MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT

Guidelines
for Updating the General Curriculum
Framework

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Content

MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT

DECREE

REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF GUIDELINES FOR UPDATING THE GENERAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

18 November 2019, No. V-1317

Vilnius

As part of the Implementation Plan of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved by Resolution No. 167 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 13 March 2017 'Regarding the Approval of the Implementation Plan of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania', namely Point 3 of Task 2.1.1 'Updating pre-school, primary, basic and secondary education curricula by adapting them to students with different educational needs and integrating sustainable development, creativity, entrepreneurship and STEAM competences', I hereby

a p p r o v e of the Guidelines for Updating the General Curriculum Framework (attached).

Minister of Education, Science and Sport   Algirdas Monkevičius

Chapter I

General provisions

1. The purpose of the Guidelines for Updating the General Education Curricula (hereinafter – the Guidelines) is to lay down the directions for updating the general curriculum framework for primary, basic and secondary education (hereinafter – general curriculum framework) in order to ensure higher quality general education.

2. The general curriculum framework is a document governing the content of national level education, which helps to pursue the goals of primary education, basic education and secondary education. The general curriculum framework defines the learning outcomes pursued, laying down the scopes of teaching and learning, and specifying features of levels of attainment of learning outcomes.

3. The Guidelines lay down the areas for change in the general curriculum framework for primary, basic and secondary education, including the goals, learning outcomes (competences), learning content and changes in the assessment of student achievements.

4. The Guidelines contribute to the implementation of provisions of long-term strategic documents, namely, Lithuania's Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030' approved by Resolution No. XI-2015 of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 May 2012 'Regarding the Approval of Lithuania's Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030"' (hereinafter – Lithuania's Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030') and the fourth goal for sustainable development 'To ensure inclusive and equal quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all' of the Sustainable Development Agenda 'Change the world. Agenda for sustainable development till 2030' adopted by the United Nations Assembly General on 25 September 2015 (hereinafter – Sustainable Development Agenda 2030).

5. The National Strategy for Education 2013-2022 approved by Resolution No. XII-745 of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 December 2013 'Regarding the Approval of the National Strategy for Education 2013-2022' (hereinafter – Strategy for Education 2013-2022), the Guidelines for Change of General Education Schools approved by Resolution No. XIII-627 of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania of 11 July 2017 'Regarding the Approval of the Guidelines for Change of General Education Schools' (hereinafter – the Guidelines for Change of General Education Schools), the Guidelines for Changing Science and Innovation Policies approved by Resolution No. XII-2654 of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania of 27 September 2016 'Regarding the Approval of the Guidelines for Changing Science and Innovation Policies' and the Concept of a Good School approved by Decree No. V-1308 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 21 December 2015 'Regarding the Approval of the Concept of a Good School' (hereinafter – the Concept of a Good School) have been used in drafting the Guidelines.

6. The Guidelines are based on the provisions laid down in the Description of Primary, Basic and Secondary Education Curricula approved by Decree No. V-1309 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 21 December 2015 'Regarding the Approval of the Description of Primary, Basic and Secondary Education Curricula' (hereinafter – the Description). They have been updated and supplemented in the Guidelines in light of education legislation of Lithuania and international education-related documents (data of European Union (EU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (hereinafter – UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereinafter – OECD), national and international research, proposals made in discussions with the academic community and other stakeholders.

7. The general curriculum framework shall be updated in accordance with the principles of the education system enshrined in Article 5 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania.

Chapter II

Overview of the current situation

UNIT ONE
Overview of strategic documents

8. Article 4 (2) of the Law on Education stipulates that **the education content shall be developed and systematically updated for the implementation of education objectives set forth in the Law – to develop an educated, mature personality, which can be characterized by: focus on values based on national awareness and openness to the world's humanistic culture; modern competences and a commitment to lifelong learning; readiness and motivation to contribute to the country's sustainable development and development of a democratic society**. Updating the education content takes into account the changing needs of the country driven by the socio-cultural environment, the needs of the local and school community, student experience, and educational needs and interests.

9. Education is an integral component of the development of the state and society. The aim of focusing the general education system on the development of creativity, citizenship and leadership has been noted as one of key changes in Lithuania's Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030'.

10. The National Education Strategy 2013-2022 establishes that in order to target the education system on developing creativity, knowledge of modern technologies, entrepreneurship, citizenship and leadership, curricula open to creativity, search and development shall be developed at all levels of education.

11. Ensuring opportunities for access to inclusive and equal high-quality education and lifelong learning for all has been defined in the 'Agenda for Sustainable Development till 2030' as one of 17 sustainable development goals. In pursuit of this goal, the plan is to promote high-quality education geared towards sustainable development.

12. The importance of the relationship between education and sustainable development has been highlighted in EU, OECD and UNESCO strategic documents on education, which lay down global trends and challenges in line with components of sustainable development:

    12.1. environmental protection – climate change, environmental pollution and reduction of natural sources encourage reconsideration of the human impact on ecosystems, the sustainability of the current development model and mutual relations of various ecosystems;

    12.2. economical – scientific knowledge, technological innovation and artificial intelligence raise fundamental questions such as: How to ensure sustainable development? What is the role of the human being in the future economy? How to create new economic and social models ensuring higher quality life for all?;

    12.3. social – the population has been growing, migration, urbanization, social and cultural diversity have been changing countries and communities; differences in the quality of life

have become more pronounced, while conflicts, terrorism, instability and populism have undermined trust in other people and in fundamental state institutions.

