

Facts to Know about Georgian Education System

MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION AND
SCIENCE
OF GEORGIA



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Development of the education system is one of the priorities of Georgian government. A well-educated and forward-looking young generation greatly contributes to the overall progress of the country. In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MES) is implementing the reforms that are aimed at enhancing the quality of education at general and higher educational institutions. Currently, MES is carrying out reforms in 49 directions.

Society is interested in the ongoing developments of education. In order to inform the public on the current trends and novelties in the education system, MES has developed a brief overview of the ongoing reforms in the education system.

- ▶ Georgia acceded to the Bologna Process and is a signatory to the Lisbon Convention, which means that the Georgian educational system (general, vocational and higher) is fully compatible with the European standards of education. Diplomas issued by high school, vocational colleges and institutes of higher educational are recognized by European countries and the US.

International organizations nominated MES along with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Justice as one of the most uncorrupted Ministries throughout Georgia. According to the research undertaken by Gallup, 69% of the Georgian population supports the reforms implemented in Georgia.

- ▶ There are 2,087 public and 226 private schools in Georgia with 600,000 schoolchildren and 59,000 teachers. International organizations listed Georgia in the 5 countries with the highest access to education. Georgia was elected Vice-president of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO for the second time. UNESCO's choice is in direct recognition of the achievements of the current educational reforms implemented by MES.
- ▶ The World Bank recognized the general education funding scheme as one of the successful components of the education system. General educational institutions are financed through a voucher system. In 2011, some components were modified in the formula of voucher funding, as a result of this change- all schools have sufficient finances to successfully carry out learning process; there are no schools with budget deficits.

Financial vouchers are given to each student by the government for receiving an education. Each child is free to choose among public and private schools. Private schools constitute 11% of the total number of the schools in Georgia and 10% of schoolchildren study there. Georgia is one of the leading countries in Europe in terms of the presence of private schools. This is a result of the policies enacted by the Georgian government.

- ▶ Public schools are decentralized in Georgia. They are governed by school boards composed of parents, teachers and schoolchildren. The board approves the school budget and internal regulation of the school. The Minister presents a certified candidate for the position of school principal and if the school board approves, then they appoint the principal and can ultimately fire him/her as well.
- ▶ According to research by the European Union, 78% of the Georgian population thinks that schools are safe. This is the result of the outstanding job of the Office of Resource Officers of Educational

Institutions. Violence has been reduced by 94%, vandalism by 98%, weapons in school by 73% and so on.

The Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions will become a member of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), in the U.S.A. The members of this organization positively assessed the activities of Georgian school resource officers and the reforms carried out in the Georgian education system and offered the Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions a membership to NASRO.

- ▶ Parents now have the option of sending their children to school at the age of 5. National assessment results showed that 5- and 6-year old children were equally capable of passing the learning program defined by the National Curriculum. It is also noteworthy that in 2011, 52% of parents decided to send their kids to school at the age of 5.
- ▶ All first graders received net books as a present from the President starting in 2011. Educational programs and games are loaded on these net-books which help make the learning process more engaging and fun for the schoolchildren.

The results of the national assessment undertaken in 2011 show that the introduction of net books to the learning process proved to be productive: it has increased the children's motivation and made the process of learning more engaging. Promisingly, 94% of first graders got the highest scores (24,9) in the assessment test, according to the international assessment standards.

- ▶ From 2011, a new national curriculum was introduced to schools; the document is recognized by international experts and UNESCO.

Physical culture classes were replaced by Sports classes according to the new curriculum, sport leagues were also created in different

kind of sports, new subjects such as World Culture, Civil Protection and Safety were introduced.

According to a decision made by the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Internal Affairs, 11th graders are being taught a new subject – “Traffic Signs and Road Safety”. The schoolchildren will take automatic driving lessons (theoretical) at schools. Upon a successful completion of the course, schoolchildren will receive temporary drivers' licenses, at age 17, free of charge.

