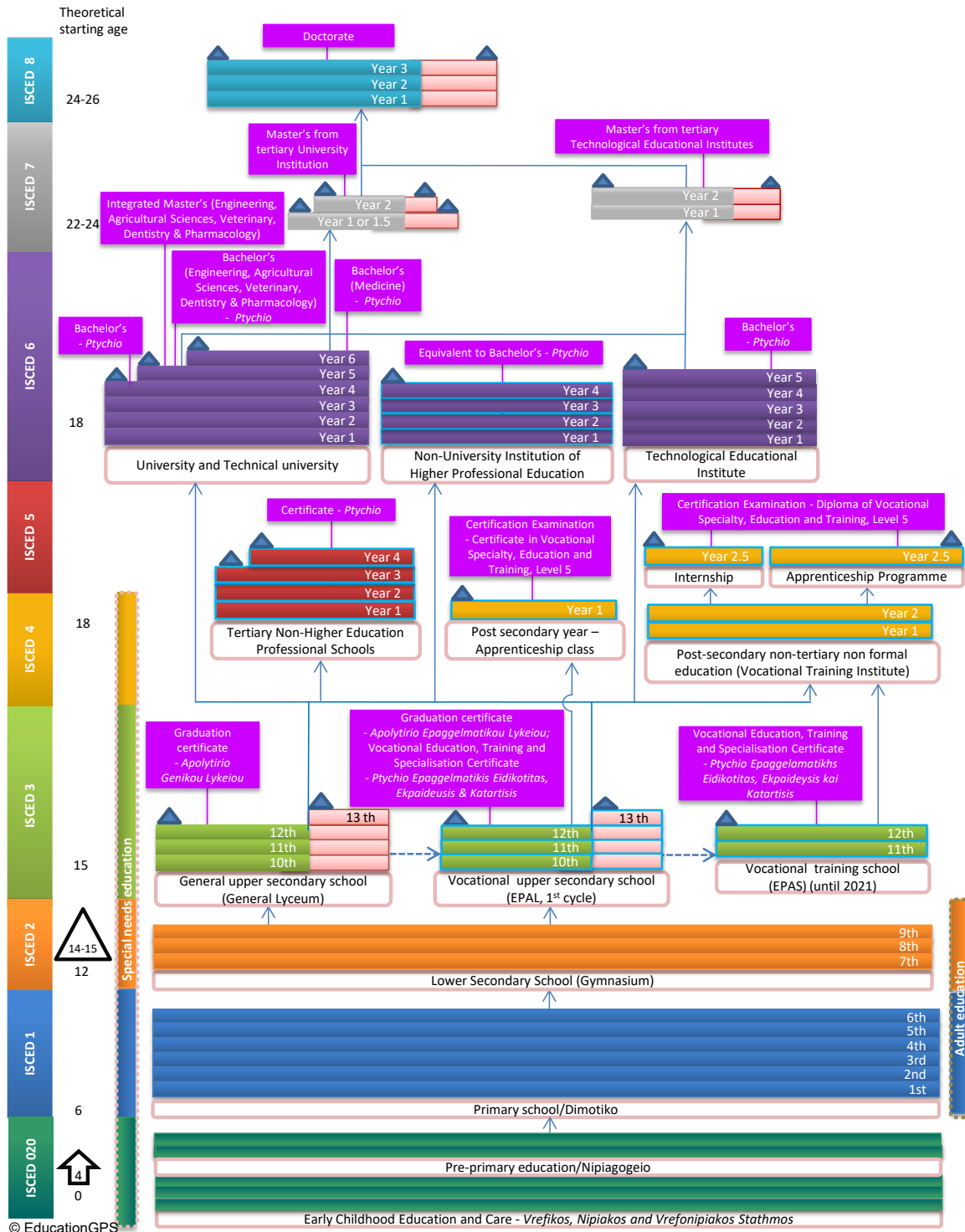### Figure 8. Annual expenditure per student (2016), by level of education

Expenditure per student at different levels of education

*Source:*OECD (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en.