13. The Communication from the European Commission 'Improving and Modernizing Education' notes that quality education is of particular importance to the personal, social, and professional improvement of citizens, and opportunities for finding employment. It is also one of the most effective ways of reducing social and economic disparities and increasing social inclusion mentioned in the European Commission Communication to the European Parliament, Council, European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions 'Improving and Modernizing Education' (COM(2016) 941 final). Council Recommendation No. 2018/C 189/01 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning points out the exceptional role of key competences: these are the competences necessary for each person's personal development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle and active citizenship. If students are to acquire the competences necessary in the changing world, changes in education content are necessary.

14. The OECD Guidelines[1] encourage the pursuit of broad educational goals. They emphasize the commitment to help each student to become a mature personality, fulfil their powers and build a shared future based on the well-being of the individual, society and the planet. The OECD Guidelines highlight that the role of competences – learning to set clear goals, to perceive innovations and find complex solutions to complex problems – will be important in the future. Although different cultures bring to life a diversity of values and attitudes, there are foundational values that cannot be ignored. The OECD Guidelines list education content-related issues: curricula are overloaded with minor content, without responding to the challenges of the future and the needs of students with different abilities; education content does not provide students with equal opportunities, is insufficiently focused on the development of values, and also fails to ensure the efficient implementation of education curricula.

15. The Guidelines for the Implementation of Goal 4 of UNESCO's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[2] notes the exceptional role of education in the implementation of change and the importance of systemic access to higher quality education. Learners must be provided with opportunities to acquire knowledge, and develop the skills and values necessary to build peaceful, healthy and sustainable communities. Culture is the foundation of sustainability, taking into account local conditions and knowledge of cultural expression and heritage, their diversity and respect for human rights. UNESCO's analysis[3] recognizes education content and its effective implementation to be one of the most important factors that determine the quality of education and better learning outcomes in the context of constant change and uncertainty.

16. Strategic tasks for the change of education content laid down in the Guidelines for Change of General Education Schools are: to draft a competence-oriented general curriculum framework, to seek to ensure appropriate teaching and learning resources, and to improve the assessment system of learning achievements. The document emphasizes that a rational balance in all areas of education is important for disclosing mature personalities and individual opportunities. Students are encouraged to responsibly implement solutions based on values and the latest knowledge, and to create a prospect for the future.

17. The Concept of a Good School points out that education content should be fun, empowering, sufficiently broad and deep, it should be challenging and encourage problem

[1] *The Future of Education and Skills. Education 2030.*
https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf
[2] *Education 2030. Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, 2015*
[3] *Reconceptualizing and Repositioning Curriculum in the 21st Century, 2017*

solving, thus developing the competences necessary for life today; learning by exploring, experimenting, discovering and inventing, creating and communicating.

UNIT TWO
Overview of research

18. Research on the values of a society reveals the values that guide personal behaviors and affect the development of the society, and that should be strengthened. Studies have shown that we are a society which values human rights and individual freedom, but one that lacks solidarity, citizenship and tolerance. Nevertheless, young people are more civic minded than the older members of society; Lithuanian students are more civic minded than the international average.

18.1. A strong civil society is a society whose culture on the development of children's values focuses more on personal qualities that develop interpersonal communication and collaboration: respect for others, selflessness, and a sense of responsibility. According to the data of the European Values Study (EVS, 1990, 1999, 2008), Lithuania, just like most other post-Soviet countries, has attached much less importance to these qualities than to personal freedom and autonomy, i.e. the qualities that reduce the need for collaboration with other people. Compared to other European countries, Lithuanian society is one of the weakest civil societies, and is severely affected by political and social alienation. Aspects of civic attitudes, such as confidence in compatriots, solidarity with social exclusion groups, tolerance for people leading a different lifestyle, support for a political community, principles, the functioning and institutions of a democratic country, and civic involvement prove this fact. Based on the conclusions of the Analysis of Changes in Moral Values of the Lithuanian population[4], there is a lenient attitude to violations of civic morals (such as tax fraud, state benefit fraud, etc.) in Lithuania, in common with some other post-Soviet countries.

18.2. The Corruption Perceptions Index, which reflects the scope of corruption in the public and political sectors, conducted by Transparency International in 2018 also shows that there is significant leniency to violations of civic morals. According to the index, there was progress at the beginning of the decade, but the situation has not changed since 2015. In 2018, just like in previous years, Lithuania had a score of 59 on a scale of 100 (with 0 being a highly corrupt country and 100 – a highly transparent one). This is worse than the average in Western Europe and the EU (66 points in 2018).

18.3. The study of the Civic Empowerment Index (CEI) conducted in Lithuania revealed that the CEI of the society, which covers the perception of civic influence, the actual and potential civic engagement, and the assessment of risks of civic activities, increased slightly (from 34 to 37 points) over the decade (from 2007 till 2016)[5]. However, the CEI value among 15-29-year-olds (which is 42.5 points) is 5.5 points higher than that of society as a whole. Young people stand out for their assessment of civic influence in particular and are more inclined to act in the face of various societal problems; they are more actively involved in civic and political activities. These 15-19-year-olds stand out for a high appreciation of their influence and a reduced sense of threat that may be faced by civically active people. Participation in public organizations and various civic activities significantly increase the civic empowerment of young people. The CEI value of young people currently involved in youth organizations is up to 20 points higher than that of people who have

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[4] Žiliukaitė R., Poviliūnas A., Savicka A. *Changes in the values of Lithuanian society during the twenty years of independence*. Vilnius, 2016

[5] Civil Society Institute. *Presentation of the study of the Civic Empowerment Index of Lithuanian Society of 2016*. 26 June 2017, Vilnius, http://www.civitas.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/PGI-2016-pristatymas_psl.pdf

never had such experience. Civic empowerment of young people is also linked to participation in non-formal education activities both in school and outside of it. The study also assessed the current civic education of students. Respondents of all ages gave 6 out of 10 points for its effectiveness, while students themselves gave it almost 7 points; however, the assessment of better students or more active citizens was much more critical. These data together highlight the need for supplementing citizenship lessons with non-formal civic education activities, encouraging involvement in activities of public organizations.

