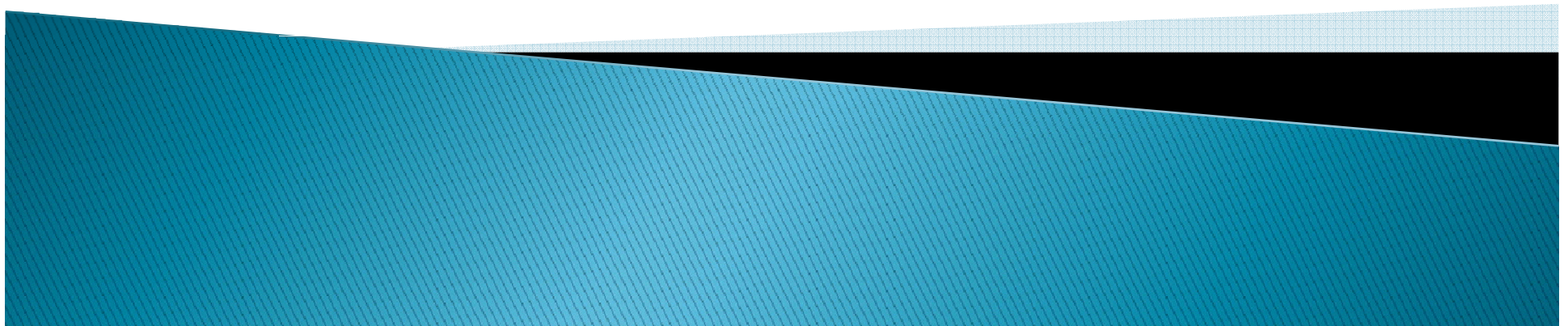
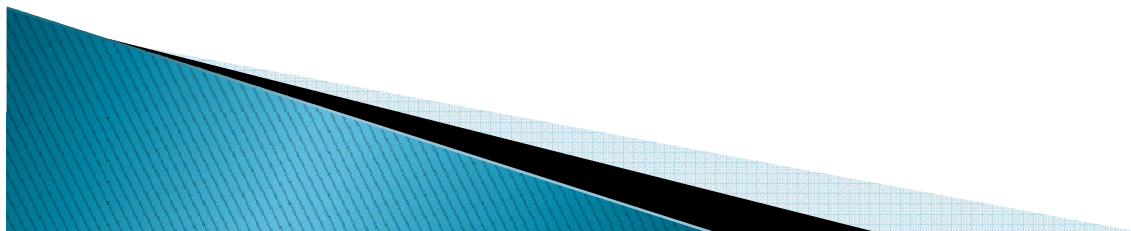


# Strategic planning in education. The Flemish experience.

Warsaw University  
Gaby Hostens



1. A federal country
2. Three communities
3. Constitutional context for educational policymaking
4. Performances of the system : PISA 2009
5. Strategic planning in education
6. Strategic educational planning in Flanders
7. The strategic plan of G-O, the agency for  
‘community schools’, the former ‘state schools’
8. Strategic planning at regional and local level
9. The case of the Jesuit schools : limited central  
planning



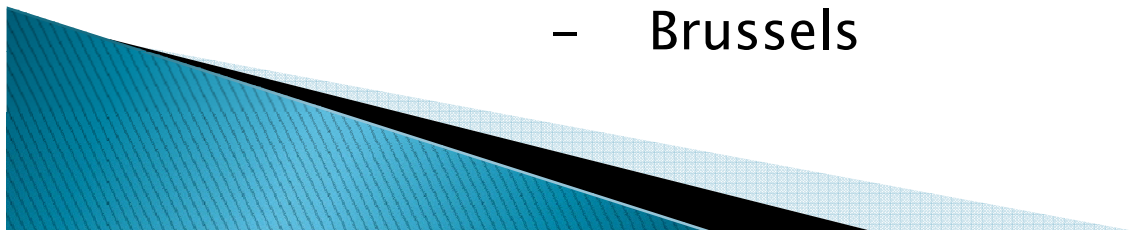
# 1. Belgium : a federal country

A federal state :