ANNEX A: STRUCTURE OF GREECE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Greece   2020

Theoretical starting age

ISCED 8

24-26

Doctorate

Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

ISCED 7

22-24

Master's from tertiary University Institution

Master's from tertiary Technological Educational Institutes

Year 2
Year 1

Integrated Master's (Engineering, Agricultural Sciences, Veterinary, Dentistry & Pharmacology)

Year 2
Year 1 or 1.5

ISCED 6

18

Bachelor's (Engineering, Agricultural Sciences, Veterinary, Dentistry & Pharmacology) - *Ptychio*

Bachelor's (Medicine) - *Ptychio*

Bachelor's - *Ptychio*

Bachelor's - *Ptychio*

Year 6
Year 5
Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Equivalent to Bachelor's - *Ptychio*

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Year 5
Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

University and Technical university

Non-University Institution of Higher Professional Education

Technological Educational Institute

ISCED 5

Certificate - *Ptychio*

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Certification Examination - Certificate in Vocational Specialty, Education and Training, Level 5

Year 1

Certification Examination - Diploma of Vocational Specialty, Education and Training, Level 5

Year 2.5
Internship

Year 2.5
Apprenticeship Programme

Tertiary Non-Higher Education Professional Schools

Post secondary year – Apprenticeship class

Year 2
Year 1

Post-secondary non-tertiary non formal education (Vocational Training Institute)

ISCED 4

18

ISCED 3

15

Graduation certificate - *Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou*

Graduation certificate - *Apolytirio Epaggelmatikou Lykeiou*; Vocational Education, Training and Specialisation Certificate - *Ptychio Epaggelmatikis Eidikotitas, Ekpaideusis & Katartisis*

Vocational Education, Training and Specialisation Certificate - *Ptychio Epaggelamatikhs Eidikotitas, Ekpaideysis kai Katartisis*

13 th

12th
11th
10th

13 th

12th
11th
10th

12th
11th

General upper secondary school (General Lyceum)

Vocational upper secondary school (EPAL, 1st cycle)

Vocational training school (EPAS) (until 2021)

Special needs education

ISCED 2

14-15
12

9th
8th
7th

Lower Secondary School (Gymnasium)

Adult education

ISCED 1

6

6th
5th
4th
3rd
2nd
1st

Primary school/Dimotiko

ISCED 020

4
0

Pre-primary education/Nipiagogeio

Early Childhood Education and Care - *Vrefikos, Nipiakos and Vrefonipiakos Stathmos*

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Note: The key for the interpretation of this table is available at the source link below.
Source: OECD (2020), "Greece: Overview of the Education System", *OECD Education GPS*, https://gpseducation.oecd.org/Content/MapOfEducationSystem/GRC/GRC_2011_EN.pdf.

ANNEX B: STATISTICS

#	List of key indicators[1,2,3]	Greece	Average or total	Min OECD	Max OECD
	Background information				
	Economy				
1	GDP per capita, 2016, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs (OECD Statistics)	m	42 441	14 276	107 775
2	GDP grow th, 2016 (OECD Statistics)	m	1.8%	0.6%	6.6%
	Society				
3	Population density, inhab/km², 2017 (OECD Statistics)	83	37	3	517
4	Population aged less than 15 as a percentage of total population, 2018 (OECD Data)	14.4%	17.0%	12.2%	28.4%
5	Foreign-born population as a percentage of total population, 2018 or the most recent available year (OECD Data)	5.8%	14.4%	0.8%	47.6%
	Education outcomes				
6	Mean performance in reading (PISA 2018)	457	487	412	523
7	*Average three-year trend in performance across PISA assessments, by domain (PISA 2018)[4,5]*				
	Reading performance	-1.5	0.4	**-4.9**	**7.1**
	Mathematics performance	0.1	-0.6	**-9.1**	**6.4**
	Science performance	**-5.9**	-1.9	**-10.7**	**6.4**
8	Enrolment rates of 3-year-olds in early childhood education and care, 2017 (EAG 2019)	m	79.3%	2.4%	100%
9	Percentage of 25-64 year-olds w hose highest level of attainment is low er secondary education, 2018 (EAG 2019)	12.5%	14.4%	0.8%	39.9%
10	*Educational attainment of the population aged 25-34 by type of attainment, 2018 or latest available*				
	At least upper secondary education, 2018 (EAG 2019)	87.0%	85.4%	50.1%	97.8%
	Tertiary education, 2018 (EAG 2019)	42.8%	44.3%	23.4%	69.6%
	Vocational upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, 2018 (EAG database 2020)	20.8%	24.5%	1.8%	50.1%
11	*Unemployment rates of 25-34 year-olds by educational attainment, 2018 (EAG 2019)*				
	Below upper secondary	27.3%	13.7%	3.0%	37.3%
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	25.1%	7.3%	2.5%	25.1%
	Tertiary education	23.2%	5.5%	1.7%	23.2%
	Students: Raising outcomes				
	Policy lever 1: Equity and quality				
12	First age of selection in the education system (PISA 2018)	15	14	10	16
13	*Students performing at the highest or lowest levels in reading (%) (PISA 2018)*				
	Students performing below Level 2	30.5%	22.6%	11.1%	49.9%
	Students performing at Level 5 or above	3.7%	8.7%	0.8%	15.0%
14	Percentage of students in schools w here students are grouped by ability into different classes for all subjects, PISA 2015	0.3%	7.8%	0.0%	56.1%
15	Percentage of students w hose parents reported that the schooling available in their area includes tw o or more other schools, PISA 2015	m	36.8%	20.4%	56.9%