18.4. According to the data of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), which examine civic knowledge of students and their understanding, attitudes and citizenship-related behaviors, the average score of 8th graders in Lithuania was slightly above the international average; the civic mindedness of Lithuanian students increased in 2016–2019[6].

19. The pursuit of personal and public well-being requires developing a strong self-confident person, who can create harmonious interpersonal relationships. Research has shown that the mental health of a large number of Lithuanian students is not that good; students lack health sustainability and strengthening skills, confidence in their abilities; there is still widespread bullying in schools.

19.1. According to the data of the National Examination Centre (hereinafter – NEC) of 2018, about 60 % of Lithuanian students feel good at school, however, the mental health of students differs across schools and grades; the share of students who feel good at school ranges from 30 to 76 % in municipal schools[7]. The Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (5th, 7th and 9th graders) (HBSC) study of 2018[8] revealed that 12.5 % of students have a low level of satisfaction with their lives, with almost a third of students living with reduced mental health, more than a half of students feel they have no support from their classmates, almost a third of students (27.8 %) suffer bullying and almost a fifth (19.3 %) bully others. The comparison of different age groups revealed that 7th graders suffered from the highest bullying rates, with boys being more likely to bully others. Although bullying prevention programmes have been implemented in Lithuanian schools, the country ranked 42nd out of 44 countries in terms of the number of cases of bullying in 2014 (HBSC, 2014). The data of the National Student Achievement Check (hereinafter – NMPP) of 2018[9] revealed that 64.8 % of 11-15-year-old students were not happy with their school. It should be noted that the indicator of well-being of 6th and 8th graders at school improved over the years, and even though this improvement is relatively small, it is significant and has been consistent.

19.2. According to the HBSC 2018 data, only a fifth of 11-15-year-old children are physically active every day. Compared to other European countries, Lithuania has the worst alcohol consumption and smoking rates: one out of six students tends to drink alcohol regularly, and every tenth student uses tobacco products every day, but the number of students that have attempted smoking has been decreasing. However, the sexual behavior indicators of 9th graders are nearly the best in Europe[10].

19.3. According to the PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) study in the field of natural sciences in 2015, a strong correlation was observed between student self-confidence and the results of solving tasks in natural sciences in nearly all countries.

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[6] Dukynaitė R., Stundžia M. International Civic and Citizenship Education Study ICCS 2017. Presentation of results. 10 November 2017, https://www.nec.lt/failai/7214_ICCS_2016_pristatymas_2017_11_10.pdf

[7] *Lithuania. Education in the country and regions 2019. Gap in student achievements*. Vilnius, 2019

[8] Šmigelskas K., Vaičiūnas T. Presentation of the Study of Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children. 16 May 2019

[9] *Report on the National Student Achievement Check*. Vilnius, 2018

[10] Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. *Health and lifestyle of pupils in Lithuania – who are we shaping?*

The difference between the results of students with the highest and lowest self-confidence was 59 points in Lithuania.

20. Learning achievements of Lithuanian students are not good enough, as indicated by the lack of a systematic improvement of results. According to research data, too many students do not reach the minimum level of achievement, and very few students reach the maximum level.

20.1. According to the data of the 2016 PIRLS (*Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*) study, the reading skills of Lithuanian 4th graders are higher than average in the research scale, with more students having achieved the maximum level compared to the average of other countries that participated in the research. Furthermore the achievements of Lithuanian students have significantly increased since 2011. The results in mathematics and sciences of 4th and 8th grade students were also were above the average of the research scale and have significantly improved in recent years[11].

20.2. NMPP results of 2014–2018 show improved achievements of 4th–8th grade students in mathematics, reading and writing, and improvement of 8th graders in natural and social sciences[12].

20.3. According to the PISA 2015 data, one in every four student in Lithuania does not achieve the second out of the six achievement levels, and only a very small number of Lithuanian students reach the highest – fifth and sixth – level of achievement and are able to solve the most difficult tasks in mathematics, reading and science. These Lithuanian indicators, especially those of high achievements, are worse than the OECD average[13]. The study also revealed that the ability of students to apply knowledge and to solve actual problems in all areas being analyzed (reading, natural science and mathematics) in Lithuania was lower than the average of OECD member countries[14], and has not improved, or has even declined.

20.4. According to the NEC data, 5.7 % of students failed to achieve a satisfactory level of achievements in the Lithuanian language and as many as 20.07 % – in mathematics in the basic education achievement tests (hereinafter – PUPP) conducted in 2019. Compared to last year, the number of students, who received a grade of 9-10 for Lithuanian language and literature, and mathematics in PUPP, increased slightly.

20.5. Both international and national studies of student achievements revealed a significant gap in the achievements in Lithuania: between girls and boys, children learning in city and rural schools, and different types of schools[15].

