
The Compulsory School Act

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CHAPTER I

OBJECTIVES AND COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Article 1

Local authorities are responsible for providing schooling for all children and youths 6 to 16 years of age as specifically provided for in this Act. Such schooling is called compulsory school (Ice. *grunnskóli*). All children and youths of the age prescribed above must attend school, subject to the exemptions provided for in Articles 5, 7 and 8.

Any reference made in this Act to the age of pupils is based on the calendar year in which a pupil reaches the age specified.

Article 2

The role of compulsory school is to prepare pupils, in co-operation with the home, for life and work in a democratic society which is continuously developing. School practice and methods shall thus be characterised by tolerance, Christian ethics and democratic co-operation. The school shall encourage broad-mindedness in its pupils and increase their understanding of people's circumstances and living environment, of Icelandic society, its history and unique characteristics and of the responsibilities of the individual towards society.

Compulsory schools shall make an effort to carry out their activities to correspond as fully as possible with the nature and needs of their pupils and encourage the overall development, well-being and education of each individual.

Compulsory schools shall provide their pupils with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills and to adopt working practices which will encourage them to strive steadily to learn and develop their potential. The school is thus to lay the foundation for independent thinking on the part of pupils and train their ability to co-operate with others.

Article 3

Compulsory education shall be of ten years in duration.

Each compulsory school shall have only a single shift.

Each compulsory school may be divided up into units according to the decision of the local authority concerned.

Article 4

Pupils living in rural areas shall be provided with daily transportation to and from school, rather than boarding school, wherever possible.

Children younger than ten years of age shall not be placed in boarding schools unless there are special reasons for so doing.

A local authority may establish separate, local subsections of main schools.

Pupils in compulsory schools shall be given the option of a school meal during classroom hours.

Article 5

A local authority may submit to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture a reasoned request for temporary exemption from complying in full with the provisions of Articles 1 and 26 of this Act concerning compulsory education and the school year. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture shall decide whether and to what extent such exemption shall be granted.

Article 6

The parent or guardian of a child of compulsory school age is responsible for ensuring the enrollment of the child upon reaching school age and its attendance at school. In the case of irregular school attendance of a child of compulsory school age, except where such is caused by illness or other valid reasons, the school principal must seek means to remedy the situation.

Should this not prove successful the principal shall refer the matter to the School Board, which shall take action upon receiving the opinion of the specialist educational services of local authorities.

Should no solution be found either party, the child's parent or guardian or the School Board, may refer the matter to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which shall attempt to resolve the question and may issue a ruling as to how the situation shall be rectified.

Article 7

Exempted from compulsory school attendance in accordance with Article 1 are:

- children attending an approved private school, cf. Article 56,
- children residing in school districts which have been granted an exemption in accordance with Article 5, to the extent provided for by such exemption.

Article 8

Should the parent or guardian of a child of compulsory school age apply for temporary exemption for the child from school attendance the principal may grant such exemption in consultation with the supervisory teacher if he feels there are valid reasons for so doing. The parent or guardian is responsible for seeing to it that the pupil catches up on studies missed during the period of exemption.

CHAPTER II

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Article 9

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture is ultimately responsible for affairs covered by this Act and for supervising the fulfilment by local authorities of the obligations provided for in this Act, Regulations issued by virtue of its provisions and the National Curriculum Guide.

The Ministry shall ensure that specialist educational services are available to all compulsory schools in Iceland and that pupils, who cannot satisfactorily avail themselves of the instruction in ordinary compulsory schools, are provided with suitable instruction.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture shall gather and distribute information concerning school operations and activities at compulsory school level.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall report to the *Althingi* [the Icelandic Parliament] at three-year intervals on the implementation of compulsory schooling in Iceland.

Article 10

All operations of ordinary compulsory schools shall be the responsibility of and funded by local authorities from such time as this Act enters into force in full, except where otherwise provided for specifically. Local authorities shall, at annual intervals or more frequently if such is required, report to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture on the implementation of compulsory schooling in their district.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may issue a Regulation laying down more detailed provisions concerning the obligations of local authorities to provide information on school operations.

[The Union of Local Authorities in Iceland shall take the initiative in finding solutions for questions concerning compulsory education involving more than one local authority, unless otherwise provided for in laws or regulations or in accordance with an agreement reached by the parties concerned.]¹

¹. Act No. 77/1996, Article 1.

