

Supporting High Needs School

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The Swedish Curricula section Rights and obligations

It is not in itself sufficient that teaching only imparts knowledge about fundamental democratic values. *Democratic working forms should also be applied in practice and prepare pupils for active participation in the life of society.* This should develop their ability to take personal responsibility. By taking part in the planning and evaluation of their daily teaching, and being able to choose courses, subjects, themes and activities, pupils will develop their ability to exercise influence and take responsibility.

What directs schools

Political Governness

with the goal

to create a school
for equity

Juridical Governness

as means

to create a
a school for equity
with legal rights of
the individual

Pedagogical Governness

with the task

to create a school
for equity and learning
for all children

Figure: Three important players in relation to creation of equity schools

Expected function of the implementation structures in relation to new policy

Learning to get knowledge and motivation in relation to the new policy

New Policies, Laws or decisions from the political arena

Goal – having sufficient knowledge to be able to communicate the policy

Leadership for the new policy

Knowledge about the new policy



Burden of task to achieve the policy

Fundamental values

The national school system is based on democratic foundations. The Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that education in the school system aims at pupils acquiring and developing knowledge and values. It should promote the development and learning of all pupils, and a lifelong desire to learn. Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based. Each and everyone working in the school should also encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person and the environment we all share.

The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are the values that the school should represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is achieved by fostering in the individual a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility. Teaching in the school should be non-denominational.

The task of the school is to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby be able to participate in the life of society by giving of their best in responsible freedom.

The Education Act stipulates that the education provided in each school form and in the leisure-time centre should be equivalent, regardless of where in the country it is provided. National goals specify the norms for equivalence. **However, equivalent education does not mean that the education should be the same everywhere or that the resources of the school are to be allocated equally. Account should be taken of the varying circumstances and needs of pupils. There are also different ways of attaining these goals.** The school has a special responsibility for those pupils who for different reasons experience difficulties in attaining the goals that have been set up for the education. **For this reason education can never be the same for all.**

Understanding and compassion for others

The internationalization of Swedish society and increasing cross-border mobility place high demands on the ability of people to live with and appreciate the values inherent in cultural diversity. *Awareness of one's own cultural origins and sharing in a common cultural heritage provides a secure identity which it is important to develop, together with the ability to understand and empathize with the values and conditions of others.* The school is a social and cultural meeting place with both the opportunity and the responsibility to strengthen this ability among all who work there.

All who work in the school should uphold the fundamental values that are set out in the Education Act and in this curriculum, and clearly dissociate themselves from anything that conflicts with these values.

Swedish school policy – a school for all?

The right to equal education is one of the core articles in Swedish school law (Skollag 2010:800). The law also states that everyone should have equal *access* to education, regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic background.

Furthermore, there is a *discrimination regulation* in relation to gender, gender transcendence, ethnicity, religious beliefs or other belief systems, functional limitations, sexual orientation or age (Diskrimineringslag 2008:567).

Guidelines

All who work in the school should:

- contribute to developing the pupils' sense of togetherness and solidarity, and responsibility for people outside the immediate group,
- in their activities contribute to the school being permeated by the spirit of solidarity between people,
- actively resist discrimination and degrading treatment of individuals or groups, and
- show respect for the individual pupil and carry out their daily work in democratic ways.

Teachers should:

- clarify and discuss with the pupils the basic values of Swedish society and their consequences in terms of individual actions,
- openly communicate and discuss different values, views and problems,
- be observant and together with other school staff take the necessary steps to prevent and counteract all forms of discrimination and degrading treatment.
- together with the pupils develop rules for working and participating in their own group, and
- work together with the home in the upbringing of the pupils and clarify the school's norms and rules as a basis for work and co-operation.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEADTEACHER

As both pedagogical leader and head of the teaching and non-teaching staff in the school, the head teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that school activities as a whole are focused on the national goals. The head teacher is also responsible for following up and evaluating school results in relation to the national goals and the knowledge requirements. The head teacher is responsible for the results of the school and within given constraints, has special responsibility for ensuring that:

- the working forms of the school are developed to facilitate pupils in exercising influence,
- the working environment in the school is organized such that pupils have access to guidance, teaching material of high quality, as well as other assistance in order to be able to independently search for and acquire knowledge through such means as libraries, computers, and other learning aids,
- the teaching and health services for pupils are organised so that pupils receive the special support and help they need,
- contacts are established between the school and the home in the event the pupil experiences problems and difficulties at school,
- the allocation of resources and remedial measures are related to teachers' assessments of the pupils' development,.....