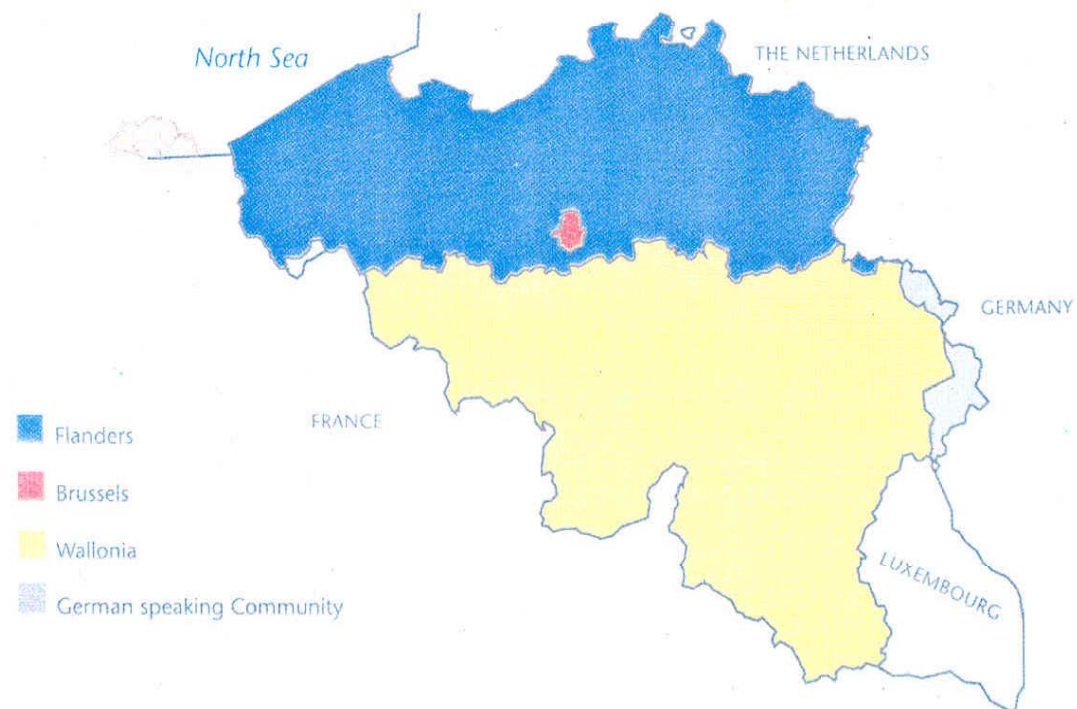
- a federal parliament and government
- +
- regional parliaments and governments

3 communities : - Flemish : ± 6 million Dutch speaking  
- French : ± 4 million French speaking  
- German : ± 100,000

3 regions : - Flanders  
- Wallonia  
- Brussels



## Belgium : 3 communities and 3 regions



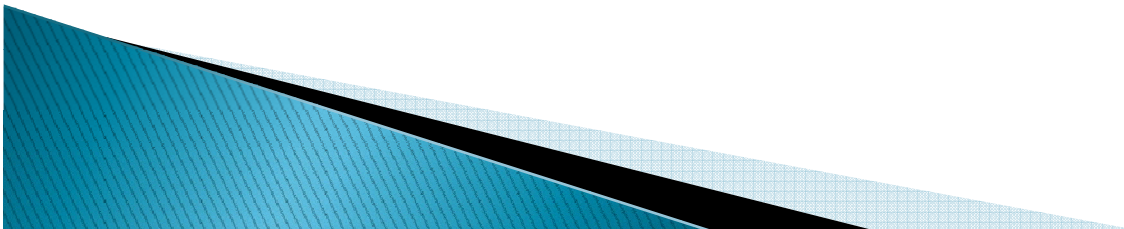
### 3. 3 communities : autonomous competences and responsibilities in education

The educational systems have grown apart

- \* Governance of the systems
- \* Curricula
- \* Funding mechanisms
- \* Quality assurance mechanisms
- \* Teacher policies ( salaries!)
- \* Performances :



PISA , TIMSS



### 3. Constitutional context for educational policymaking

Freedom of education : ‘ Education is free ; any preventive measure is forbidden. The community offers free choice to parents’.

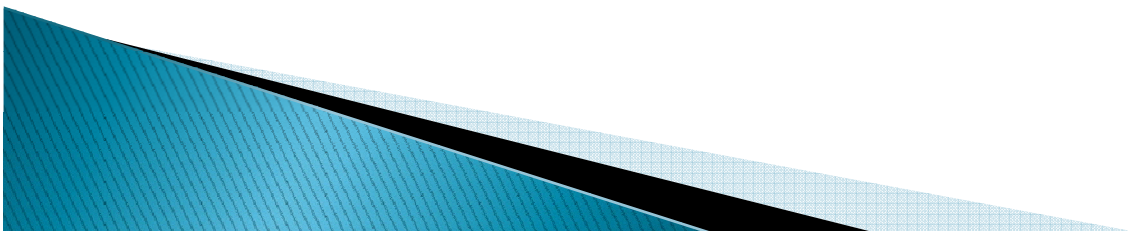
- Freedom for providers to start, establish a school.  
A diversity of providers : the ‘state’ or Flemish community; municipalities and provinces; private organisations, mainly Catholic organisations (dioceses, parishes, religious orders, etc) and other denominations ( Jewish, Islamic). Also Freinet and Steiner schools.

Schools have ‘networked’ : network of Catholic schools, municipality schools, provincial schools, community or ‘state’ schools ( an autonomous agency!!).



Freedom for **parents to choose a school** : the right to education of your choice.

