

Education policy

Education policy consists of the principles and government policies in the educational sphere as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems.

Education occurs in many forms for many purposes through many institutions. Examples include early childhood education, kindergarten through to the 12th grade, two and four year colleges or universities, graduate and professional education, adult education and job training. Therefore, education policy can directly affect the education people engage in at all ages.

Examples of areas subject to debate in education policy, specifically from the field of schools, include school size, class size, school choice, school privatization, teacher selection, education and certification, teacher pay, teaching methods, curricular content, graduation requirements, school infrastructure investment, and the values that schools are expected to uphold and model. Issues in education policy also address problems within higher education.

Education policy analysis is the scholarly study of education policy. It seeks to answer questions about the purpose of education, the objectives (societal and personal) that it is designed to attain, the methods for attaining them and the tools for measuring their success or failure. Research intended to inform education policy is carried out in a wide variety of institutions and in many academic disciplines. Important researchers are affiliated with departments of psychology, economics, sociology, and human development, in addition to schools and departments of education or public policy.

Education sector

The education sector or education system is a group of institutions (ministries of education, local educational authorities, teacher training institutions, schools, universities, etc.) whose primary purpose is to provide education to children and young people in educational settings. It involves a wide range of people (curriculum developers, inspectors, school principals, teachers, school nurses, students, etc.). These institutions can vary according to different contexts.

Schools deliver education, with support from the rest of the education system through various elements such as education policies and guidelines – to which school policies can refer – curricula and learning materials, as well as pre- and in-service teacher training programmes. The school environment – both physical (infrastructures) and psychological (school climate) – is also guided by school policies that should ensure the well-being of students when they are in school. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has found that schools tend to perform best when principals have full authority and responsibility for ensuring that students are proficient in core subjects upon graduation. They must also seek feedback from students for quality-assurance and improvement. Governments should limit themselves to monitoring student proficiency.

The education sector is fully integrated into society, through interactions with numerous stakeholders and other sectors. These include parents, local communities, religious leaders, NGOs, stakeholders involved in health, child protection, justice and law enforcement (police), media and political leadership.