The Funding of School Education: Connecting Resources and Learning

BELGIUM (FLEMISH AND FRENCH COMMUNITIES)

Country Profile
This annex presents the approaches of individual OECD review countries for funding early childhood and school education. Country profiles describe national frameworks for the distribution of funding for current and capital expenditure. They illustrate the financial flows across levels of administration and the allocation mechanisms used to determine and distribute funding to school providers and to individual schools. This does not include information on funding targeted at individual students. Country profiles present information for 2016 and draw primarily on the data countries provided for the review’s qualitative survey of school funding frameworks as well as country background reports of participating countries and country review reports conducted by the School Resources Review. The notes provide further explanations on countries’ approaches to funding of early childhood and school education.

The country profile is drawn from:

Further information can be found on the project website:
www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm

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In Belgium, education policy is the responsibility of the three Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities). For international comparability, the Communities are considered as state authorities. The Flemish and the French Communities participated in the OECD review and information for both Communities is presented in this country profile. Each of the Communities has its own autonomous education system, even though aggregate funding in each of the Communities is partially dependent on a negotiated lump sum transfer from the federal level. Schools are governed by a legally recognised competent authority, typically referred to as school board or school governing body (school provider in the tables below). School providers are responsible for the organisation of the education in accordance with legislation and regulations. School boards can oversee one or several schools and typically administer all resources allocated to their school(s). In each of the two Communities, there are three educational “networks”, which are not legal entities but rather classification principles of schools according to legal status: a Community education network; a grant-aided public education network; and a grant-aided private education network. For public schools, the school providers are typically the state educational authority (French Community) or an autonomous public body (Flemish Community Education, Gemeenschapsonderwijs GO!), besides – for the case of grant-aided public schools – regional (provincial) and local authorities (cities and municipalities). For government-dependent private-schools, the school providers are private entities such as religious communities or associations. However, the different legal status of schools – whether public or private, municipal or provincial – has no bearing on the funding entitlement for current expenditure and staff. Differences exist for the entitlement for funding for school buildings. Only Community education receives funding for 100% of capital costs, while grant-aided public education and private education can only apply for co-funding from the state authorities. In the country profile presented here, the central level refers to the federal state, the state level to the Community or region, the regional level to the provinces, and the local level to cities and municipalities.

For in-depth information on school funding in the Flemish Community of Belgium, see the OECD country review report (http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264247598-en) and the country background report (www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).