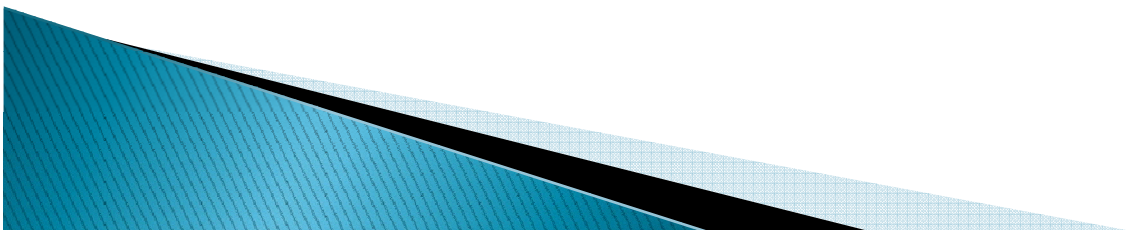
A wide diversity of schools in a densely populated country. Parents have a genuine choice. They can choose and 'vote with their feet'.



## Policy tools to achieve freedom of education

For providers:

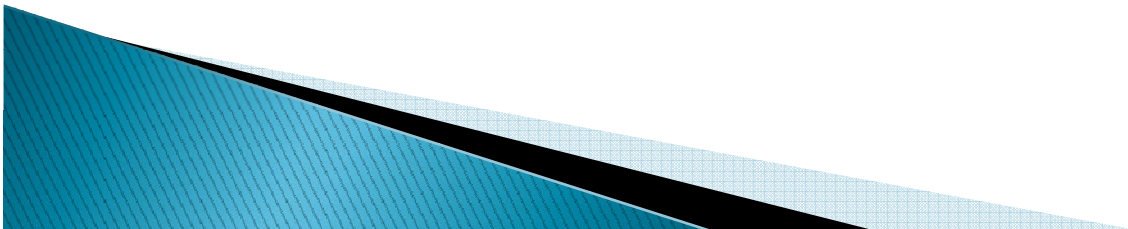
- State funding ( teacher salaries, operating expenses, school infrastructure) but ultimate financial responsibility lies with the providers( school boards whether public or private)
- Pedagogical autonomy : choice of pedagogical methods, curriculum based on the national core curriculum, assessment of students, etc.
- Obligation to enrol students who accept the pedagogical project of the school and who meet the legal criteria to enrol.
- The right to refuse when the school is 'full'.





For parents and students:

- Access is free during compulsory education:  
no enrolment fees.
- Entitlement to enrol provided the parents accept the pedagogical project and the student meets the legal criteria
- Entitlement to high quality education, to a challenging curriculum



# Achieving freedom of education : checks and balances!!!

## A politically sensitive issue!!

### Implementing freedom of education

- \* For the few in the 19<sup>th</sup> century!
- \* For the many, for all in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Issues at stake

- \* Who delivers education?
- \* Who pays for education and how much?
- \* Who lays down the curriculum?

### Partners in the debate?

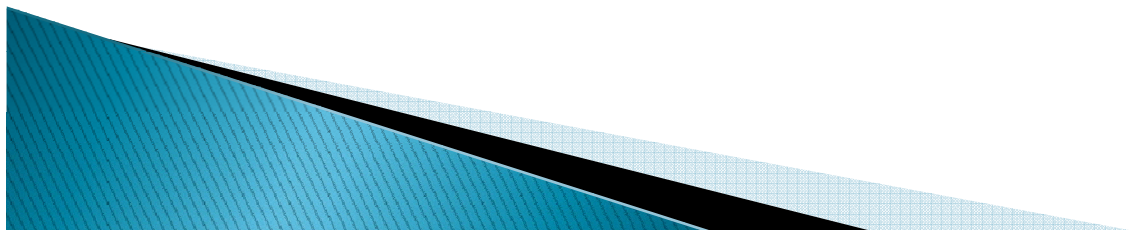
- \* The Catholic church and the State
- \* Supported by political parties
- \* 'School wars'



At the heart of the debate : Who controls education?

Access is free : ‘ Everyone has the right to education with the respect of fundamental rights and freedoms. Access is free till the end of compulsory schooling’.

The right to education includes the right to high quality education and training at the expense of the Flemish community during compulsory schooling ( from 6 till 18)



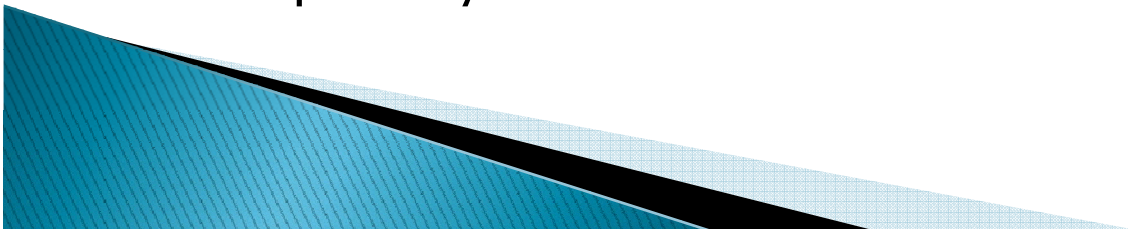
## Moral and religious education

‘ All pupils of school age have the right to moral or religious education at the expense of the Community’.