- In 2011, schoolchildren of 1st to 6th grade started to study with new textbooks developed according to modern standards. From 2012-2013, new textbooks will be introduced in 7-12th grades. These textbooks will stay unchanged for the next 5 years. The price of each book will not exceed 10 GEL. All schoolchildren from 1st to 12th grade who come from socially vulnerable families are being provided with school textbooks free of charge.
- From 2011, English Language is instructed from first grade, according to the national assessment, the first graders successfully participated in the learning program defined by the national curriculum. The schoolchildren learn English with Macmillan textbooks- one of the most famous publishing houses.
- Beginning in 2012, a new e-library started functioning. It includes resources both for teachers and schoolchildren. The skool.ge project was launched in cooperation with Intel Corporation. It collects the supplementary learning and teaching materials in Math, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Other electronic resources and educational tools are also available for Georgian schoolchildren at www.buki.ge and www.el.ge.
- Native and Fluent English Speaking Teachers continue to arrive in Georgia as a part of the educational program “Teach and Learn with Georgia”. These teachers are placed in public schools

throughout Georgia and are involved in the educational process together with the local teachers. Up to 2500 volunteers participated in the program for the last two years. Qualified teachers come from Australia, the U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain and many other countries. High scores obtained by schoolchildren in English on high school exams and national unified exams credit the successful operation of TLG at schools.

- ▶ The program “Georgian Language for Future Success” started in 2012. The aim of the program is to improve the knowledge of Georgian language among ethnic minorities living in Georgia. In the scope of the program, 500 native speaker teachers are teaching Georgian language in the schools of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti. While conducting Georgian language lessons, the program participants co-teach with local teachers of the Georgian language and assist the teachers of other subjects to deliver classes bilingually. The teachers participating in the program live in host families. The number of ethnic minorities wishing to continue their studies at vocational and higher educational institutions was increased by 230. “Georgian Language Houses” were also opened to enhance the learning of Georgian language among ethnic minorities.
- ▶ To recognize the achievements of the successful schoolchildren and support them, MES implements various programs. Schoolchildren who complete secondary school with the highest grades, are awarded the gold and silver medals, those schoolchildren who successfully complete the basic level of education receive a personal computer from the President of Georgia.

Schoolchildren can also participate in the National School Olympiads; those winning first, second, third places are awarded cash prizes. (1000, 700 and 500 GEL). Successful schoolchildren can also spend summer vacations in youth camps. Last year, 600 schoolchildren participated in the project and 120 of them were sent to Great Britain to pursue English language courses.

The Georgian government also supports participation of Georgian schoolchildren in international Olympiads. Schoolchildren especially perform well in Math and IT. Winning candidates are awarded cash prizes (5000, 3000 and 2000 GEL).

In 2012, international youth camps will be opened with support of CERN and MES, the schoolchildren will have opportunity to enhance their knowledge in Natural Sciences and IT.

In 2011, the International Young Science-Inventors Contest “Leonardo Da Vinci” began.

- ▶ Since 2010, students have had the chance to study natural sciences intensively at Physics-Mathematics Special Schools.
- ▶ In 2012, it is planned to build 23 new schools and rehabilitate 600 schools.

Student-computer ratio is 1/7. All schools are equipped with computers that have access to the internet. This year, schools will be provided with 11000 new computers and 1500 School Boxes (Modern apparatus that ensures a constant connection between the school and the central server. This apparatus also enable schools to have local electronic services.)

All schools throughout Georgia are equipped with modern Physics, Chemistry and Biology laboratories.

Public schools will be provided with 200,000 new desks and 5000 boards. In 2012, multifunctional, technology-equipped classrooms, so called “Future Classrooms,” will be opened in 100 public schools of Georgia.

- ▶ In order to obtain high school diplomas, all 12th graders take High School Exit Exams in Georgian Language and Literature, a Foreign

Language, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, History and Geography.

High School Exit Exams are carried out with Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT). According to the assessment of the international organization CITO, Georgia is one of the leading countries in which school exams are carried out with modern technologies.

👉 Teacher Certification process in Georgia is voluntary till 2014. From 2014, certification will become mandatory for all public school teachers.

