

19 - CURRICULAR REFORM IN SLOVAK PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THE PLACE OF THE MOTOR PERFORMANCE TESTING OF PUPILS IN 1ST AND 3RD GRADE IN IT

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Doi: 10.16887/93.a1.19

Abstract

Curricular Reform in Slovak Primary Schools and the Place of the Motor Performance Testing of Pupils in 1st and 3rd Grade in it

Started in 2020, a new curriculum reform was launched in Slovakia, which in the first phase is focused on primary and lower secondary education at primary school (Antala 2021; Masaryková 2021). In our article, we want to indicate the direction in which the planned changes should go and how they will also affect the educational field of Health and movement and the school subject of physical and sports education (Pupala and Fridrichová 2022). New curricular reform in regional education will bring these news: changing the structure of education at primary school, creation of a new State Educational Program (SEP) and relevant follow-up documents, placing more emphasis on educational areas than on the subjects themselves, transforming cross-cutting topics into educational areas and subjects, transformation of the Central Subject Committees of the National Institute for Education into a new structure, creation of Regional centres of curricular management and support, free textbook market, new position of Educational area Health and movement and school subject Physical and sport education in new curriculum, motor performance testing of pupils in 1st and 3rd classes as compulsory part of school curriculum.

Key words: curricular reform, testing of motor performance, physical education

Resumen

Reforma curricular en las escuelas primarias eslovacas y el lugar de las pruebas de rendimiento motor de los alumnos de 1.º y 3.º grado

Iniciada en 2020, se lanzó una nueva reforma curricular en Eslovaquia, que en la primera fase se centra en la educación primaria y secundaria inferior en la escuela primaria (Antala 2021; Masaryková 2021). En nuestro artículo, queremos señalar la dirección en la que deben ir los cambios previstos y cómo afectarán también al campo educativo de la Salud y el movimiento y a la asignatura escolar de educación física y deportiva (Pupala y Fridrichová 2022). Nueva reforma curricular en la educación regional traerá estas novedades: cambio de estructura de la educación en la escuela primaria, creación de un nuevo Programa Educativo Estatal (SEP) y documentos de seguimiento pertinentes, poniendo más énfasis en las áreas educativas que en las materias mismas, transformando transversalidad de temas en áreas y materias educativas, transformación de los Comités Centrales de Materia del Instituto Nacional de Educación en una nueva

estructura, creación de Centros Regionales de gestión y apoyo curricular, mercado libre de libros de texto, nueva posición del área Educativa Salud y circulación y asignatura escolar Educación física y deportiva en el nuevo currículo, pruebas de rendimiento motor de los alumnos de 1º y 3º curso como parte obligatoria del currículo escolar.

Palabras clave: reforma curricular, pruebas de desempeño motor, Educación Física

Résumé

Réforme des programmes dans les écoles primaires slovaques et place des tests de performance motrice des élèves de 1re et 3e année

Commencée en 2020, une nouvelle réforme des programmes a été lancée en Slovaquie, qui dans la première phase se concentre sur l'enseignement primaire et secondaire inférieur à l'école primaire (Antala 2021 ; Masaryková 2021). Dans notre article, nous voulons indiquer la direction dans laquelle les changements prévus devraient aller et comment ils affecteront également le domaine éducatif de la santé et du mouvement et la matière scolaire de l'éducation physique et sportive (Pupala et Fridrichová 2022). La nouvelle réforme des programmes de l'enseignement régional apportera ces nouveautés : modification de la structure de l'enseignement à l'école primaire, création d'un nouveau programme éducatif de l'État (SEP) et de documents de suivi pertinents, mettant davantage l'accent sur les domaines éducatifs que sur les matières elles-mêmes, transformant thèmes transversaux en domaines et matières pédagogiques, transformation des Comités centraux des matières de l'Institut national de l'éducation en une nouvelle structure, création de centres régionaux de gestion et de soutien curriculaires, marché des manuels scolaires gratuits, nouvelle position du domaine éducatif Santé et mouvement et matière scolaire Éducation physique et sportive dans le nouveau programme, tests de performance motrice des élèves de 1^{ère} et 3^{ème} classes comme partie obligatoire du programme scolaire.