‘Schools organised by the public authorities shall offer, until the end of compulsory schooling, the choice between one of the recognised religions and that of non-confessional moral education’.

In public schools students can choose among recognised religions ( Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Jewish, Orthodox and Islamic) and non-confessional moral education.

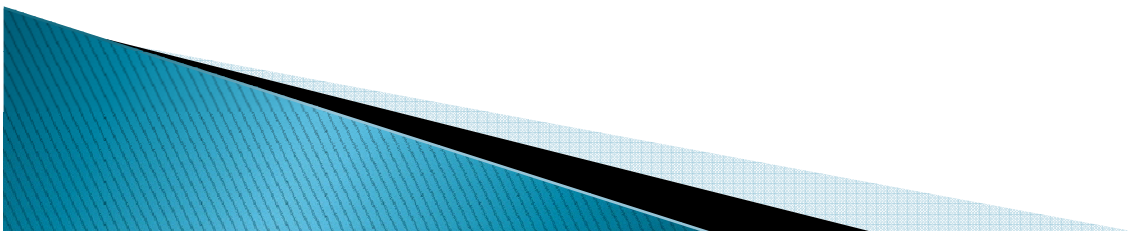
In Catholic schools, Catholic religion is compulsory.



## Equal treatment

‘All pupils or students, parents, teaching staff or institutions are equal before the law or decree. Laws and decrees take into account objective differences, notably the specific characteristics of each organising authority, that justify appropriate treatment.’

Equal treatment for students, parents, staff and institutions refers to funding of schools, salaries of teachers and diplomas awarded by institutions. Socio-economic background of students, learning difficulties and disabilities justify appropriate treatment, i.e. such students generate more human and financial resources.



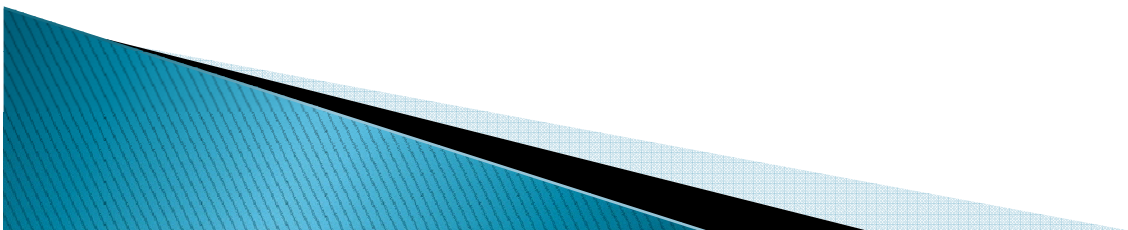
## Checks and balances in the system : the case of secondary education!

The state lays down

- the compulsory subjects
- maximum and minimum number of periods per week
- core curriculum and quality control by inspectorate

The providers enjoy pedagogical autonomy and are responsible among other things for

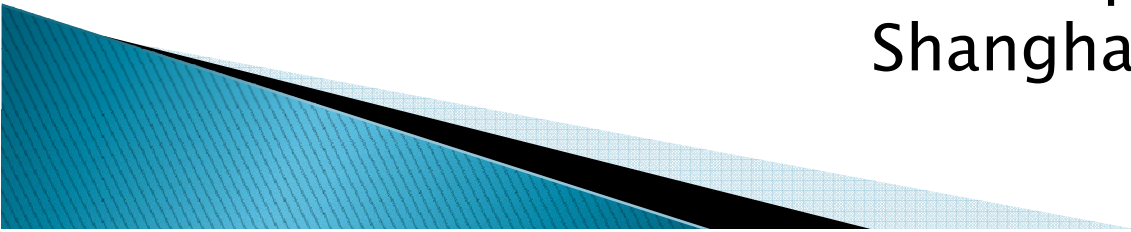
- the number of periods per subject
- optional subjects
- elaborate study plans that contain the core curriculum in a recognisable way
- the pedagogical process
- assessment of students
- issuing of diplomas