Article 11

A school district is a unit operating one or more compulsory schools. Local authorities may cooperate in operating compulsory schools and in such case form one school district. A local authority operating two or more compulsory schools is considered as one school district. A municipality may, however, be divided into several school districts if the local authority so decides. A local authority may be involved in the operations of more than one school district if children and youth of compulsory school age from that municipality attend schools in two or more school districts.

In cases where local authorities jointly operate a compulsory school or part of it they shall conclude an agreement on the establishment of the school, its operations and how the expenditure is to be divided between the parties. Such agreement shall, for instance, provide guidelines for the hiring of school personnel and specify which local authority shall be their employer and how the repayment of the portion of wage costs borne by other parties to the operations shall take place.

[A local authority may assign to a municipal cooperative unit (*byggðasamlag*) the rights and obligations for compulsory school operation for which the local authority is responsible in accordance with this law.]¹

¹. Act No. 77/1996, Article 2.

Article 12

In each school district a School Board shall be responsible for compulsory school affairs, in accordance with laws and regulations or as assigned to it by the local authority or authorities.

The School Board is responsible for ensuring that all children in the school district of compulsory school age receive instruction as provided for by law. The School Board shall approve the scheduled instruction time for pupils each year and monitor the activities of teachers and pupils in the school district. In municipalities where there is more than one school district the scheduled instruction time of pupils shall also be approved by the local authority concerned. The School Board may make proposals to principals on improvements to school activities. Furthermore, the School Board shall encourage links and co-operation between preschools and compulsory schools.

The School Board shall supervise and encourage the schools' access to specialist educational services and ensure that, in general, schools have adequate facilities and equipment, including outdoor and playground areas for pupils. The School Board, together with the principal, shall ensure that the requirements of Acts and Regulations in this area are fulfilled and make proposals to the local authority on improvements.

Article 13

The School Board shall be elected by the local authority or authorities concerned at the beginning of each electoral term. Elections to the School Board and its working practices are subject to provisions of the Local Government Act, No. 8/1986, and statutes of the local authority concerned.

Alternates equal in number to the members shall be elected in the same manner.

Where more than one municipality is involved in the operation of a compulsory school, in whole or in part, the representation of each on the School Board shall be prescribed in an instrument of

establishment. Representatives of teachers, principals and parents have the right to attend School Board meetings as non-voting members.

Compulsory school teachers of a school district shall elect among themselves a representative to take part in the activities of the School Board. Teachers shall elect one representative in school districts where there are the equivalent of 15 or fewer full-time teaching positions and two if the number of positions is 16 or more. Alternates equal in number to the teachers' representatives shall be elected.

The principal of a school or, in his absence, the vice-principal shall have the right to attend meetings of the School Board when questions specifically concerning the school are discussed.

A school parents' association or a parents' association in the school district, shall elect one representative to take part in the activities of the School Board and one alternate.

Article 14

The school principal is the director of a compulsory school, is responsible for its activities and provides professional leadership. The principal is responsible for seeing to it that the school curriculum guide is drawn up. He or she shall hold meetings of the teaching staff as often as necessary and no less frequently than once a month. Teachers and other specialised school personnel shall attend meetings of the teaching staff. A meeting of the teaching staff shall also be held if one-third of the school's teachers so request.

In schools where the quantity of instruction corresponds to eight full-time positions or more, excluding the principal, teachers shall elect a three-person teachers' council which shall advise the principal concerning school administration on behalf of the teachers. In other schools the teachers' meeting shall fulfil the role of the teachers' council.

At least twice each year the principal shall hold a joint meeting of the teachers' council, parents' council and pupils' council to provide them with information on school activities and discuss matters of concern to these bodies.

Article 15

It is the obligation of school personnel to strengthen co-operation between home and school, for instance, through the dissemination of information on school activities.

Parents of children in compulsory schools may decide to establish a parents' association in their school for the purpose of supporting school activities and strengthening connections between home and school.

The principal shall organise the founding meeting for such an association if parents so desire. The association shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

Article 16

Each compulsory school shall have an active parents' council, the establishment of which is the responsibility of the principal.

The parents' council shall be comprised of three parents who are not in the employ of the school. Parents of compulsory school children elect representatives to the parents' council for a two-year term at a time. The parents' council shall discuss and express its opinion to the school and School Board on the school curriculum guide and other planned school activities, ensure that parents receive notification of plans and supervise their implementation.

