



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Strategy for Lower secondary Education in Norway

# Motivation and Mastery for better Learning

Joint effort to improve classroom management, numeracy, reading and writing



## Preface

In the strategy *Promotion of the Status and Quality of Teachers* the government has launched a series of measures to strengthen a modern school of knowledge. Increased efforts on further and continuing education and school based development measures are some of the most important initiatives. Even if it is crucial with good individual teachers it is not sufficient. We also need school heads who are able to create environments for sharing of knowledge and collaboration, and municipalities and counties aiming at good quality in their schools. It is the interaction between good teachers, school leaders and school owners which is the key to succeed.

This Government supports all schools to become learning organizations, however, the team building in itself has to take place locally. *Lower Secondary in Development* is an important national measure – both to contribute to this team building and to enhance the pupils' basic skills.

School based competence development is a basic element in the *Lower Secondary in Development*. This implies the fact that the school, including the management and all the staff are taking part in the development processes at their own working place. School becomes a learning organization where teachers and management are facing the challenges in common, evaluate their own practice and execute changes and develop the education and training when necessary.

In this way a team is built in school to be for the best for the pupils.

Simultaneously we are continuing the historical emphasis on further and continuing education. Never until now have there been so many study places for teachers who want more professional input. The further and continuing education should be as close to the field of practice and contribute to increased knowledge and knowledge sharing in school. Choice of subject areas for the school owners in the *Lower secondary in Development* should be related to the prioritization of subjects for further and continuing education.

We are well under way with the realization of the *Lower Secondary Education in Development*. It started in 2012 and schools with lower secondary level classes shall have accomplished this measure by autumn 2017.

The intention of this strategy is to be of help and support for teachers, school leaders and school owners. For a well organized school skillful management and a strong learning and professional fellowship are to the best for the learning and motivation among the pupils.

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This strategy document explains the main elements in the prioritized initiatives and roles including the areas of responsibility of the different stakeholders. Participating organizations in the Gnist partnership have rendered important contributions to this document. The Gnist - partnership nationally and internationally has been invited to partake in the further working-out and completion of the measures in the strategy.

## Introduction

The Storting discussed White Paper 22 (2010 – 2011) *Motivation – Mastery – Opportunities* in January 2012, cf. Recommendation to the Storting 145 S. The White Paper signalled further development of a diverse and inclusive school for everyone. The key message is that a more practical, varied, relevant and challenging lower secondary school will raise student motivation and learning. The Government is taking three main steps to promote this:

- introduction of elective subjects
- increased flexibility through changes in allocation<sup>1</sup> of lessons and subjects
- the measures within the framework of this strategy

Statistics and research show that pupils' motivation for learning is at its lowest in lower secondary school. Many pupils find school dull and monotonous,<sup>2</sup> resulting in some pupils falling behind in the learning process and some of them never completing upper secondary school.

To find out why motivation is so low, the Ministry of Education and Research has been engaged in dialogue with a large number of pupils, teachers and parents in lower secondary school. They have voiced their opinions on how the lower secondary school should be renewed. There has been close cooperation with the various organisations engaged in making the lower secondary school better. The conversations with and feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and others communicated a clear and strong desire to see more practical and varied working methods in the lower secondary school. At the same time, it is important that the education is perceived to be both relevant and challenging. This can be an important contribution to raising pupils' motivation and commitment.

Classroom management, numeracy, reading and writing are priority commitment areas to vary the working methods in the lower secondary school. The key measures are:

- school-based professional training in classroom management, numeracy, reading and writing for teachers and school administrators
- development of descriptions of good classroom management and good teaching in numeracy, writing and reading
- assistance in and facilitation of local development work
- network for exchanging experience and establishing a professional community

National education authorities have received a challenge from international experts in the OECD and from national researchers: We must communicate priority measures in education policy more clearly to all levels in the education system, and explain better how the schools can reach the goals. The expectations to the different partners and which tasks shall be handled by which stakeholders must also be clear to everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry will send a proposal out for consultation in regard to changing the allocation of lessons and subjects to allow more local flexibility in the classroom schedule.

<sup>2</sup> Topland, B. og E.M. Skaalvik (2010): *Meninger fra klasserommet. Analyse av Elevundersøkelsen 2010*. Kristiansand, Oxford Research

In order to succeed we must have trust and good communication across and between the management levels and the stakeholders in the school sector.

**This strategy shall contribute to...**

**...higher pupil** motivation and learning outcome in the lower secondary school – enhancing the desire to learn in general, and raising skill levels in numeracy, reading and writing in particular

**... teachers** making teaching more practical and varied – through better class management and developing a culture for sharing, reflection and cooperation at all schools with lower secondary school classes

**...school administrators** giving priority to educational leadership and contributing to developing the school as a learning organisation

**...school owners** giving priority to the selected areas in their planning and development work, and actively supporting the schools' work of raising the quality of education

**...regional/local networks** coordinating and facilitating the priority efforts and contributing to exchanging experience and dialogue

**...the university and university college sector (HE)** contributing to school-based skills development and to developing the knowledge basis and the pupils' ability to provide practical and varied teaching

**...national authorities** preparing support and guidance material, facilitating school-based skills development and more cooperation

The strategy applies for the five years from the start of the 2012/2013 school year to 2016/2017. The measures in the campaigns will be developed and subject to pilot tests in the period leading up to the 2013/2014 school year. The strategy measures will be fully in force as of the 2013/2014 school year. The objective is to reach all schools with lower secondary level during the strategy period.