#### 4. Performances of the system : PISA 2009

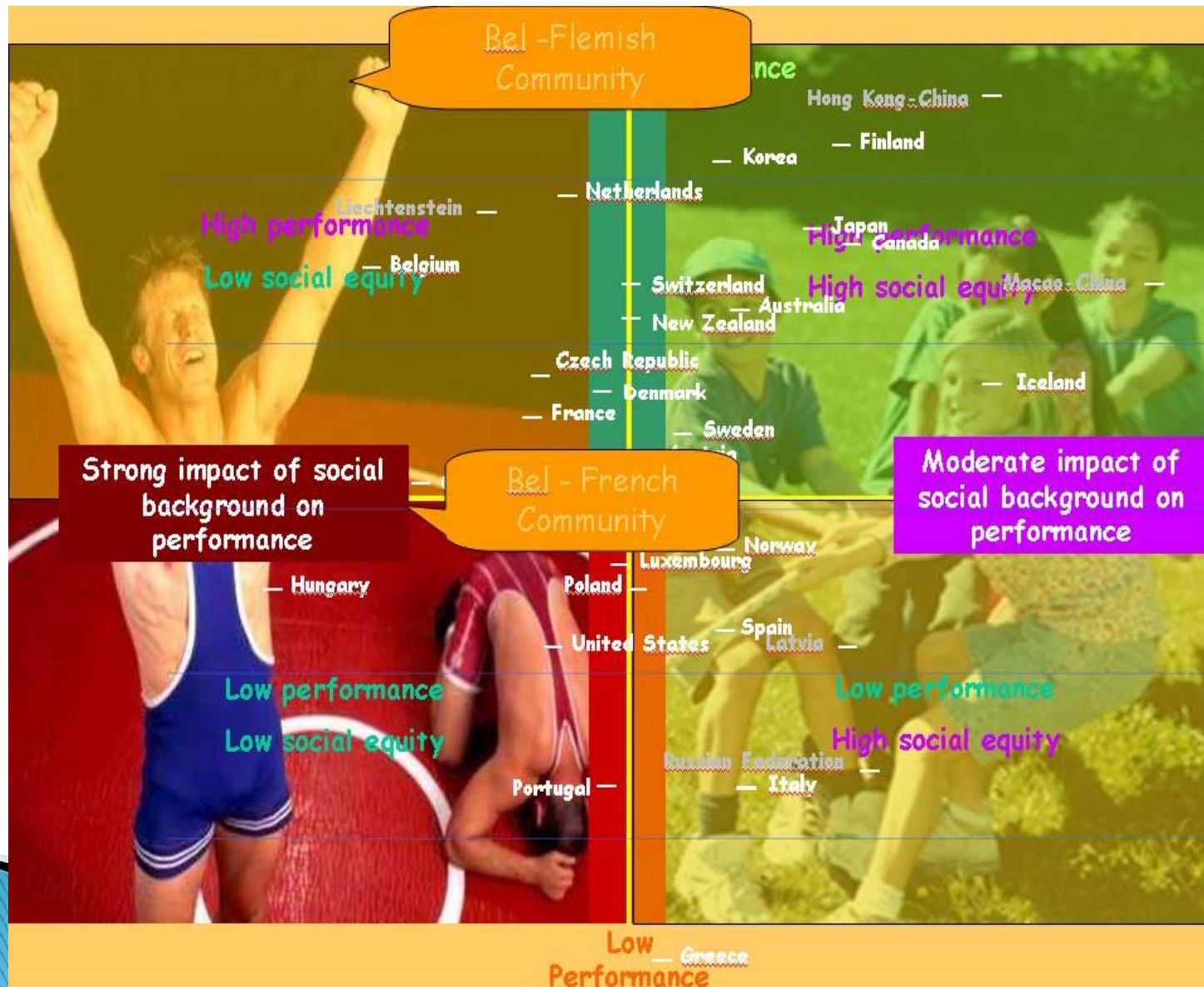
Scientific literacy	Mathematical literacy	Reading literacy
Shanghai China 575	Shanghai China 600	Shanghai China 556
Finland 554	Hongkong 555	Finland 536
Hongkong 549	Korea 546	Hongkong 533
Japan 539	Finland 541	Canada 524
Flanders 526	Flanders 537	Flanders 519
Netherlands 522	Japan 529	Australia 515
Germany 520	Canada 527	Netherlands 508
Slovenia 512	Netherlands 526	Poland 500
Poland 508	Poland 495	Denmark 495

Asian countries : excellent performances!!  
Shanghai!!!