The principal shall take part in the activities of the parents' council and provide it with information on school activities.

Should parents so desire, the school may, in a reasoned statement, apply to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for an exemption from the provisions of this Article. There must be valid reasons for exemption, such as the extremely small size of the school.

Article 17

Pupils in compulsory schools may establish a pupils' council to look after, for instance, their social affairs, special interests and services. The principal shall request one of the teachers to assist the pupils' council.

The pupils' council of each school shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL PREMISES

Article 18

Preparations for the construction of school premises shall be made by the local authority in consultation with the School Board.

The capital investment costs of compulsory schools shall be financed by local authorities. Each school district shall possess satisfactory school premises for the needs of compulsory schooling according to local conditions. The construction or alteration of school premises shall take into consideration whether pupils walk to school, are transported to school on a daily basis, dwell in residence or are a mixture of the above.

Article 19

School premises shall, in addition to providing instructional facilities for all subjects, include facilities for a school resource centre, for pupils to study, for other activities and rest outside of instruction periods; facilities for access by and assistance to the handicapped; facilities for specialist educational services for pupils; facilities for eating school meals; toilets; office and working facilities for teachers, school administrators and other school staff; physical education facilities and facilities for pupils' general social activities and other activities prescribed in this Act. If such is convenient, nearby facilities may be used for individual subjects, such as physical education.

In designing and building school residences, every effort shall be made to have them resemble a normal home and to ensure that pupils have access at all times to residential supervisors.

Article 20

Preparations for construction of and improvements to compulsory school premises shall be made in accordance with a Regulation issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture in consultation with the Union of Local Authorities in Iceland providing for minimum facilities and equipment.

The local authority shall decide upon school names.

Article 21

Municipalities are responsible for looking after and financing the maintenance of school buildings and the renewal and maintenance of equipment in satisfactory fashion.

The provisions of this Article shall also apply to school buildings which were erected jointly by the national and local authorities and the latter shall have no claim upon the National Treasury as far as maintenance of these premises is concerned. Should premises, originally constructed with a contribution from the National Treasury to the capital investment cost, be taken into use for purposes other than compulsory schooling, an agreement shall be reached on the settlement of the share of ownership which was thus established. In the case of failure to reach agreement, the property shall be evaluated by persons appointed to do so by a court.

[The share of ownership held by the national government shall be written off in fifteen equal installments and thus transferred to the local authorities responsible for operating and maintaining the premises. This shall be done by lowering, at the end of each year, the share of ownership held by the national government, as registered by the Valuation Office of Iceland as of 1 August 1996, by 6 2/3%, commencing on 31 December 1996. The share of ownership held by the local authority is increased accordingly.]

Should any change occur in the division of responsibilities between national and local authorities, with the result that school premises are used for operations of the national government, a corresponding transfer of the share of ownership of the local authority to the national government shall be made over a period of fifteen years.

This provision shall not, however, apply to premises and facilities used by upper secondary school, such as gymnasiums and other sports facilities. Headmasters' and teachers' residences, building lots without structures and rights to land are also exempted.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture shall set more detailed provisions concerning the implementation of this Article in a Regulation after consulting with the Union of Local Authorities.]¹

¹. Act No. 77/1996, Article 3.

Article 22

The day-to-day responsibility for and administration of school premises, including residences of principals and teachers which are owned jointly by the national and local authorities or the local authorities exclusively, shall rest with the principal on behalf of the local authority.

The local authority may allow the use of all or part of the school premises for youth activities, sports activities or general social affairs for the residents of the locality. This may not, however, be allowed if such disrupts instruction, pupil social activities or other use of the premises prescribed by law.

After receiving the opinion of the School Board concerned, a local authority may decide to allow the use of school premises outside of the normal school year, as accommodation and restaurant facilities. Income from school property shall accrue to the Municipal Treasury.

IV. CHAPTER

PERSONNEL OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLS

Article 23

Each compulsory school shall have a principal hired by the local authority upon receiving the opinion of the School Board. In hiring principals account shall be taken of the qualifications and experience of applicants. The principal of a boarding school is also the supervisor of the school residence.