For in-depth information on school funding in the French Community of Belgium, see the country background report (www.oecd.org/education/schoolresourcesreview.htm).
**Current expenditure in the Flemish and the French Communities of Belgium: lump sum transfer from the central government to the Communities, block grants from the Communities to school providers for operational costs and direct payment of staff by the Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Allocation mechanism</th>
<th>Purpose of grant</th>
<th>Basis to determine the level of the grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ISCED 0-3       | **Lump sum** from central authority to the state authorities (Communities) | For all policy domains, including education | **Negotiated process, Funding formula** (based on demographic criteria):  
  - Size of total population under the age of 18  
  - Population at the age of compulsory education |
| ISCED 0-3       | **Block grant** from the state level to school providers | To cover operational costs (salaries of technical maintenance staff, instructional materials), work-based learning (as part of vocational programmes) and maintenance of infrastructure | **Funding formula**  
  - Number of students  
  - Student socio-economic characteristics  
  - School size  
  - School location  
  - Level of education provided  
  - Fields of study  
  - General or vocational education  
  - Grade levels offered  
  - Students with special educational needs  
  - Number of apprentices with work-based placements |
| ISCED 0-3       | **Restricted block grant** from the state level to school providers | For extra support for specific student groups: disadvantaged groups, newly arrived immigrants and refugees, children on sick leave and students following specific religion or non-confessional ethics classes | **Funding formula**  
  - Number of students  
  - Number of newly arrived immigrants  
  - Student socio-economic characteristics  
  - School location  
  - Level of education provided  
  - Fields of study  
  - Grade levels offered  
  - Students with SEN |
| ISCED 0-3       | **Dedicated grant** transferred directly from the state level to educational staff | Salaries for teachers, school management and administrative staff | **Funding formula**  
  - Number of teachers  
  - Teacher characteristics (career level, qualification, experience)  
  - Number of students  
  - Student socio-economic characteristics  
  - School size  
  - School location  
  - Level of education provided  
  - Fields of study  
  - General or vocational education  
  - Grade levels offered  
  - Students with SEN  
  - Number of apprentices with work-based placements |
### Capital expenditure in the Flemish Community of Belgium: ad hoc grants to school providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Allocation mechanism</th>
<th>Purpose of funds</th>
<th>Basis to determine the level of the grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 0-3</td>
<td><strong>Infrastructure investment programme</strong> based on public/private partnerships</td>
<td>Infrastructure construction and renovation</td>
<td><strong>Administrative discretion</strong>&lt;br&gt;● Decision from the Flemish Agency for Educational Infrastructure after investment decision of private partners&lt;br&gt;● Autonomous authority for Flemish Community Education Go! may also choose to transfer a public grant for their own schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 0-3</td>
<td><strong>Ad hoc grant</strong> from autonomous public authority for Flemish Community Education Go! to its own school providers</td>
<td>Infrastructure construction, renovation and maintenance</td>
<td><strong>Administrative discretion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 0-3</td>
<td><strong>Ad hoc grant</strong> from the Flemish Agency for Educational Infrastructure to school providers (provinces, municipalities, cities and private entities)</td>
<td>Infrastructure construction, renovation and maintenance</td>
<td><strong>Administrative discretion</strong>:&lt;br&gt;● Based on application dossier&lt;br&gt;● High population density can be a criterion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Capital expenditure in the French Community of Belgium: ad hoc and annual grants to school providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Allocation mechanism</th>
<th>Purpose of funds</th>
<th>Basis to determine the level of the grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 0-3</td>
<td><strong>Ad hoc grant</strong> from the state education authority to schools run by the French Community</td>
<td>Infrastructure construction, renovation and maintenance</td>
<td><strong>Administrative discretion</strong> based on application dossier&lt;br&gt;Criteria that might be considered include:&lt;br&gt;● Socio-economic characteristics of students&lt;br&gt;● School location (e.g. densely populated areas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 0-3</td>
<td><strong>Annual grant</strong> from the state level to school providers (provinces, municipalities, cities and private entities)</td>
<td>For instructional and non-instructional equipment bought with the grant for operational expenditures</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

Lump sum from the central authority to the state authorities for all policy domains (ISCED 0-3): The transfer from the federal budget to the Communities involves some degree of political negotiation on the total amount of the lump sum transferred which cannot be explained by a funding formula only. Moreover, the budget of the Communities entails other (fiscal) sources than the transfer from the federal level, while taxes levied at the local level (provinces, cities and municipalities) may contribute to infrastructure or non-teaching related services. The lump sum can be used for all policy domains at the competence of the Communities, not only for education, and can be distributed across policy domains at the discretion of the Community. There are no transfers from the Communities (state level) to regional or local levels. Funds are transferred rather directly to school providers.

Capital expenditure in the Flemish Community (ISCED 0-3): Access to capital funding is organised through two public agencies. A dedicated public body, GO! Education of the Flemish Community, finances the creation or improvement of buildings in the Flemish Community school network as public assets. The Agency for Educational Infrastructure (Agentschap voor Infrastructuur in het Onderwijs, AGION) finances building works in schools of other public school providers (municipal and provincial) as well as publicly-subsidised private schools. AGION meets 70% of their capital requirements in primary education and 60% in secondary education. The unsubsidised balance, in turn, can be met by a state-guaranteed loan. The asset remains privately owned for publicly-subsidised private schools. For other public school organising bodies, the asset remains owned by the regional and local authorities (municipalities and provinces). In addition, there is the possibility of public-private partnerships.

Capital expenditure in the French Community (ISCED 0-3): The school building fund allocates funds to public schools. Publicly-subsidised private schools do not receive resources from this fund. However, a guarantee fund grants them a capital repayment guarantee for the financing of construction, renovation, modernisation and expansion (Decree 05/02/1990 on school buildings). With regard to emergency works, the priority programme of works (Programme prioritaire de travaux, PPT) makes it possible to remedy essential needs by allocating funds to all school providers (under the same funding mechanisms: ISCED level 0-1: 70%, ISCED levels 2-3: 60% by the French Community, the remainder by the school provider) (Decree 16/11/2007 on the priority work programme).