- Certified teachers get surplus of 75 GEL to their salaries;
- In case if teacher passes English language and IT exams, her salary surplus is 125 GEL;
- Natural Science teachers who pass exam in laboratory field, get salary surplus of 75 GEL;
- 25 % of certified teachers' salaries equal to 1000 GEL;
- Mentor teachers' salary surplus is 180;
- Teachers who are teaching subjects bilingually receive 200 GEL as salary surplus;
- Teachers who are involved in the program "Teach for Georgia" receive 500 GEL as salary surplus.

The government pays a lot of attention to teachers' professional development. All teachers are able to take free trainings at Kutaisi and Tbilisi Teachers' Houses. By the end of the year, such Teachers' Houses will be opened in Akhaltsikhe, Batumi, and Zugdidi.

The government sends English teachers to Great Britain where they participate in intensive trainings in English language. Physics teachers develop their professional skills at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

All public school teachers throughout Georgia have access to the educational and informational online journal www.mastsavlebeli.ge.

All public school libraries are provided with the magazine “Teacher” which is published by the National Center for Teacher Professional Development under the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

The government of Georgia provides medical insurance to all public school teachers of Georgia.

- The development of inclusive education is also a priority for MES. The Government of Norway supports Georgian inclusive education reform.
- Beginning in 2012, all citizens of Georgia who want to master a new profession at state or private vocational colleges will be provided with a 1000 GEL voucher at vocational colleges’ information centers.

In 2012, 5 new colleges will be opened: 2 of them in Tbilisi, and other 3 in Ambrolauri, Kobuleti and Ozurgeti.

Last year, 64% of vocational college graduates found employment.

The strategy for the development of vocational education has been developed with support of the European Union and meets the European requirements.

Two of the new vocational colleges (Kachreti, Kobuleti) have their own dormitories for students. This gives students from remote regions the opportunity to learn a new specialty.

All vocational colleges are equipped with modern equipments and meet international standards.

- By the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, a new program, “Professional Retraining and Professional Orientation Trainings,” will be launched. In the scope of the

program, 20,000 people will be trained in English Language, Computer Skills, and Professional Orientation free of charge.

- ▶ Entrants have to pass 4 exams (Georgian language, Foreign Language, General Skills, and selected subject) in order to enroll in higher education institutions. According to the World Bank's assessment, Georgia's National Examination system is one of the successful in the world.

Public universities provide entrants with 100%, 70%, 50% and 30% grants depending on their results in exams and the faculties they choose. For the government of Georgia the development of the faculties of natural and exact sciences and engineering is a top priority.

Georgia has the lowest education fees compared to other post-Soviet countries and Europe. The state allocates additional finances in order to support socially vulnerable students in receiving higher education.

- ▶ Quotas are defined specifically for Azeri and Armenian entrants for the 2012 national unified exams. They are asked to take a general ability test in their own languages (Azeri and Armenian), on the basis of which the students are enrolled in preparatory programs. Furthermore, Azeri and Armenian students will take a year-long intensive course in Georgian Language; afterwards, they will be enrolled at the universities of their choice.
- ▶ Beginning in 2012, 40 professors from foreign universities will give lectures at Tbilisi State University, Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi State Medical University and Ilia State University.
- ▶ Enrollment of foreign students in Georgian higher education institutions has increased 300%.
- ▶ The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia offers the

opportunity to study abroad to successful students. Around 400 Georgian students have already been financed to study abroad at leading universities.

- ▶ Beginning in 2012, public institutes of higher education have been readjusted into Non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entities.
- ▶ Beginning in September 2012, Batumi Technological University will be opened. The University will be a branch of American University.
- ▶ The Government of Georgia will allocate 24 million GEL for the development of the sciences and supporting scientific researches. Georgian scientists are taking an active part in conducting important international research at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).
- ▶ 25,000 BA students of authorized higher educational institutions will be employed as a part of the student employment program. Students will be employed in governmental agencies, private sector, legal companies, museums, medical institutions, and municipalities. Their salaries will be 500 GEL. Interested candidates will be able to complete an online registration on www.summerjob.ge .

The main purpose of the program is to provide students with the opportunity to make the most of their summer vacation. Student employment programs such as this are being introduced and developed in other western countries.