In a compulsory school with 12 or more employees in full-time positions, in addition to the principal, the local authority shall hire a vice-principal upon receiving the opinion of the principal. The vice-principal shall assume the duties of the principal in the absence of the former. In schools with fewer than 12 employees the principal shall decide, at the beginning of each school year, in consultation with a teachers' meeting and the School Board, which of the school's permanent teachers shall handle school administration in his absence.

The hiring of teachers and other personnel is subject to provisions in the statutes on municipal administration. Should these contain no specific provisions in this regard, the local authority or its administrative council shall instruct the school as to how personnel are to be hired.

The hiring of teachers and principals shall accord with the current provisions of the Act Restricting Use of the Titles Compulsory School Teacher and Principal and of their Rights.

Article 24

The principal shall choose a supervisory teacher for each class group of pupils. The supervisory teacher shall supervise closely the studies of his or her pupils and their development, instruct their studies and other activities, assist and counsel them on personal questions and support efforts to strengthen co-operation between home and school.

The principal may make teachers responsible for grade supervision, subject supervision or advising new teachers and student teachers, in accordance with a decision of the local authority in this

regard.

Article 25

The local authorities shall contribute an amount corresponding to 1% of the regular monthly salaries of teachers and principals in their municipality to a special fund which shall be administered by and maintained in the custody of the Union of Local Authorities in Iceland. This fund shall be used to pay the salaries of teachers and principals in compulsory schools on educational leave of up to one year in length. Travel grants and grants in addition to paid leave may also be made from this fund. The fund shall be controlled by a five-person board. An association representing unionised teachers at compulsory school level shall appoint two persons to the board and the Union of Local Authorities in Iceland three. Alternates shall be chosen in the same manner.

The board of the fund shall evaluate applications for support from the fund and decide upon its annual awards. A decision on awards shall be made no later than 1 December each year.

The Union of Local Authorities in Iceland shall look after and bear the cost of secretarial services for the board of the fund and its audited accounts shall be published each year with the balance sheet of the Union of Local Authorities.

All of the fund's income shall be used to pay salaries for study leave and grants, as provided for in the first paragraph. The appointing parties shall bear the costs of all participation by their representatives on the board.

The board of the fund shall adopt and publish its own rules of procedure.

CHAPTER V

THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL YEAR

Article 26

The instructional year in compulsory school shall be nine months in duration. It shall include at least [170]¹ days of instruction.

Having regard to the industrial structure and circumstances in individual school districts, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture may grant a temporary exemption from the above provisions.

¹. Act No. 77/1996, Article 4.

Article 27

The school day for compulsory school pupils shall begin in the morning and continue without interruptions, other than for normal breaks and a luncheon period. There shall be breaks amounting to at least 15 minutes for every 100 minutes of instruction and a luncheon period of at least 30 minutes.

The weekly instruction received by each compulsory school pupil shall be at least:

1200 minutes (30 instruction periods) in grades 1-4

1400 minutes (35 instruction periods) in grades 5-7

1480 minutes (37 instruction periods) in grades 8-10

In determining the daily and weekly working hours of pupils in compulsory schools, care shall be taken to ensure that the total does not exceed a reasonable workload with regard to the age and maturity of the pupils.

The principal shall determine the length of instruction periods in consultation with the teachers' council/teachers' meeting. The standard length of instruction periods in compulsory schools shall be 40 minutes.

Local authorities may make provision for after-school activities for pupils outside of the limits of the normal school day.

Article 28

Christmas vacation for pupils in compulsory schools shall extend from 21 December to 3 January inclusive and Easter vacation from Palm Sunday up to and including the Tuesday following Easter.

CHAPTER VI

CURRICULUM AND ORGANISATION OF INSTRUCTION

Article 29

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall provide compulsory schools with a National Curriculum Guide. The Guide shall set out policy concerning the educational role of compulsory school, the principal instructional policy and organisation of instruction in accordance with the role of compulsory schooling, cf. Article 2.

School activities shall emphasise:

- strengthening the self-consciousness and social consciousness of pupils,
- promoting their physical and mental well-being, healthy lifestyles and responsible behaviour toward living beings and the environment,
- training pupils in using the Icelandic language in all subjects, as well as training them in dramatic and artistic expression,
- the ability of pupils to understand causal relationships and to draw logical conclusions,
- understanding and vital and creative activities, and achieving a balance between academic and practical studies,
- utilising play as a means of learning and development,
- studies which will be of advantage to pupils in their daily lives, further studies and employment,
- preparing both sexes equally well for active participation in society, family life and employment,
- a variety of ways to acquire knowledge through the use of technological media, information technology, school resource centres and written sources,
- study counselling and information on occupational options, providing information on business and industry and courses of study in preparation for choosing further study or employment.