21. Studies revealed that students do not acquire sufficient skills of working in a group, knowing how to learn, financial literacy, the use of ICT and other skills necessary for modern life. The development of these skills should receive more attention.

21.1. According to the NMPP 2017 data[16], about a fifth of 4th–8th graders think they do not know how to learn, and the number of students believing that has not declined since 2012.

21.2. The PISA study of collaborative problem-solving conducted in 2015 revealed that Lithuanian students are barely able to use the potential of working in a group, Lithuanian

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[11] TIMMS data – *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* – 2015

[12] NMPP 2018. *Report on the National Student Achievement Check*. National Examination Centre. Vilnius, 2018

[13] Dukynaitė R., Stundžia M. International Mathematics and Science Study TIMSS 2015. Presentation of results. 29 November 2016

[14] Dukynaitė R., Stundžia M. International Mathematics and Science Study TIMSS 2015. Presentation of results. 29 November 2016

[15] *Lithuania. Education in the country and regions in 2016. Student achievements*. Vilnius, 2016

[16] *Report on the National Student Achievement Check in 2017*. Vilnius, 2017

fifteen-year-olds achieved lower than average results in collaborative problem-solving compared to the average results in OECD member countries[17].

21.3. According to the studies on financial literacy, nearly every third 15-year-old student that participated in the study did not attain the basic – second – level of student financial literacy, which means that these students are unable to apply their knowledge and skills in various situations where they have to deal with financial issues, and are not ready to take responsible and independent actions[18].

21.4. According to the data of the International Computer and Information Literacy (ICILS), computer and information literacy of 8th grade students in Lithuania was close to the international average in 2013 but was far behind other European countries[19].

22. The education content laid down in the general curriculum framework lacks coherence, while the curricula of some subjects cover less than in other OECD countries. Some provisions of the general curriculum framework do not materialize in education.

22.1. According to the analysis prepared by the Education Council, the inner coherence of subject-based content in the general curriculum framework is insufficient, thus updates to education content must be better targeted and more systematic. This can be achieved by improving the coherence of curricula and adjusting the scope of their content, emphasizing the importance of general competences for a person's maturity[20].

22.2. The results of the Curriculum Content Mapping carried out within the scope of the OECD project 'Education 2030'[21] revealed that the general curriculum framework of certain subjects covered less when compared to the education content of certain other OECD member countries (for example, mathematics content), therefore, students do not learn the same content as their peers in other countries do; different grouping of areas of education and the subjects which they cover affect the purpose of education and the practice of organizing education. The analysis revealed that the scope of inclusion of certain personal qualities, abilities and values in the general curriculum framework of Lithuania was insufficient, or they are planned in the curriculum of one subject only or not included at all (for example, the development of qualities such as perseverance and resilience, trust and respect). This demonstrates that curricula do not create conditions for developing the values, skills and competences mentioned above. This analysis also showed that certain competences (for example, problem solving or critical thinking) are often indicated in the general curriculum framework of various subjects, receiving disproportionate attention (but the above-mentioned data on student achievements show that these competences are not sufficiently developed); educational priorities have been found to not be sufficiently refined in the curricula of certain subjects.

22.3. General education requires that children be educated based on their abilities, but schools still find this to be a considerable challenge. The data of the external assessment of general education schools reveal that less than one tenth of schools evaluated in 2011-2017 focus on student needs and the organization of education (personalization, etc.). The differentiation of education and progress of each student are the two aspects which both external evaluators and schools themselves have considered to be weak points for several years now. The data of the 2018 external evaluation of schools revealed that 60 % of lessons can be considered modern lessons where students work in groups, discuss, do

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[17] *PISA tests of 15-year-old students in OECD countries in 2015. Collaborative problem-solving. Report.* Vilnius, 2017

[18] *PISA tests of 15-year-old students in OECD countries in 2015. Report on financial literacy.* Vilnius, 2017

[19] *Lithuania. Education in the country and regions in 2016. Student achievements.* Vilnius 2016

[20] *Overview of educational situation in Lithuania in 2013 – 2016.* Lithuanian Educational Council, 2017

[21] *Education 2030*, OECD, 2018

experiments, make presentations, engage in activities outside their classroom, etc., while other lessons were teacher-centered rather than student-centered[22].

23. There is a lack of coherence between educational goals, content delivery and assessment of achievements. The analyses show that the effectiveness of the achievement assessment system must be reconsidered.

23.1. The overview of the Lithuanian Educational Council[23] emphasizes the problem of assessment of student achievements and final exams, draws attention to the negative effects of the standardized examination system that narrows educational goals, and the lack of constant feedback throughout the entire assessment system. The development of the cumulative assessment system is considered to be an important measure for improving the assessment system.

23.2. The impact of *matura* examinations on the quality of general education has also been emphasized in the overview of the Lithuanian Education Policy by OECD: 'In general education schools, where a greater focus should be placed on various learning opportunities that would not be overshadowed by incentives offered by the examination system (*matura* examinations). [...] The assessment of work in classroom should be better and more cohesively associated with enrolment in higher education institutions through the application of a controlled system for grading work in classroom or aligning the structure and content of *matura* examinations to match curricula delivered in schools'[24].