Still, there are significant achievement gaps related to gender, ethnicity, and educational background of parents, with substantial differences between municipalities.
(*Skolverket*, 2012)

An ethics challenge?

In brief, the basic values in **the ethic of justice perspective** are fairness or equal treatment while **ethics of critique** examines if, and if so how and why, there are any barriers within the structure for fairness. **Ethics of care** focuses on the individual and its uniqueness and responsibility to be caring in relationships with others. **Ethics of profession perspective** can be upheld by **professional ethical codes.**”

A photograph of a sunset over a large, calm body of water. The sun is a bright orange orb on the horizon, with its light reflecting on the water. The sky transitions from a pale blue at the top to a warm orange near the horizon. The text "Creating a model" is written in a yellow, serif font in the lower center of the image.

Creating a model

Dimension 1: Challenging External School Intake Context

- External situations and conditions
 - Exist independent of schools' activities
 - Connected to and influence the nature of activities occurring within the school sites
- Characteristics:
 - Relatively stable and difficult to change over time
 - Variations in the meaning of “challenge” across national and/or regional borders
 - Shared, similar externally embedded challenges

Dimension 2: Challenging Internal Circumstances (1)

- Challenges, events and situations that schools face and deal with on the school sites
 - inclusively various internal conditions for school improvement
 - differing aspects of school performance
 - “hard” indicators of pupil academic outcomes
 - “soft” indicators in school life

Dimension 2: Challenging Internal Circumstances (2)

- Characteristics:
 - less stable
 - can be more vulnerable to change and leadership influence (e.g. leadership continuity)
 - change in schools' internal conditions can result in situations which significantly, positively or negatively, aspects of school performance

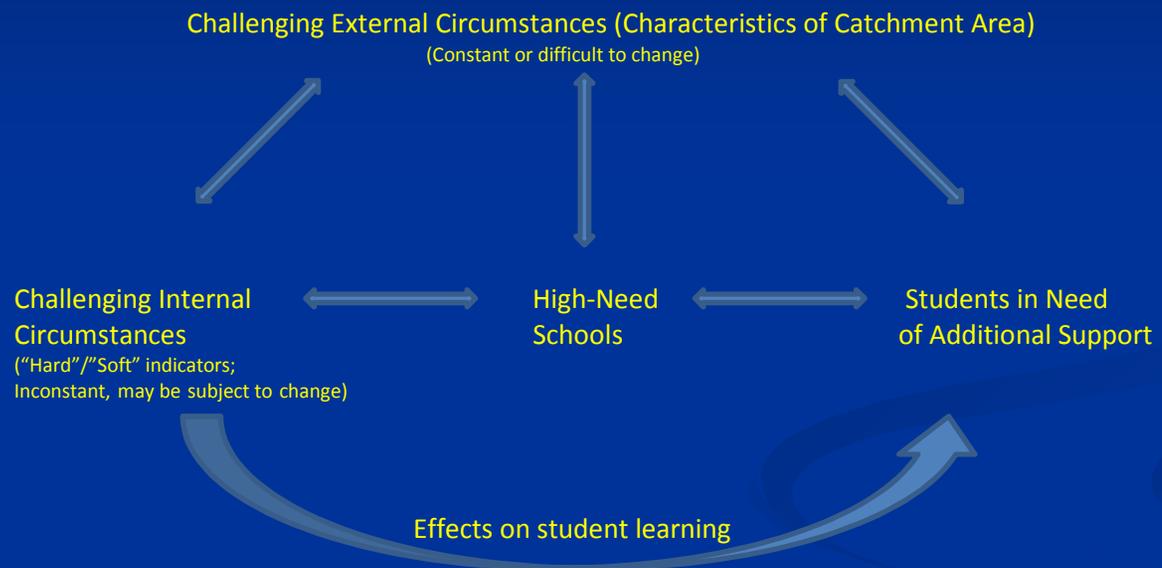


Figure 1: Four key factors in relation to high-need schools.

The Role of Principals

- Creating, developing and sustaining positive internal contexts for improvement
 - *There is no-blame culture in the school. We work together collaboratively and are happy to give up our own time for extra activities. We have different strengths and we complement each other well. The quality of teaching and learning is high and we all want the school to be great! (Full time teacher)*

Leadership Matters

- The ability to progressively shape the culture of their schools through the enactment of their personal and professional values and visions, and also, the ability to proactively respond to policy demands and strategically align them with the learning and development needs of the school.

THANK YOU!