In drawing up the National Curriculum Guide, in the organisation of study, and in producing and selecting study materials special effort shall be made to ensure that the opportunities for study accessible to all pupils shall be as equal as possible, cf. Article 2.

The objectives of study and instruction, and the working practices of compulsory schools, shall be such as to prevent discrimination on the basis of origin, gender, residence, class, religion or handicap.

All school activities shall take into account the varied personality, maturity, talent, ability and interests of pupils.

Article 30

The National Curriculum Guide shall lay down the main objectives of study and instruction. It shall specify the core subjects and provide for the structure and arrangement of compulsory school study, as well as the share of instruction time to be devoted to individual subjects and subject areas. Effort shall be taken to have as much cohesion as possible in the study programme.

The National Curriculum Guide shall provide for the content and organisation of study in the areas

listed here below:

- a. Icelandic/language arts,
- b. mathematics,
- c. foreign languages, i.e. English and Danish (or other Nordiclanguage),
- d. arts and crafts,
- e. natural sciences, environmental and technical instruction,
- f. domestic science
- g. physical education,
- h. social studies,
- i. Christian instruction, ethics and religion.

Article 31

Each school shall issue a school curriculum guide annually, responsibility for which lies with the principal. The school curriculum guide shall be drawn up by the teachers of the school. A school curriculum guide is a more detailed version of the National Curriculum Guide and shall take the special characteristics and circumstances of the school into consideration. It shall serve as the working plan for the school, and shall include information on working hours, the school calendar, organisation of instruction, objectives and content of studies, evaluation of pupils, evaluation of school activities, accident prevention measures, extracurricular activities in the school and other aspects concerning school activities. The school curriculum guide shall be submitted to the School Board and parents' council for comments each year.

Article 32

In the 9th and 10th grades some of the subjects studied may be voluntarily chosen by the pupils. Up to one-third of instruction time may be optional subjects. Temporary periods of employment may be assessed for study credit, provided such has been organised in consultation with the school.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall issue more specific rules on optional subjects.

Article 33

Compulsory school instruction in public schools shall be provided to pupils without charge and neither pupils nor their parents or guardians may be required to pay for instruction, instructional materials or other materials which are required by pupils for use in their study and in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the National Curriculum Guide.

The national government shall supply and pay for instructional and study materials which satisfy the provisions of the National Curriculum Guide.

Public authorities are not required to furnish pupils with materials for personal use, such as writing supplies and paper.

The National Centre for Educational Materials shall ensure that textbooks and other study materials which fulfil the requirements of current legislation and the National Curriculum Guide are always available, obtained either through their own publishing activities or procured from other parties. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall issue a Regulation containing provisions on the distribution of educational materials without charge to pupils in compulsory schools upon receiving the proposals of the National Board for Educational Materials.

Should doubt exist as to whether instructional materials fulfil the requirements of current legislation and the National Curriculum Guide, they may be referred to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture which will issue a ruling on the matter.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall in a Regulation set more detailed provisions for the implementation of this Article.

Article 34

Pupils in all compulsory schools shall be provided with the opportunity to participate in extracurricular and social activities organised by the school. Extracurricular and social activities may be organised as part of the day-to-day activities of the school or outside of normal school hours.

One of the objectives of social activities is to enable pupils to carry out social responsibilities in society.

CHAPTER VII

PUPILS' RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Article 35

Children and youth are obliged to attend compulsory school unless they receive comparable instruction elsewhere, cf. Articles 7 and 56 of this Act.

Children are obliged to attend school from the beginning of the school year in the calendar year during which they reach the age of six years. A child's parents or guardians may apply for or agree to its commencing school at an earlier or later date than provided for in this Act on the compulsory attendance of six-year-old children. A principal may grant such exemption upon receiving a report from the specialist educational services.

A pupil who satisfactorily completes his or her entire compulsory studies in a shorter time than ten years is considered to have completed compulsory study.

Parents or guardians may apply for or agree to authorisation by a principal for the pupil to leave school after completing the 9th year for a period of up to one year for employment participation and such pupil will then complete his or her compulsory school studies later. Such employment participation may be assessed for study credit equal to study in specified optional subjects in the 10th year.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may grant a pupil exemption from completing compulsory study in a specific subject if valid reasons exist for so doing. Furthermore, the Minister may approve of study outside of school as equivalent to study in a compulsory subject.