Mots-clés : Réforme curriculaire, test des performances motrices, éducation physique

Abstrato

Reforma curricular nas escolas primárias eslovacas e o lugar do teste de desempenho motor dos alunos do 1º e 3º ano

Iniciada em 2020, foi lançada uma nova reforma curricular na Eslováquia, que na primeira fase está focada no ensino primário e secundário inferior na escola primária (Antala 2021; Masaryková 2021). Em nosso artigo, queremos indicar a direção em que as mudanças planejadas devem seguir e como elas afetarão também o campo educacional da Saúde e do movimento e a disciplina escolar de educação física e esportiva (Pupala e Fridrichová 2022). A nova reforma curricular na educação regional trará essas novidades: mudança na estrutura do ensino no ensino fundamental, criação de um novo Programa Estadual de Educação (SEP) e documentos de acompanhamento relevantes, dando mais ênfase às áreas educacionais do que às disciplinas em si, transformando temas transversais em áreas e disciplinas educacionais, transformação das Comissões Centrais de Assuntos do Instituto Nacional de Educação em uma nova estrutura, criação de núcleos regionais de gestão e apoio curricular, mercado livre de livros didáticos, novo

posicionamento da área educacional Saúde e movimento e disciplina escolar Educação física e esportiva no novo currículo, teste de desempenho motor dos alunos da 1ª e 3ª classes como parte obrigatória do currículo escolar

Palavras-chave: Reforma curricular, testes de desempenho motor, educação física

Introduction

Started in 2020, a new curriculum reform was launched in Slovakia, which in the first phase is focused on primary and lower secondary education at primary school (Antala 2021; Masaryková 2021). In our article, we want to indicate the direction in which the planned changes should go and how they will also affect the educational field of Health and movement and the school subject of physical and sports education (Pupala and Fridrichová 2022).

Methodology

In article we use descriptive approach based on analyse of new curricular documents.

Results and discussion

What should the new curricular reform in regional education bring?

Changing the structure of education at primary school

Curricular reform should ensure the creation of a harmonized and integrated curriculum. A curriculum will be prepared for elementary schools structured into 3 cycles, i.e., 1st to 3rd grade is the first cycle; 4th and 5th grade is the second cycle and 6th to 9th grade is the third cycle.

Creation of a new State Educational Program (SEP) and relevant follow-up documents

Accompanying documents will also be created for the new SEP, focused on the basic principles and philosophy of the educational program; the methodology of educational areas in the whole of compulsory education; organization of teaching and learning for educational areas in individual educational cycles; teaching aids and learning resources for individual educational areas; assessment of students and evaluation of educational results in individual educational cycles and educational areas.

Placing more emphasis on educational areas than on the subjects themselves, transforming cross-cutting topics into educational areas and subjects

The basis of the curriculum should be educational areas. The construction of new curricula should be based on the development of educational areas, a higher degree of harmonization of individual programs within which it will be possible to better integrate knowledge from individual subjects and avoid repetition of knowledge in individual subjects, the possibility of avoiding incoordination of internal elements of educational programs and creating programs more efficiently will increase lessons at school. The framework curriculum will not contain a breakdown of the number of hours by grades and individual subjects, but by educational areas and cycles

Transformation of the Central Subject Committees of the National Institute for Education into a new structure

The central subject commissions and expert commissions at the National Institute for Education are advisory bodies of the director of the National Institute for Education, which participate in the conceptual, developmental, and methodological activities of the institute in the field of creation, application, verification and evaluation of educational programs for schools and school facilities. The umbrella body for the work of the Central Subject Commissions will be the Central Curricular Commissions for Education for individual levels of education and types of schools, which are: the central commission for pre-primary and basic education; Central Commission for Gymnasium and Secondary Education; Central Commission for Art Education in Primary Art Schools; central commission for education in language schools; central commission for education in special schools. Internally, they are also organized as commissions for individual cycles of the educational program or educational levels.

Union of National Institute for Education and The Methodology and Pedagogy Centres

As part of the change in the institutional coverage of processes, there should be a merger of the National Institute for Education and Methodology and Pedagogy Centres into one unit, which should bring a higher degree of coordination and efficiency of managerial and educational processes.