23.3. According to the 2018 data of the National Agency for School Evaluation (NMVA), the assessment of student achievements and self-assessment are among the aspects emphasized most often during external evaluations of schools. Assessment of education (teachers' activities) should be improved in a fifth of schools, self-assessment of students should be improved in nearly a tenth of schools, and the entire assessment area should be improved in another 13.2 % of schools. Schools themselves see that self-assessment of students is the weakest of the aspects under consideration[25]. The analysis of national tests of student achievements (2014, 2015) revealed that formative assessment in Lithuanian schools has not been applied efficiently enough, because no statistically significant association was identified between the summarized indicator of student achievements and the factor *Practical formative, positive assessment*. Scientific literature presents abundant evidence of the fact that formative assessment adds value to learning and student achievements, but national results revealed that the implementation of formative assessment in Lithuania has not been successful, therefore more attention should be devoted to strengthening the assessment culture in schools and developing teacher assessment competence.

23.4. The development of non-formal education of children provides additional opportunities for students to develop individual learning skills. According to the Education Management Information System (hereinafter – ŠVIS) data, 50 % of students took advantage of non-formal education opportunities at school or elsewhere in 2016, and in 2018 – 60 % of students used this opportunity. In 2018, 32 % of students attended extracurricular activities at school and 44 % – out of school, but no system has been developed to assess and recognize student competences, encourage accumulating evidence of competences or achievements and applying them for further education and study purposes.

UNIT THREE

[22] *Lithuania. Education in the country and regions 2019. Gap between student achievements*. Vilnius, 2019

[23] *Overview of educational situation in Lithuania in 2013–2016*. Lithuanian Educational Council, 2017

[24] *Overview of educational policy of different countries. Education in Lithuania*. OECD, 2017

[25] *National Agency for School Evaluation. Quality of activities of general education schools. Annual report*. 2018

Suggestions of stakeholders

24. The Lithuanian Teachers' Association and other interested organizations that have made recommendations for updating the general curriculum framework made the following proposals:

24.1. to revise the list of competences and their understanding given the traditions, current challenges and trends for change; to present a more accurate list of competences and description of the results of their development;

24.2. to ensure coherence between the content of the subjects taught/areas of development vertically and horizontally; to resolve problems of content integration and overload in curricula; to link integrative programmes to curricula, providing examples of such links;

24.3. to give more importance to formative assessment and cumulative assessment of learning outcomes.

UNIT FOUR
Conclusions

25. The following **directions for updating the general curriculum framework** have been distinguished based on the overview of the current situation:

25.1. **to strengthen the development of personal qualities and values**;

25.2. **to create conditions for each student to attain a higher achievement level**.

26. The following shall be planned when updating the general curriculum framework:

to enhance the development of personal values, social and emotional abilities, self-confidence, resilience and creativity;

to systematically include the development of trust, respect and tolerance for other opinions, cultural diversity, national self-awareness, civic mindedness, attitudes towards the culture of a democratic dialogue and sustainable development;

to create conditions for each student to achieve a higher achievement level by providing a solid and sustainable knowledge base; to develop competences through the content of the subjects taught;

to meaningfully include relevant content aimed at developing student competences; to provide for (educational) learning opportunities in different contexts; to establish links between levels, areas of education and subjects;

to ensure coherence between educational goals, content delivery and assessment of achievements.

Chapter III

(Educational) Learning outcomes

27. The description notes that learning outcomes are consistently acquired competences that demonstrate personal, spiritual, intellectual and physical maturity. Personal maturity refers to a set of competences that allow making own choices on professional careers, making a personal contribution to sustainable development of the Lithuanian, European and global community, and advanced economy. The Law on Education defines competence as the ability to perform a particular activity based on the totality of the acquired knowledge, abilities, skills and values.

28. The **direction of competence-oriented education shall continue to be followed** in updating the primary and basic curriculum framework, approved by Decree No. ISAK-

2433 of the Minister of Education and Science of 26 August 2008 'Regarding the Approval of Primary and Basic Curricula' (hereinafter – Primary and Basic Curricula). Components of competences shall be itemized in updating the concept of a competence:

28.1.　knowledge: subject, interdisciplinary, procedural and epistemic. Subject knowledge includes concepts, detailed content to be learnt in lessons of a specific subject, e.g. mathematics or the Lithuanian language. Interdisciplinary knowledge links the content of one subject to that of another. Procedural knowledge involves understanding how to perform an action in a certain sequence. Procedural knowledge may relate to a single area or cover more areas. Epistemic knowledge is the understanding of how experts and researchers in a certain field (mathematicians, historians, scientists, etc.) think and work. It allows students to broaden their knowledge of a field or subject, and helps them understand why they need to learn the subject, where and how knowledge in the field can be applied;

28.2.　skills: cognitive, metacognitive, emotional, social and practical;

28.3.　values: personal, interpersonal and societal.

29. In order to develop competences and ensure the coherence and continuity of their development, it is important to rely on the individual progress of a student and focus on their talents and strengths. **Competences are developed through subject-based content**. Updated general curricula of subjects reveal how the subject content develops student competences.

30. **Values shall be developed with a focus on the following fundamental values: democracy, empathy, dignity, responsibility, trust; the following competences shall be developed: social and emotional, cognitive, creativity, civic, cultural and communication.**

31. When distinguishing competences defined in the Primary and Basic Curricula and in the Secondary Curricula approved by Decree No. V-269 of the Minister of Education and Science of 21 February 2011 'Regarding the Approval of Secondary Curricula', studies of the state of education, trends in educational sciences, and recommendations by international organizations have been taken into account, as well as ensuring the continuity of competence development.