Article 36

Pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic shall be entitled to special instruction in Icelandic.

Such pupils may be granted an exemption from the national final examination in Icelandic and sit instead a special Icelandic examination.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall set detailed rules concerning the instruction of such pupils.

Article 37

Children and youth, who face problems in their studies due to specific learning difficulties, emotional or social difficulties and/or handicaps, cf. Article 2 of Act No. 59/1992, are entitled to special support instruction. Such instruction may be on an individual basis or in a group within or outside of the regular classroom, in special classes within schools or in special schools.

Wherever possible, instruction shall be provided in the home school. If a child's parents or guardians, teachers or other specialists feel that the child is not receiving suitable instruction in its home school, the parents or guardians may apply for it to attend a special school.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall in a Regulation set more detailed provisions for the implementation of this Article.

Article 38

Local authorities shall organise special classes/special schools for pupils who cannot avail themselves of instruction suited to their needs in regular compulsory school classrooms. Such classes/schools are intended:

- to provide a specialised study environment for pupils for a longer or shorter period,
- to provide the personnel of regular compulsory schools with advice and methodological support.

Specially educated teachers shall be in charge of such instruction in special classes/special schools wherever practicable.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall approve guidelines for the operations of special classes/special schools upon receiving the proposals of local authorities. The guidelines shall provide for derogations from the general curriculum and other reference provisions of the Compulsory Schools Act.

The real property of the special schools in operation at present shall be made available for such operations without rent or other charge but the operating authorities shall assume and bear the cost of all their operations, including maintenance costs, from the effective date of the full implementation of this Act.

Should there subsequently be deemed no need to continue the operations of any or all of these institutions the National Treasury will once more assume jurisdiction of their real property and may make use of them for other purposes.

Article 39

A pupil protection council may be established in a compulsory school to co-ordinate the efforts of various parties responsible for individual pupils with regard to study counselling, specialised educational services and primary health care.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall issue a Regulation concerning pupil protection councils.

Article 40

A pupil may not be employed during the school year if such employment, in the opinion of the principal and teachers, prevents the pupil from pursuing his or her studies properly or from obtaining sufficient rest. In such instances the principal shall notify the pupil, his or her parent or guardian and the employer in question of this. If the situation is not remedied, the matter shall be referred to the School Board. Should a child's parent or guardian refuse to comply with the decision of the School Board either they or the principal may refer the matter to the Child Protection Committee.

Article 41

Pupils are obliged to obey all instructions of teachers and other school staff concerning school matters, to comply with school rules and follow general rules of good conduct in their dealings with staff and fellow pupils.

Should a pupil's conduct be seriously deficient, his or her teachers shall investigate the underlying causes and attempt to alleviate the situation, for example, through discussions with the pupil in question and his or her parents or guardians. Should this fail to result in improvement, the teacher shall seek the assistance of the principal and the school's professional counsellors.

While matters, as referred to in the second paragraph, are being resolved, the principal may suspend the pupil from school temporarily, and shall send notification of such suspension immediately to the pupil's parents or guardians and the School Board. Should the school itself fail to resolve the question, the School Board shall take up the matter. Should the School Board fail to find a solution which is acceptable for all parties concerned, the question shall be dealt with as provided for in the third paragraph of Article 6 of this Act, upon receipt of the opinion of the specialised educational

services of municipalities.

A pupil may not be expelled from school unless alternative provision has been made for his or her needs.

Further instructions on the implementation of this Article shall be provided in a Regulation issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

CHAPTER VIII

Specialist educational services

Article 42

All local authorities which operate compulsory schools must provide these schools with specialist educational services, general and subject-specific instructional advice, covering the subjects listed in Article 30, study counselling and psychological services. Where such services are not operated by the municipality the local authority must arrange for their provision by other municipalities, institutions, such as teacher training institutions, or other parties providing services in this field.

Each local authority must account for the provision of such specialist educational services in its schools to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall issue a Regulation providing, for instance, for the minimum services required in this respect.

Article 43

School specialist educational services are intended to see to the optimal utilisation of methodological and psychological knowledge in school activities. Teachers and principals shall be offered advice and support from specialist educational services both for regular school activities and for innovative and development work. Specialist educational services shall offer parents and guardians instruction on child raising wherever this is possible under the existing circumstances.

The staff of specialist educational services shall carry out preventive work in observing and diagnosing pupils experiencing mental or social difficulties if they affect the pupils' studies and make proposals for improvement. Pupils' parents or guardians may request such observation. Staff of schools and primary healthcare may also request such observation after obtaining the approval of parents or guardians.

Staff of specialist educational services shall be teachers with further education, psychologists and other specialists.

CHAPTER IX

EVALUATION OF PUPILS

Article 44

The principal objective of evaluation of pupils is to encourage the pupils and assist their study.

Through evaluation, compulsory schools shall seek to acquire the most dependable evidence possible on the success of school activities. Every teacher and school is responsible for monitoring carefully the pupils' progress in achieving the objectives set for them by the National Curriculum Guide and the school. Evaluation should not only take place at the end of study, but should be a permanent aspect of school activities, inseparable from study and instruction.

Article 45

Evaluation in compulsory school shall generally be carried out by the schools' teachers; pupils and their parents or guardians shall be provided with clear and comprehensible information on study progress. Teachers shall provide written reports at least at the close of each school year.

Information as to the report received by an individual pupil may not be divulged to persons other than the pupil and his other parents or guardians unless required due to transfers of pupils between

schools. Educational authorities and other parties may, however, be allowed access to this information for scientific research purposes, on the condition that complete confidentiality is ensured.

A pupil and his or her parent or guardian shall have the right to examine the evaluated examination results of pupils in accordance with provisions to this effect contained in a Regulation issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

Article 46

National examinations in core subjects shall be held concurrently in all 4th- and 7th-grade classes of compulsory school. Upon completion of compulsory school, national final examinations shall be held in at least four subjects as decided by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

Schools shall, in addition, be offered national diagnostic tests and standardised knowledge tests intended to analyze the study status of pupils.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall provide compulsory schools with national examinations and shall bear the costs of official supervisory staff responsible for holding the national final examinations.

The Institute for Educational Research, or other party decided upon by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, shall supervise the composition and holding of these examinations.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall, in a Regulation, set more detailed provisions on the arrangement and implementation of national examinations.

Article 47

Upon conclusion of compulsory education a pupil shall receive a certificate attesting to the completion of compulsory study as provided for by law. The certificate shall record the pupil's achievement in the subjects studied in the 10th grade of study.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture shall issue models for such certificates.

Article 48

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall in a Regulation set provisions for the monitoring of the achievement of pupils in special schools and other pupils of compulsory school age who are considered to deviate from normal development to such an extent that examinations in accordance with Article 46 are unsuited to their needs.

Article 49

Each compulsory school shall take up methods for evaluating school activities, including instruction and administrative practices, internal communication and external relations. An investigation of the self-evaluation methods used by schools shall be made by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture at five-year intervals.

CHAPTER X

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT, EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS

Article 50

Teachers and principals of compulsory schools shall, in addition to educational leave as provided for in Article 25, be offered in-service training for the purposes of improving their professional competence and learning of significant innovations in schooling and educational affairs, and shall receive support for innovative and developmental work. Funds shall be allocated from the national budget for these purposes.

Principals shall take the initiative in formulating a plan for the continuous education of staff in each school, in order that it may follow as closely as possible the aspects emphasised in the school curriculum guide.

Article 51

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for carrying out evaluation of schools and school activities to insure that schooling complies with the provisions of this Act and the National Curriculum Guide. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may assign such evaluation to the Institute for Educational Research or other parties.

The results of such evaluation of schools and school activities shall be taken into account, for instance, in reviewing the National Curriculum Guide.

Article 52

Althingi shall provide allocations from its annual budget for the Compulsory Schools Developmental Fund. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall be responsible for the Fund and set rules for grants therefrom.

Article 53

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may, with the approval of a local authority, take the initiative in developmental and experimental work in compulsory schools. The Minister may also grant permission to local authorities and private schools to operate experimental schools or to experiment with specific aspects of school activities by exempting them from provisions of Acts and Regulations. Such exemptions could, for instance, concern studies, the school year, the organisation of instruction, number of instruction periods, etc. provided such does not conflict with Article 2 of this Act or limit the role of compulsory schooling as provided for therein.