Creation of Regional centres of curricular management and support

Gradually, 40 regional centres of curriculum management and support should be created so that the whole of Slovakia is evenly covered. It is planned to create one such centre for 2 districts. The centres should have adequate personnel and space provision with people from practice who will help school principals and teachers in solving various issues related to school management and securing individual educational areas and subjects. The centres were supposed to be created gradually so that they would be fully available by the 3rd quarter of 2024.

Free textbook market

The textbook market for individual educational areas and subjects will be liberalized so that the new reform is covered by new textbooks by the end of 2024.

Link to The Recovery Plan approved by the Slovak Government

The financing of the reform should be linked to the Recovery Plan approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic, and sufficient resources should be provided to implement the project in practice.

The time horizon for implementing changes

So far, the proposed changes have been presented mainly at the project level, and it is planned to gradually introduce them into life. The whole process should start at the level of creating framework teaching plans and changes of central subject commissions and gradually continue in other areas. The approval of the definitive version of the SEP for all three educational cycles of elementary schools is planned for the 1st quarter of 2023, the possibility of implementing the new curriculum in elementary schools should be from the 3rd quarter of 2023, and the implementation of the new curriculum in all elementary schools should take place by September 2026.

Educational area Health and movement and school subject Physical and sport education in new curricular reform

Such a framework curriculum according to education cycles for primary schools has already been published. Outside of compulsory lessons (2 per weeks in all classes and all cycles) it states that if the school has suitable conditions for teaching the subject of physical and sports education, it will use optional (available) hours in primary education to strengthen the said subject. The school will have a great deal of autonomy in how it creates school programs across learning areas and subjects within individual cycles. It is very likely that cross-cutting topics, including the protection of life and health, which is provided by physical and sports education teachers, will gradually be integrated into individual educational areas and their subjects, and will not appear in the education and training system in the same form as it is now. Motor performance testing of pupils in 1st and 3rd classes is compulsory part of school curriculum.

How will the motor performance testing of pupils in 1st and 3rd grades of primary school be implemented?

The project of motor testing of pupils in 1st and 3rd classes of primary schools is based on the Sports Act no. 440/2015 Coll. in which in paragraph § 58 letter p) it is stated that "Once a year, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with primary schools, universities and sports organizations, ensures a nationwide testing of the physical abilities of pupils in the first and third classes of primary schools."

As stated on the project website <https://www.testovanieziakov.sk/>, the aim of the project of testing pupils' physical abilities is to inform parents about the state of the child's physical abilities in comparison with children who were tested within the entire population year in Slovakia. At the same time, advise/direct children to sports, where they can apply their innate abilities. The state provides this service to parents free of charge.

The test battery for the identification of movement prerequisites of pupils in the 1st and 3rd grades of the primary school consists of the following disciplines:

1. body height and body weight
2. forward bend with reaching
3. repeated assembly with rod
4. endurance in deflection by touch
5. long jump from place
6. sit up
7. rolling 3 balls
8. run 4 x 10 m
9. flag chase
10. multi-stage endurance boat run at 20 meters

The website provides the following instructions for testing:

1. Testing should be done all at once on one day, with measurements of height, weight, and sitting forward bending with reaching possibly the day before (e.g., also in the classroom) to reduce time consumption. It is necessary to observe the order of cycles, the order of disciplines in the first cycle is arbitrary.
2. Explain and demonstrate to each group before all tests

3. The minimum number of students for testing is 6 (which is also the minimum number of students for the flag chase).

The following tools are required for testing:

starting numbers, weight, anthropometer/waist measure, bench, mats, gymnastic bars, bar (or hanging bar), band, cones (min 10 pcs), stopwatch (min 5 pcs), ruler, 3 basketballs (size no. 7), Swedish box (can be replaced with cones), flags, software beep test, PC/tablet, speakers, stationery, recording sheets (if there is software, they will be replaced with mobile phones/tablets), whistle.

Every tested pupil receives a certificate.

The COVID - 19 pandemic has temporarily limited or completely interrupted testing in schools, but it should be continued after it subsides.

Conclusions

Curricular reform in primary schools in Slovakia have aim to increase quality of physical education teaching and creation of motivation of children and youth to physical and sport activities and lifelong participation.

Acknowledgement

The study is supported by The Scientific Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (VEGA) with number 1/0213/23. It is titled "Tandem Teaching of Physical and Sports Education in Primary School and its Impact to Motor, Cognitive and Emotional Development of Pupils".

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