32. **Social, emotional and healthy lifestyle competence**. The social, emotional and healthy lifestyle competence is understood as a person's self-awareness and self-discipline, social awareness, abilities to build interpersonal relations, responsible decision-making and personal care for physical and mental health. The social, emotional and healthy lifestyle competence helps pursue own personal goals, build harmonious family relations, and take meaningful action in a broader social and cultural context. Having acquired the social, emotional and healthy lifestyle competence, students shall have self-confidence and seek to improve; know and control their emotions and behavior; understand their personal qualities, strengths and talents; follow the principles of a healthy lifestyle; set long-term and short-term development goals and motivate themselves to pursue them, planning directions of one's professional life; recognize feelings of other people; respect different opinions, recognize similarities and differences between people; communicate and cooperate successfully; deal constructively with interpersonal conflicts; resist negative influence; seek assistance and properly offer it as necessary; behave responsibly when making decisions and be able to predict the consequences of decisions; participate in building communities and public welfare.

33. **Cognitive competence**. The cognitive competence is the motivation and ability to get to know own self and the world based on knowledge, research and reflection on experience. It includes exploration, critical thinking, problem solving, and knowing how to learn skills. The cognitive competence provides opportunities for a person to develop intellectual

powers and to build a relationship with reality in accordance with the principles of scientific methodology and moral values. Experience, results and insights acquired in the cognition process are a presumption for change, namely, responsible and knowledge-based problem solving, and creation of innovation. Having acquired the cognitive competence, students shall appreciate cognition as an essential condition for personal and social development; know and show interest in natural and social life (political, social, cultural) reality; build new knowledge on the basis of the available knowledge; research the phenomena of reality and their relations by meaningfully choosing the object and methods of research, assessing the results achieved and justifying conclusions; raise problematic questions, identify issues to be addressed and areas requiring change, assessing various alternatives to change, their moral, social, economic and environmental consequences; create a coherent worldview by interpreting and linking knowledge from different disciplines; plan their learning, learn purposefully, reflecting on their success and thinking what to do next.

34. **Creativity competence**. The creativity competence is a person's motivation and ability to create and implement new: ideas, inventions, artwork, atypical solutions to problems and other innovations by imagining, improvising, thinking critically and acting in observance of the principles of good morals. Creativity is important for developing entrepreneurship skills. Creativity competence allows persons to unleash their creative abilities and to use them to create new value by contributing to the advancement of the social, cultural and economic life of the society. Having acquired the creativity competence, students shall trust their creative powers; think creatively: come up with original ideas, provide unique assessments and problem-solving options, discern the otherness of objects or phenomena, discover unexpected connections between them; create using their own imagination and experience, techniques and tools of creative expression; work diligently on implementing own ideas, without being afraid to make mistakes and to start anew; not be afraid to take risks, be open to new ideas and challenges, be tolerant to uncertainty, have their own opinion yet respect moral and cultural values.

35. **Civic competence**. The civic competence is national and civic self-awareness, sense of patriotism, activity in pursuit of the well-being of the nation, the society, the state and the world. The civic competence opens up a sense of identity through self-perception as a member of the national and civic community, providing opportunities for actively engaging in national and European life, improving it, fostering ethno-cultural, national, European values, democracy, and the natural environment of the country and the entire world. Having acquired the civic competence, students shall understand that the harmonious life of Lithuania is based on the principles of solidarity, trust and commitment to own civil society; have civic awareness and self-esteem; have good knowledge of and understanding of the historical and cultural heritage of Lithuania and Europe; have knowledge and understanding of trends in the development of the society, the nature of a democratic society and the principles, norms and rules of its life; exercise their rights in duly performing their responsibilities, complying with laws and participating in civil life; have a good understanding of the problems of the country and the world, and contribute to solving these problems as much as possible, basing their activities on the principles of sustainable development.

36. **Cultural competence**. Cultural competence means cultural awareness based on knowledge of the cultural traditions of the nation, the country and Europe, cultural diversity, contemporary cultural phenomena, and cultural expression – fostering and developing cultural identity, traditions of own language and culture, and intercultural dialogue. The cultural competence provides the foundation for creating a cultural identity, fostering and developing the culture of own nation and country, contributing to the cultural diversity of the world. Having acquired the cultural competence, students shall perceive

themselves as heirs and creators of culture; commit to the continuity of the culture of their nation and the country; have a knowledge of, analyze and interpret Lithuanian and European cultural traditions, heritage and the present; become familiar with the cultural diversity of the world; develop an aesthetic awareness and sensitivity to beauty; analyze and appreciate the significance of research, art, politics, public figures for cultural development and the present; promote cultural heritage, contemporary cultural objects and phenomena, and participate in the cultural life of schools, communities, and the country.

37. **Communication competence**. Communication competence is the ability of a person to understand, to create and to convey various types of information, to properly argue his position, and to achieve the implementation of communication intent given the purpose, the addressee and the situation, through ethical use of verbal and non-verbal instruments and technologies. Having acquired the communication competence, students shall assess the importance of communication to people and the society; perceive the opportunities offered by modern media and the impact that the media have on individuals and the society; show no tolerance for the culture of hatred; communicate in observance of the principles of good morals and legitimacy, feel responsible for the truthfulness and accuracy of the information provided; be able to make arguments substantiating their point of view and statements; understand, analyze and critically assess information presented in various forms (verbal, graphic, etc.); apply language skills in practice, follow language norms and use concepts accurately and appropriately; use communication strategies and tools, taking into account the purpose, the addressee and the situation; use modern communication technologies in a safe and ethical manner.