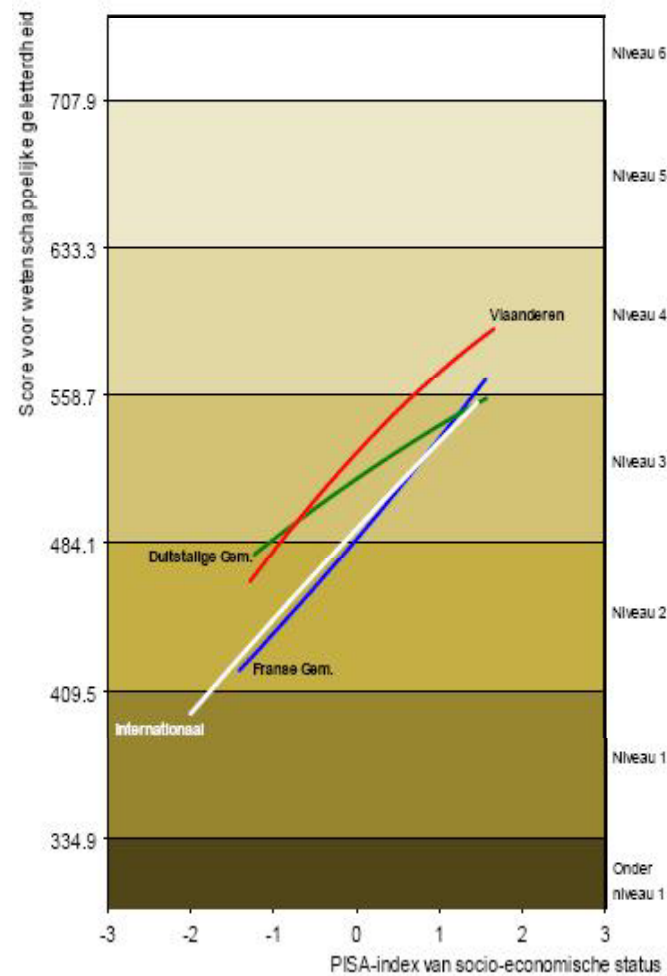


# PISA 2003





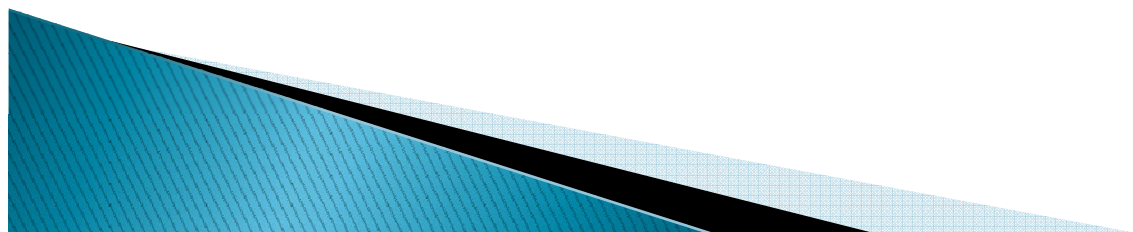
# PISA 2006



## Characteristics of Flemish performances in all PISA surveys

- Excellent average results in the 3 domains
- Large cohort of excellent performers
- Large gap between excellent performers and poor performers
- Strong impact of socio-economic background of students
- Strong impact of language spoken at home (i.e. language of instruction)
- Poor performances of first and second generation immigrant students

Policy brief 2004 – 2009 : Today champions in mathematics.  
Tomorrow champions in equal opportunities!



## 5. Strategic planning in education

Traditional educational planning : forecasting techniques and simulation models were developed!

Why ? To orient educational investments:

- Manpower approach ( needs of labour market)
- Social demand approach ( demand for schooling)
- Cost–benefit approach ( which investment benefits most?)

Strategic planning a useful tool in periods of great expansion in western countries and newly independent countries.

UNESCO : International Institute for Educational Planning!!)

Mixed results! Did not correspond to expectations. Disenchantment!



## Traditional educational planning : a quantitative approach

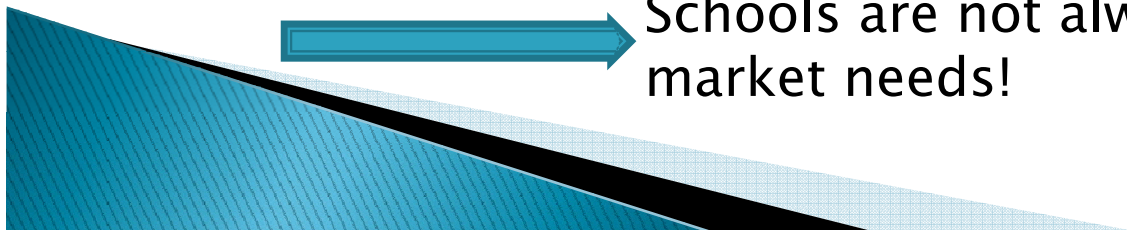
How to solve problems in **centralised systems** such as numbers of schools to accommodate students. How many teachers for the next years? How to meet labour market needs? What impact of policies on educational budget?

Traditional educational planning did not go well with a heavily **decentralised system** such as the Flemish.

Providers start schools and the state lays down a legal and financial framework.

Recently, a **partnership approach** to design and organise new fields of study in technical and vocational education to meet labour market needs.

Schools are not always responsive to labour market needs!



Strategic management cycle ( in literature)

Must be responsive to a changing environment.

### Analysis of wider environment of schooling

- Macro-economic and demographic framework
- Access to and participation in education.
- Equity
- Quality and relevance
- External efficiency
- Costs and funding of education
- Managerial and institutional aspects

### Policy design

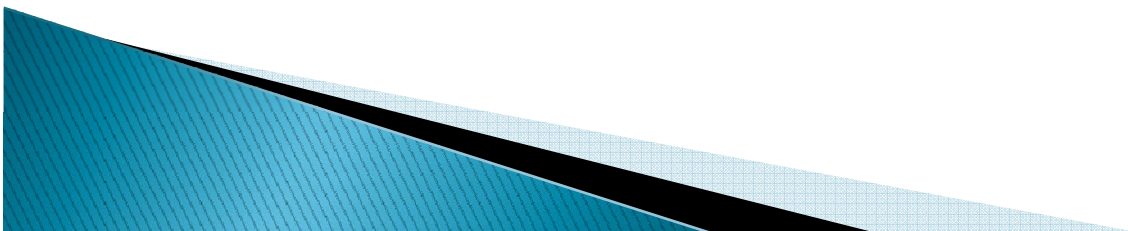
- Access( participation, including gender and equity issues)
- Quality ( internal efficiency, relevance and external effectiveness)
- Management ( governance, decentralisation, resource management)



## Planning for monitoring and evaluation

- Monitoring : credible indicators based on a reliable information system.
- Evaluation : internal evaluation, self-evaluation or external evaluation.

## Policy simulation



## 6. Strategic educational planning in Flanders

Linked to the 5-year political cycle!

**Government agreement** among political parties has a short chapter on education : The learning Flemish citizen.

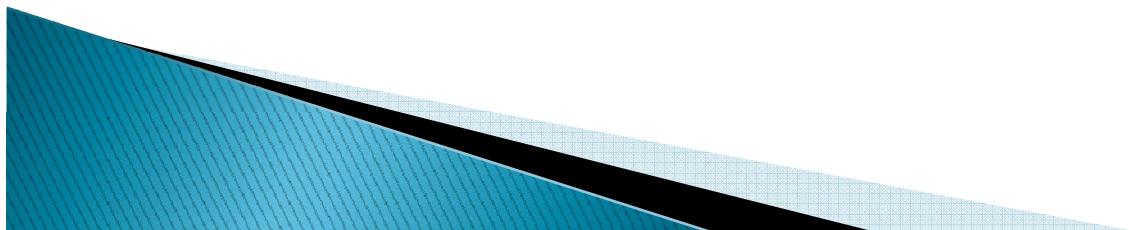
**Policy brief 2009 – 2014 by minister of education : 'Going beyond boundaries for every talent!!'**

- Analysis of context for educational policymaking : the wider environment of schooling. Deep trends and driving forces with an impact on education and school policies.
  - \* Demographic developments
  - \* Education and the labour market
  - \* Cultural and societal developments (e.g. gender issues, immigration, etc.)



## Strategic and operational objectives

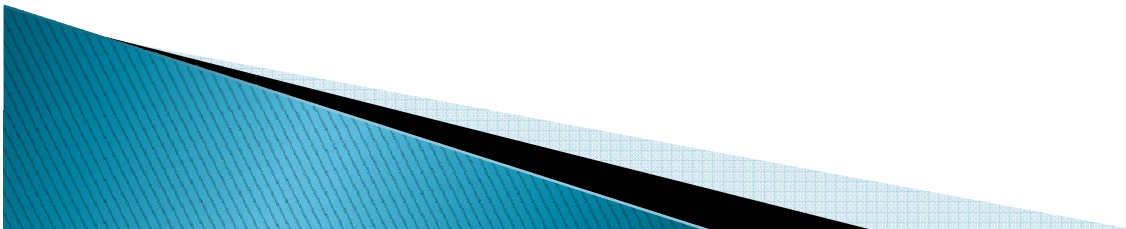
- Educate (Bildung!) **open, strong personalities**
  - **Every talent** must get opportunities
  - Learning of **Dutch** and stimulate **foreign language learning**
  - Prepare students for a successful **transition to the labour market**
  - Strengthen **integration of schools** in local, regional and international networks
  - Facilitate **high quality teaching and learning** in every single school
  - **Appreciate teachers** as key people in the education system
  - **Invest** in sustainable and modern **educational facilities**
- + lots of operational objectives





## The policy brief : a participatory process through advisory bodies and Parliament

- \* **The Flemish educational council** ( represents all stakeholders) comments on all aspects that are of interest to its members.
- \* **Socio-economic council for Flanders** ( represents private employers and unions). Comments on labour market aspects, budgetary issues, relevance of priorities, etc.
- \* **Flemish Parliament** will comment on all aspects of the policy brief.  
The minister does not reply!



## Policy implementation through operational objectives

Always in partnership with providers and unions!!

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring by ministry and inspectorate

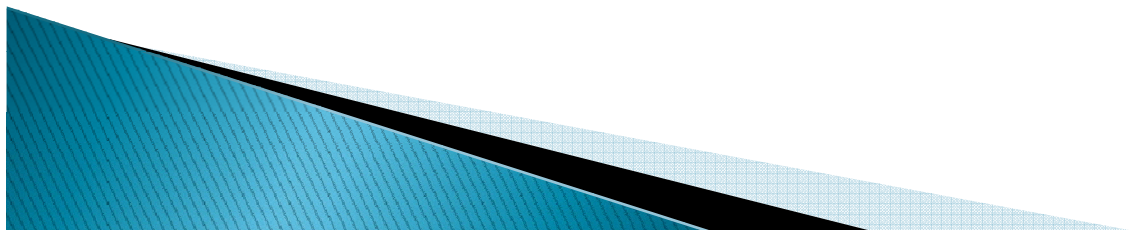
Evaluation by ministry, universities, consultancies.