#	List of key indicators[1,2,3]	Greece	Average or total	Min OECD	Max OECD
16	Percentage of students reporting that they have repeated at least a grade in primary, low er secondary or upper secondary schools (PISA 2015)	5.0%	11.3%	0.0%	42.6%
17	Percentage of variance in reading performance in PISA test explained by ESCS (PISA 2018)[4]	10.9%	12.0%	6.2%	19.1%
18	Score difference in reading performance in PISA betw een non-immigrant and immigrant students AFTER adjusting for socio-economic status (PISA 2018)[4]	**-22**	**-24**	**-80**	**16**
19	Score difference betw een girls and boys in reading (PISA 2018)[4]	**42**	**30**	**10**	**52**
Policy lever 2: Preparing students for the future					
20	Mean proficiency in literacy among adults aged 16-64 on a scale of 500 (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2015)	253.9	267.7	220.1	296.2
21	Difference in literacy scores betw een younger (25-34) and older (55-65) adults AFTER accounting for age, gender, education, immigrant and language background and parents' educational attainment (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2015).	-8.3	15.6	-8.3	37.6
22	***Share of students in upper secondary education in 2017 following:***				
	General programmes (OECD Stat - INES 2020)	71.2%	58.1%	27.6%	100.0%
	Vocational programmes (OECD Stat - INES 2020)	28.8%	43.1%	9.0%	72.4%
	Combined school and w ork-based programmes (OECD Stat - INES 2020)	a	18.3%	1.0%	58.0%
23	First-time graduation rates from tertiary education, 2017 (Below the age of 30, excluding mobile students / OECD Stat - INES 2020)	39.0%	36.6%	10.1%	49.9%
24	Percentage of 18-24 year-olds not in education, employment or training, 2018 (EAG 2019)	22.3%	14.3%	5.9%	29.8%
Institutions: Improving schools					
Policy lever 3: School improvement					
25	***The Learning Environment - PISA 2018***				
	Mean index of teacher support in language-of-instruction lessons	-0.17	0.01	-0.61	0.47
	Mean index of disciplinary climate	-0.26	0.04	-0.34	1.07
	Mean index of students' sense of belonging	0.02	0.00	-0.28	0.46
26	Percentage of teachers in low er secondary education aged 50 years old or more, 2017 (EAG 2019)	50.7%	37.0%	6.3%	54.2%
27	***Number of teaching hours per year in public institutions by education level, 2018 (EAG 2019)[7]***				
	Primary education	664	783	561	1063
	Low er secondary education, general programmes	614	709	481	1063
28	Ratio of actual teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult w orkers w ith tertiary education, low er secondary education, general programmes, 2016 (EAG 2019)	0.83	0.88	0.64	1.40
29	Proportion of teachers w ho believe the teaching profession is valued in society (TALIS 2018)	NP	25.8%	4.5%	67.0%
30	Proportion of teachers w ho w ould become a teacher again if they could choose (TALIS 2018)	NP	75.6%	54.9%	92.2%

#	List of key indicators[1,2,3]	Greece	Average or total	Min OECD	Max OECD
	Policy lever 4: Evaluation and assessment to improve student outcomes				
31	***Percentage of students in schools where the following arrangements aimed at quality assurance and improvement at school are used (PISA 2015):***				
	Internal/Self-evaluation	80.7%	93.2%	74.8%	100.0%
	External evaluation	20.8%	74.6%	20.8%	97.4%
32	***Percentage of students whose school principals reported that standardised tests are used for the following purposes (PISA 2015):***				
	To make decisions about students' retention or promotion	60.6%	31.3%	3.4%	60.6%
	To monitor the school's progress from year to year	46.6%	69.4%	26.2%	97.7%
	To make judgements about teachers' effectiveness	16.4%	37.0%	4.4%	87.5%
	To identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved	48.3%	58.9%	14.1%	92.4%
33	Percentage of lower secondary teachers whose principals report conducting formal appraisal of their teachers at least once per year (TALIS 2018)	NP	63.5%	16.2%	98.1%
	Systems: Organising the system				
	Policy lever 5: Governance				
34	***Percentage of decisions taken at each level of government in public lower secondary education, 2017 (EAG 2018)***				
	Central	52.1%	23.8%	0.0%	83.3%
	State	a	10.3%	0.0%	62.5%
	Regional/Sub-regional	8.3%	4.9%	0.0%	33.3%
	Local	8.3%	13.3%	0.0%	71.9%
	School	8.3%	34.0%	0.0%	91.7%
	Multiple levels	22.9%	13.8%	0.0%	100.0%
	Policy lever 6: Funding				
35	Expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP (from primary to tertiary), 2016 (EAG 2019)	m	5.0%	0.0%	6.5%
36	***Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions, for all services, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP, 2016 (EAG 2019)***				
	Pre-primary education	5 697	8 349	1 579	17 533
	Primary education	5 973	8 470	2 961	17 913
	Lower secondary education	6 859	9 884	2 561	21 739
	Upper secondary education	6 704	10 368	3 001	21 231
	Tertiary education	m	15 556	5 787	48 407
37	***Relative proportions of public and private expenditure on educational institutions, 2016 (EAG 2019)***				
	Public sources	m	82.7%	62.7%	97.6%
	All private sources (includes international sources)	m	17.4%	2.4%	37.3%
38	***Change in the share of expenditure on educational institutions, EAG 2019 (Percentage-point difference between 2010 and 2016, primary to tertiary education)***				
	Public sources	m	-2.7	-9.8	6.3
	All private sources	m	2.5	-6.3	7.0

Notes
1. The average, total, minimums and maximums refer to OECD countries except the Survey of Adult Skills, where they refer to participating countries. For indicators 6, 13 and 17-19 the average value refers to the arithmetic mean across all OECD member countries (and Colombia), excluding Spain. For indicator 5, the average value refers to the arithmetic mean across all OECD member countries (except Japan, Korea and Poland) as calculated by the Education Policy Outlook."
2. "m": included when data is not available.
3. "NP": included if the country is not participating in the study.
4. Statistically significant values of the indicator are shown in bold (PISA only).
5. The average three year trend is the average change in PISA score points from a country's/economy's earliest participation in PISA to PISA 2018.
6. "a": included when the category is not applicable.
7. For Greece, this refers to maximum teaching time.

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NOTES

[1] On 25 May 2018, the OECD Council invited Colombia to become a Member. While Colombia is included in the OECD averages reported in this publication for data from Education at a Glance, the Programme for International Student Assessment and the Teaching and Learning International Survey, at the time of preparation of these OECD datasets, Colombia was in the process of completing its domestic procedures for ratification and the deposit of Colombia's instrument of accession to the OECD Convention was pending For Greece, this refers to maximum teaching time. The Greek Constitution stipulates that higher education is exclusively offered by public institutions. However, some private tertiary institutions (colleges) do exist, most of which are outposts of foreign universities. In accordance with EU regulations, qualifications from European providers are recognised but those from non-European institutions are not.

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