38. Students acquire the knowledge and skills of the subject in lessons of that subject, and develop the respective competences defined in Points 32-37 of the Guidelines. Recommendations for updating the content of each subject taught shall supplement these Guidelines.

Chapter IV

Requirements for the quality of the general curriculum framework

39. Clause 15 of the Description lists the key requirements for the quality of the content of education curricula: "The content of general education curricula shall be relevant and meaningful to students, open to the diversity of their needs and talents, integral, involving in the resolution of actual problems, encouraging self-directed learning and the development of self-awareness. It shall provide students with opportunities to explore and to solve problems, reflecting on them from different perspectives, acting in practice and applying knowledge and skills of different fields".

40. The content of the subject taught shall create conditions for the development of competences presenting it in the general curriculum framework in a coherent manner, taking into account the academic logic, methodology and the relevant age of the students concerned. **The following quality criteria shall be followed** in preparing general curriculum frameworks:

40.1. **value orientation**, when education content promotes the development of values: students develop competences in meaningful contexts by making value-based decisions and implementing meaningful changes;

40.2. **rigor** – the education content promotes academic challenges, in-depth knowledge, creative thinking, activities and reflection;

40.3.   **contextuality** – the education content is related to contexts which would motivate students for an active cognition process and the application of learning outcomes; interdisciplinary subjects in line with the subject tasks and specifics shall be included in curricula content;

40.4.   **dynamic change** – the education content reveals a constant change in reality and outcomes of its cognition (concepts, theories, ideas), broadening and deepening the worldview and opening the prospect of the future;

40.5.   **focus** – the scope of the education content which provides a broad view and a better understanding in pursuit of in-depth learning and quality of results;

40.6.   **consistency** – the sequence of the education content based on educational tasks, academic logic of respective subjects, given the learning outcomes already achieved by students, and the age-specific features;

40.7.   **integrity** means strengthening the interrelationship between the content of different subjects to help students form a coherent worldview for themselves;

40.8.   **coherence** means aligning educational goals, tasks, learning content, educational activities and the assessment of learning outcomes, ensuring cross-coherence (horizontal) of different areas of education and learning content and coherence between different school years/concenters (vertical).

41.   The following areas of education have been distinguished in updating the general curriculum framework: moral education, language education, mathematics education, science education, social education, art education, informatics education, technology education, health and physical education.

42.   In order to develop competences, it is important to ensure a multidimensional relationship between different areas of education, subjects and the real world in the (educational) learning process. Interdisciplinary integration helps students to form a holistic view of the phenomena being analyzed for themselves. Interdisciplinary integration cannot replace the learning of individual subjects. It reveals a broader context of the subject, helping students to analyze the questions that they have, and which are often outside the limits of one subject only. General curricula create conditions for interdisciplinary integration, but collaboration between teachers is the key prerequisite for integration.

43.   Interdisciplinary integration shall be implemented in applying the following methods when updating the general curriculum frameworks:

43.1. Preparation of a national natural science curriculum for 5th–8th grade students ensuring integrated learning of individual natural science subjects (choosing this curriculum as an alternative to separate natural science subject programmes shall be possible).

43.2. The curricula of the subjects being prepared shall be supplemented with the content necessary for the development of skills important in modern life, for example, media and digital literacy, civic mindedness, financial literacy, health literacy, human safety, European Union issues, etc.

43.3. The preparation of the general curriculum frameworks aims to ensure that the content of subjects taught is consistent. Curricula developers must anticipate potential interdisciplinary relationships and disclose them meaningfully when examining proposed interdisciplinary topics: **personal power** (ideals; pursuit of meaning; ideas; personalities); **cultural identity and a sense of community** (cultural heritage; mother tongue; ethnic culture, cultural diversity, cultural development, viability of tradition, historical self-awareness; self-creation of the nation and civil society); **sustainable development** (the world without poverty and hunger; health, healthy lifestyle; gender equality, equal opportunities; peaceful and inclusive communities; sustainable cities and settlements; sustainable agriculture, healthy foods; circular economy, value-added jobs; the role of

education, lifelong learning; advanced technology and innovation; environmental protection; responsible consumption, conservation of natural resources; climate change prevention, sustainable energy, transport; protection of ecosystems, biodiversity; international cooperation; solidarity).

The listed topics have been selected in light of the issues that are relevant to young people: relationship with own self, the pursuit of meaning, past, present and future of the nation and the state, and the ecological, social and economic challenges posed by the global world.

43.4. Joint planning of the implementation of education content by teachers is essential for successful interdisciplinary integration. Interdisciplinary integration can be achieved on a thematic basis by developing certain skills or groups of skills, or organizing joint activities. It should be noted that although relations between certain areas are more easily recognized and they are more often taught in an integrated way in practice, for example STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art (creative activities) and mathematics) or ICT was used for learning other subjects in the implementation of IDKM (integrate subject content into language learning), the proposal is to go beyond content integration of the above subjects. Meaningful disclosure of interrelations between humanitarian disciplines and their relations with other subjects stimulate critical thinking and the creativity of students. The recommendations for the implementation of curricula that are currently underway will include practical examples of interdisciplinary integration.

44. When updating the general curriculum frameworks, the following curricula, integrating programmes, recommendations and other relevant content shall be integrated in the general curriculum framework of content-related subjects: development of life skills, prevention of consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other psychoactive substances, financial literacy, anti-corruption education, global education, intellectual property, health and life skills, human safety, ethnic culture, history of resistance, national security and land defense, career education, and European Union issues.

