



Izglītības un zinātnes
ministrija

Case study: Latvia's School Network Reform

Ramona Urtane, Senior Expert on School Network Governance

Lessons Learned: Reforming the School Network

- ✓ **Don't make it only about policy. Make it human.** Start with accepting the reality and recognising the emotional impact of change on communities.
- ✓ **Be ready to be the 'bad guy'.** Own the problem publicly. Use data, but don't hide behind consultants. People trust leadership, not just logic.
- ✓ **Fail fast and learn fast – but choose your partners wisely.** Not all criticism is constructive; build alliances that help refine, not sabotage.
- ✓ **Invest in deep partnership with municipalities.** Go beyond formal meetings. Be a co-creator and trusted voice in local decision-making.

Rhetorical questions to keep in mind



Personal Responsibility & Integrity

What does it really mean to lead a reform that reaches every child, every teacher, every community — not just on paper, but in real life?



Empathy & Courage

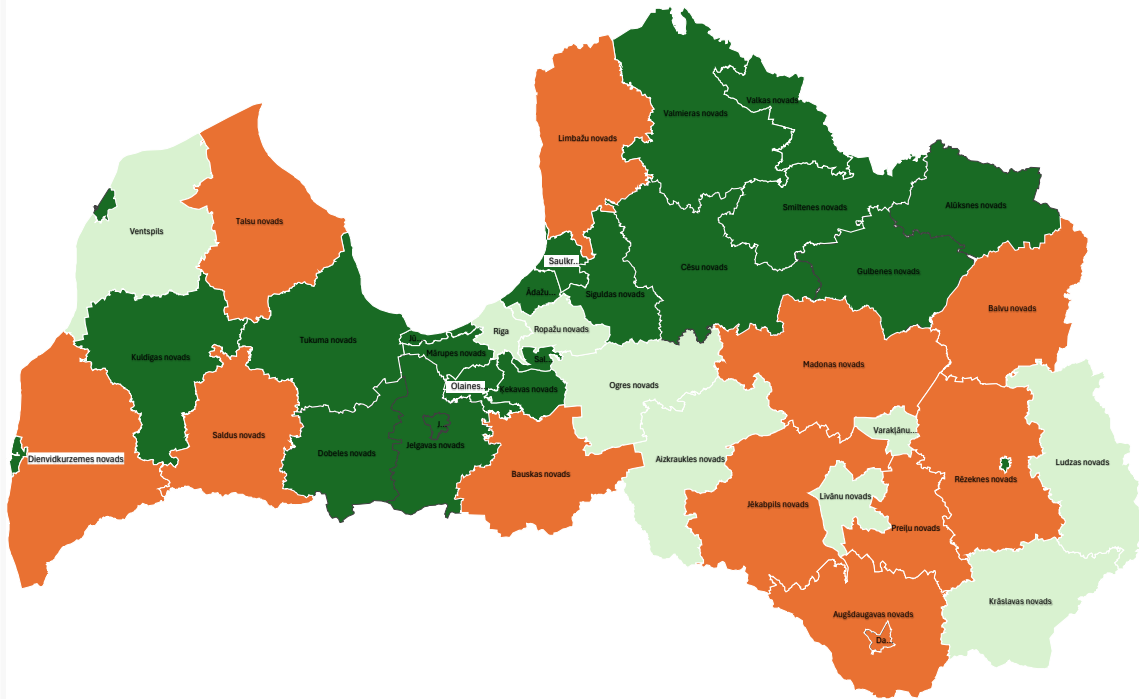
How do we stay true to our values — fairness, quality, equity — when the decisions we make are painful and unpopular?



Partnership

What happens when we stop treating reform as something we implement to others and start treating it as something we build with them?

Key findings



Since 2023, when the Cabinet of Ministers approved the report "Comprehensive Solutions for the Provision of Quality Education in General Basic and Secondary Education: Sustainable Education Ecosystem and Efficient Financing Model":

- **14 municipalities have taken decisions on their own initiative**, based on the planned criteria, to completely reorganise their school network (**currently 22 municipalities in total**);
- **9 municipalities have nearly completed their school network on their own initiative**, leaving 1-2 schools to be decided (**currently a total of 9**).
- From 23 municipalities that had an unorganised school network, **only 12 municipalities waiting for a regulation** on which to base their decisions.


31 municipalities or 72% have changed their position on the impact of an efficient and sustainable school network on the quality of education and teachers' salaries!