## Every year : a one-year policy note

To prioritise objectives and respond to new challenges

## New educational research

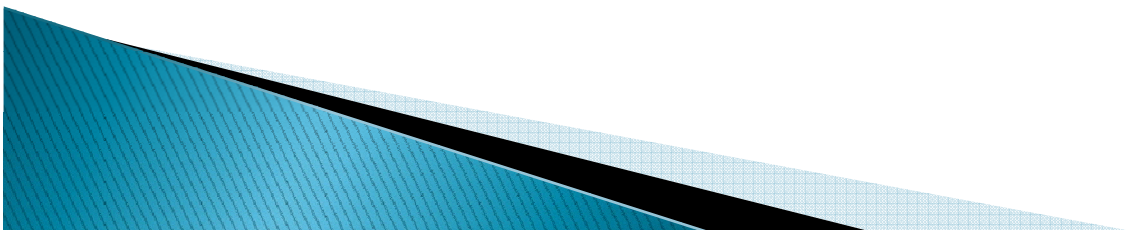
To prepare for a new policy brief after 5 years.



## 7. The strategic plan of G-O, the agency for 'community schools', former state schools.

Recently, the governing board of the Flemish agency, has developed a plan with **5 strategic objectives**.

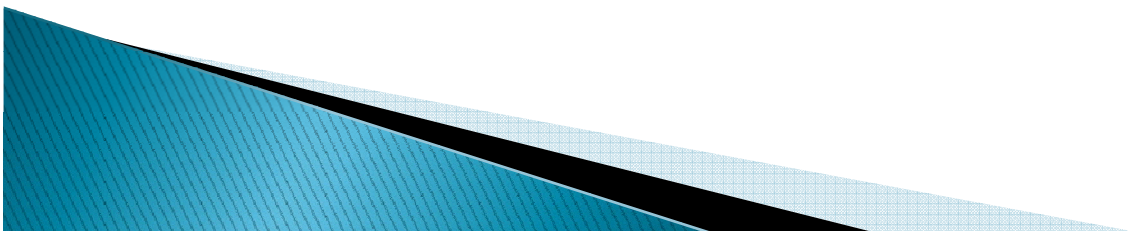
- The agency develops a **knowledge centre** to support policy design and development at all educational levels.
- The agency implements a **quality assurance system** in all its institutions.
- 'Community schools' are **open schools** with a **multicultural character** and **embedded in local communities**.
- The agency invests enough in a **geographically diverse provision of schools**, taking into account societal needs.



- The agency implements and achieves a strong **professional personnel policy** at levels of governance ( national, regional and local).

At regional ( groups of schools) and local (schools) levels the boards have tried to develop their own strategic plans. They include aspects such as

- Provision of schools and fields of study
- Criteria to select school leaders
- Budgets for investments
- Development of pedagogical projects
- Etc.



## 8. Strategic planning at regional and local level

One way or another, all schools or groups of schools develop mission statements and strategic plans.

- Planning of educational provision by school boards or groups of schools
- Consolidation of school map
- SWOT analysis by school boards and school leaders
- Investments in educational facilities
- Manpower planning : criteria to hire teachers, dealing with teacher shortages and redundancies
- Examine relevance of pedagogical offering for the labour market
- How to strengthen integration in the local community
- How to attract more students? ?

**Schools compete for students!!!**

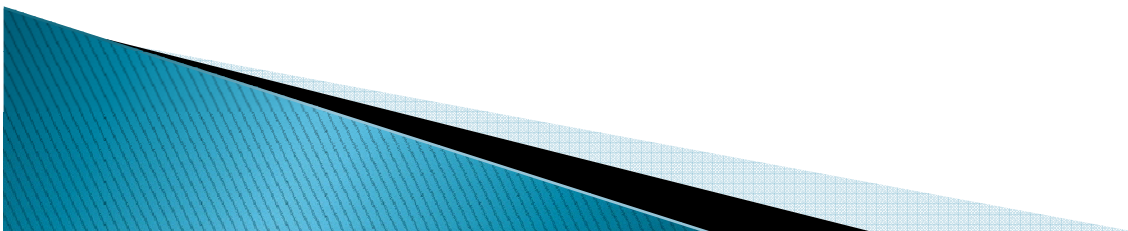


## 9. The case of Jesuit schools : limited central planning

Each and every school has its own board.

Common objectives for all schools are monitored by a central authority:

- Excellence : 75% of high school students succeed in higher education
- Social awareness : schools must develop such activities through the whole curriculum



Thank you!