Reasonable time limits shall always be stipulated for such experiments and provision made for their evaluation upon the conclusion of the experiment.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may support experimental schools and special innovations to the extent permitted by the budget at any time.

CHAPTER XI

SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTRES

Article 54

Every compulsory school shall have a resource centre. The school resource centre shall serve as one of the principal aids to school activities and the facilities, books and other instructional materials it is equipped with and its personnel shall reflect this.

A local authority may combine public library facilities with those of the school resource centre provided this does not, in the opinion of the School Board and the principal, reduce the value of the centre for the school.

CHAPTER XII

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Article 55

Primary health care in compulsory schools shall be as provided for in current legislation on health care services. The health care services in the school district should co-operate with the School Board and principal on the organisation and arrangement of primary health care.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that pupils enjoy primary health care in their schools in accordance with the arrangements provided for in the first paragraph.

Local authorities shall bear the costs of providing facilities for primary health care in schools and see to its operation. The salaries of primary health care personnel in schools and special costs incurred through these activities shall be paid as other costs involved in the operating of general primary health care at a local primary health care centre and staff hired in the same manner.

CHAPTER XIII

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Article 56

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture may authorise compulsory schools or sections of compulsory schools, in accordance with Article 3, which are financed by individuals or institutions if they operate in accordance with a Regulation or organisational plan approved by the Ministry. Such schools shall abide by the same rules and be subject to the same supervision as other compulsory schools. Children attending such private schools are exempt [from public school attendance] as provided for in Article 7, and the school director shall, before the commencement of each school year, send the School Board concerned a list of pupils and notify this same party of any and all changes to the register of pupils without delay.

Private schools shall not be entitled to receive grants from public funds.

Evaluation in private schools shall be as provided for in Articles 45 and 46.

CHAPTER XIV

ENTRY INTO FORCE

Article 57

This Act shall enter into force and be fully implemented on 1 August 1996, provided *Althingi* has, by that time, approved:

1. amendments to the Public Servants' Pension Fund Act, which will ensure all teachers and principals of compulsory schools presently entitled to membership in the Public Servants' Pension Fund of continuing membership in the Fund.
2. an Act concerning the terms of employment of teachers and principals of compulsory schools which will ensure them substantially unaltered terms of employment by their new employers. In the case of disagreement between teachers' associations and local authorities as to the form or substance of such terms of employment, either party may request arbitration on the question.
3. amendments to the Acts on Revenues of Local Authorities and on the Division of Fiscal Income between the National and Local Authorities, with regard to the increased role assumed by the latter in accordance with this Act.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall prescribe in a Regulation¹⁾ which provisions of this Act shall be implemented prior to 1 August 1996, including measures for the interim hiring of teachers and other compulsory schools staff as national public servants.

¹⁾Reg. No. 349/1995.

Temporary provisions

The provisions of Article 3, concerning single shifts in compulsory schools, shall be fully implemented six years after the entry into force of this Act. Provisions of the second paragraph of Article 27, concerning weekly instruction periods per pupil, shall be fully implemented during the period 1995--1999 as follows:

In the autumn of 1995 the number of instruction periods shall be increased by 6, resulting in the following minimum number of weekly instruction periods for pupils:

1st--4th-grade classes: 26 instruction periods,

5th--7th-grade classes: 29, 31 and 33 instruction periods respectively,

8th--10th-grade classes: 34 instruction periods.

In the autumn of 1996 the number of instruction periods shall be increased by 10, in the following manner:

1st--4th-grade classes: 27 instruction periods,
5th--7th-grade classes: 30, 32 and 34 instruction periods respectively,
8th--10th-grade classes: 35 instruction periods.

In the autumn of 1997 the number of instruction periods shall be increased by 10, in the following manner:

1st--4th-grade classes: 28 instruction periods,
5th--7th-grade classes: 32, 33 and 35 instruction periods respectively,
8th--10th-grade classes: 36 instruction periods.

In the autumn of 1998 the number of instruction periods shall be increased by 10, in the following manner:

1st--4th-grade classes: 29 instruction periods,
5th--7th-grade classes: 34, 34 and 35 instruction periods respectively,
8th--10th-grade classes: 37 instruction periods.

In the autumn of 1999 the number of instruction periods shall be increased by 7, in the following manner:

1st--4th-grade classes: 30 instruction periods,
5th--7th-grade classes: 35 instruction periods,
8th--10th-grade classes: 37 instruction periods.