Quantitative criteria and characteristics according to school location or other parameters

"The degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) is a classification that indicates the character of an area. It classifies the territory of a country on an urban-rural continuum. DEGURBA combines the **population size** and the **population density thresholds** to establish 3 or 7 exclusive classes"

Other parameters used to classify schools. This allows for a systemic solution that is inclusive of all schools to mitigate the risks of "one size fits all"

		1.-3. grade	4.-6. grade	7.-9. grade	10.-12. grade
<p>Cities</p> <p>Densely populated areas</p> <p>Small towns</p> <p>Suburbs</p> <p>Villages</p> <p>Rural areas</p> <p>Sparsely populated areas</p>	DEG1	120	120	120	120
	DEG2	120	120	120	120
	DEG3	60	60	60	120
	DEG4	30	30	45	60
	DEG5	30	30	45	60
	DEG6	30	30	30	60
	DEG7	30	30	30	60
<p>EU border school</p> <p>Accessibility school</p> <p>Only secondary school in municipality</p> <p>Private schools</p> <p>University schools</p> <p>International Schools</p> <p>Alternative education programmes</p> <p>Distance learning programmes</p> <p>Inclusive school</p> <p>Max capacity reached</p> <p>Transition School</p>	PAZ1	15	15	15	45
	PAZ2	15	15	15	30
	PAZ3	15	15	15	45
	PAZ4	30	30	30	60
	PAZ5	30	30	30	60
	PAZ6	30	30	30	60
	PAZ7	30	30	30	60
	PAZ8	120	120	120	120
	PAZ9	0	0	0	0
	PAZ10	15	15	15	30
	PAZ11	0	0	0	0



**WHAT IS THE
PROGRESS AND
FURTHER PLANS
REGARDING THE
SCHOOL NETWORK
REFORM?**



SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM: ACCOMPLISHED TASKS

1. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the report **"Complex Solutions for Providing High Quality Education in General Education"**, which analyses the following issues:

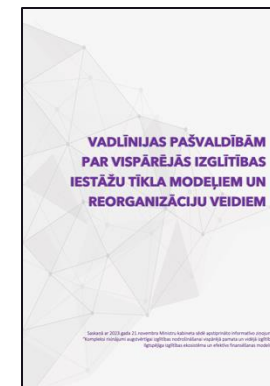
- Conditions for quality and sustainable education.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the network of schools established by municipalities.
- Solutions and criteria.



2. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the report **"The Programme at School" Model of Financing the Salaries of General Education Teachers"**, which proposes a new method of calculating state targeted funding.



3. The Ministry conducted an analysis of best practices in Latvia and around the world and developed **guidelines for municipalities on different models of school networks and types of school reorganisation**, including their advantages and risks.



SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM: TASKS IN PROCESS



Amendments of the Education Law, determining that:

- **if the criteria are met,** teachers' wages are provided from the state budget,
- **if the criteria are not met,** the municipality finances the wages of teachers from the municipal budget.

Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Requirements for an efficient school network and access to education, including the development of a methodology for identifying schools with high risk of accessibility

Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers on the procedure for calculating and distributing the state budget for the salary of teachers.

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Education Policy Perspectives
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No. 47


Geospatial modelling in support of Latvia's school network reorganisation initiative

During the last decades, demographic shifts, regional economic developments and changing student needs have generated costly mismatches between educational demand and the supply of school places in several OECD Member and non-Member countries. Operating a fragmented school network with a large number of small schools or schools with overcapacities in terms of staffing can place a significant financial burden on education systems – as is the case for Latvia, in particular in certain geographical areas (i.e. very low density rural areas). Recognising that these shifts are likely to continue and cause further inefficiencies in the years to come, Latvia has made the reorganisation of its school network a policy priority.

The OECD supported the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia (M&ES) in its school network reorganisation initiative. The initiative was founded on the collaboration between the M&ES and municipalities and aimed at jointly working to strengthen the child-centred governance of Latvia's school network and the effective management of human resources – and above all ensuring a high-quality education for every child regardless of their school location. The technical assistance provided by the OECD centred on a series of capacity building workshops that were facilitated by the OECD Secretariat and the "co-construction" (by the OECD Secretariat and the M&ES) of a geospatial simulation model that was used to support the identification of schools that are to be considered for closing or merging.

This report presents the key findings of the geospatial modelling, confirming there indeed is considerable scope for consolidating the school network and offers concrete policy recommendations for M&ES and education stakeholders to consider for advancing Latvia's school network reorganisation initiative.



This report was drafted in the OECD Secretariat by Ana Moreno Morroy, Marcos Diaz Ramirez, Carsten Dole (of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities), Marco Koolis and Solène Burtz (of the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills). The OECD Secretariat is very grateful for the good collaboration with the M&ES, including Iza Sateeniece, Rinalds Gulbis, Dace Kalnina and Ramona Ustina, and many other education stakeholders that participated in the capacity building workshops and informed the development of the geospatial model that helped ensure it fits the Latvian context.



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OECD Reviews of School Resources

PORTUGAL

David Liebowitz, Pablo González, Edith Hooge and Gonçalo Lima





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ministrija

THANK YOU!

Ramona Urtane

Senior Expert on
School Network Governance

ramona.urtane@izm.gov.lv