45. Student achievements planned in the integrating programmes of learning to learn, communication, sustainable development, cultural awareness, media and information literacy shall be linked to competences defined in Points 32-37 of the Guidelines and presented in the descriptions of learning outcomes.

46. Programmes of the history of resistance, national security and national defense, and ethnic culture may also be offered as electives.

Chapter V

Structure of the general curriculum framework

47. The general education curriculum frameworks comprise the introduction common for all curricula and general curricula of subjects being taught integrated to areas of education.

47.1. The introduction shall present the following: general provisions covering the goals, tasks of education and the implementation of the education content; pursued (educational) learning outcomes – human values and competences developed having completed primary, basic and secondary education programmes, linking each stage to the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework; development of competences every two school years; evidence of the development of competences at the four levels of achievement (provided in recommendations for the implementation of the programme); provisions for assessing student achievements.

47.2. Each area of education, which consists of general curricula of the subjects taught shall define: the purpose, indicating how this area of education helps to expand students' worldview, and what it means for the development of a person, community, society and the state; the structure, interconnection of subjects constituting it, and their coherence in

different stages of education; areas of achievement of subjects; peculiarities of competence development; interconnections with other areas of education.

47.3. Subject curricula shall define: the purpose and tasks of the subject; development of student achievements every two school years; integrating elective interdisciplinary topics; features of the four levels of achievements; scopes of the education content shall be presented by distinguishing the content of compulsory subjects (about 70 %) and elective subjects (about 30 %) to be selected by teachers in light of the capabilities of students and in coordination with other teachers. The implementation and proportion of this provision may vary depending on the stage of education, the logic of the discipline, goals, and the teaching tradition. Issues related to the ways of implementing the content of compulsory and elective subjects shall be discussed with subject teachers, experts and described in the general curriculum frameworks and recommendations for their implementation.

48. Curricula developers shall focus on the currently valid timeframe for the implementation of the general curriculum framework; however, it may be adjusted according to the planned learning outcomes and expert proposals.

49. The table below presents the curriculum framework being developed:

Education curriculum/ General curriculum framework being developed or updated	(Educational) Learning levels and grades											
	Primary education				Basic education						Secondary education	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Moral education (ethics)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Moral education (religion)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Philosophy											*	*
Lithuanian language and literature	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lithuanian language (based on the command of languages)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lithuanian sign language	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mother tongue of national minorities (Byelorussian, Polish, Russian, German)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Foreign language (first)		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Foreign language (second)					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Science	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				
Biology							*	*	*	*	*	*

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Chemistry							*	*	*	*	*	*
Physics							*	*	*	*	*	*
Social education	*	*	*	*								
History					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Geography					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fundamentals of citizenship									*	*		
Economics and entrepreneurship									*	*	*	*
Law											*	*
Psychology											*	*
Art	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Music	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Dance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Media art											*	*
History of arts											*	*
Informatics	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Technologies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Physical education	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Social, emotional, health, sexuality, family life education and human safety	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

50. It should be noted that not all curricula are designated for separate subjects. The curriculum of computer science for 1st–4th grade students is being developed by integrating descriptions of achievements in the curricula of other subjects. Only some of the listed curricula are compulsory for each student, while others are elective. Names of separate components of the curricula, which consist of different components (for example, modules in informatics), have not been included in the table. These components shall be itemized in the plan for updating the general curriculum of a specific subject. Curricula names may be revised.

51. Recommendations for the implementation of the general curriculum framework shall be developed: illustrating the levels of achievements with examples; indicating the interconnection of interdisciplinary topics with the area of education and the subjects taught; giving examples of student activities associating with (educational) learning outcomes – signs of manifestation of competences; making proposals regarding how to work with students with different educational needs, including the education of gifted children, children who come from abroad, students, who have different linguistic needs, etc.

52. The updated general curriculum framework shall be used to organize the educational process, to assess student progress and achievements, and to also assess the learning achievements of students on completion of general primary, basic and secondary education curricula. The values and competences described in the general curriculum framework can also serve as a reference point for the preparation and implementation of non-formal education programmes.

53. Long-term personal and group project work is planned for completing each curriculum. Descriptions for the preparation of project work shall be provided in the recommendations for the implementation of the general curriculum framework.
54. Evidence of student achievements in formal and non-formal contexts shall be collected in personal learning outcome folders. This evidence shall be credited at the end of primary, basic and secondary education curricula. Recommendations on the assessment of achievements and formation of a learning outcome folder shall be provided along with the updated general curriculum framework.

Chapter VI

Final provisions

55. Documents governing the content of general education, its implementation and assessment of achievements shall be prepared and adjusted given the provisions laid down in the Guidelines: the Guidelines, the General Requirements for Formal Education Curricula Approved by Decree No. ISAK-535 of the Minister of Education and Science of 13 April 2004 'Regarding the Approval of the General Requirements for Formal Education Curricula, etc.' PUPP and *matura* examination programmes shall be discontinued, and the general curriculum framework shall be used to assess student achievement instead.
56. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the National Educational Council shall be responsible for updating education content. Curricula shall be updated using state budget funds and funds of the Operational Programme for EU Structural Funds Investments. The implementation of the updated general curriculum framework in schools shall start in 2022.
57. All information on framework updates, documents under consideration and planned events shall be published online at www.school2030.lt.

GUIDELINES FOR UPDATING THE GENERAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK