



Ministry of Education, Culture and
Science

The approach to Early School Leaving

Policy in the Netherlands and
the figures of the 2011-2012
performance agreements

www.aanvalopschooluitval.nl



Overview of RMC regions in the Netherlands
Source: DUO

This booklet comprises maps for national and regional level. The above map serves as a navigation aid (together with the list of RMC regions) when using the booklet.

All Dutch municipalities record early school leavers (and potential early school leavers) and ensure that they achieve a basic qualification after all via a suitable educational or work programme. That means at least a secondary school diploma at “VWO”, “HAVO” or “MBO 2” level. Young people are subject to the compulsory school attendance requirement until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. After that, they continue to be subject to the qualification obligation until they are 18. Under-18s with no basic qualification are subject to the Compulsory Education Act. Enforcement is the responsibility of the local municipality. Over-18s are subject to the Registration and Coordination (RMC) legislation, which is enforced regionally.

Each municipality is a member of one of the 39 Registration and Coordination Regions (in Dutch: “RMC regions”). Each RMC region has a “contact municipality” which coordinates notification and registration of ESL’s by schools. For more information about the RMC regions, see “RMC-regio” at www.aanvalopschooluitval.nl (in Dutch only).

RMC regions with contact municipalities
Source: DUO

RMC region	Contact municipalities
1 Oost-Groningen	Veendam
2 Noord-Groningen-Eemmond	Delfzijl
3 Centraal en Westelijk Groningen	Groningen
4 Friesland Noord	Leeuwarden
5 Zuid-West Friesland	Súdwest Fryslân
6 Friesland-Oost	Smallerland
7 Noord- en Midden Drenthe	Assen
8 Zuid-Oost Drenthe	Emmen
9 Zuid-West Drenthe	Hoogeveen
10 IJssel-vecht	Zwolle
11 Stedendriehoek	Apeldoorn
12 Twente	Enschede
13 Achterhoek	Doetinchem
14 Arnhem/Nijmegen	Nijmegen
15 Rivierenland	Tiel
16 Eem en Vallei	Amersfoort
17 Noordwest-Veluwe	Harderwijk
18 Flevoland	Lelystad
19 Utrecht	Utrecht
20 Gooi en Vechtstreek	Hilversum
21 Agglomeratie Amsterdam	Amsterdam
22 West-Friesland	Hoorn
23 Kop van Noord-Holland	Den Helder
24 Noord-Kennemerland	Alkmaar
25 West-Kennemerland	Haarlem
26 Zuid-Holland-Noord	Leiden
27 Zuid-Holland-Oost	Gouda
28 Haaglanden/Westlanden	Den Haag
29 Rijnmond	Rotterdam
30 Zuid-Holland-Zuid	Dordrecht
31 Oosterschelde regio	Goes
32 Walcheren	Middelburg
33 Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen	Terneuzen
34 West-Brabant	Breda
35 Midden-Brabant	Tilburg
36 Noord-Oost-Brabant	s-Hertogenbosch
37 Zuidoost-Brabant	Eindhoven
38 Gewest Limburg-Noord	Venlo
39 Gewest Zuid-Limburg	Heerlen

Contents

	Introduction	3
1.	Integrated approach to early school leaving: prevention	5
	1.1 National measures	5
	1.2 Previous target: no more than 35,000 new early school leavers by 2012	6
	1.3 New target: no more than 25,000 new early school leavers by 2016	6
2.	Results for school year 2012	10
	2.1 National perspective	10
	2.2 The RMC regions	11
	2.3 The schools	14
	2.4 European indicator	17
	2.5 Youth unemployment.	17
	2.6 Crime suspects	18
	Index of tables and figures	19
	Glossary	20
	Sources and calculation method	21



Introduction

– Pupils leaving school early – is an economic, social, and individual problem. Each young person has his or her own aims, wishes and ambitions, and having a good education increases the likelihood of achieving them. The Dutch knowledge economy requires well-educated employees, while Dutch society also finds itself confronted by dejuvenation and the ageing of the population, with the pressure on the labour market consequently increasing.

European goals and results

Tackling the problem of early school leaving is one of the priorities of the European Commission. Currently, 1 in 8 young Europeans leave school early without gaining a basic qualification. The aim is to reduce the average percentage of early school leavers to less than 10% by 2020. This will involve all young people aged between 18 and 25 who are not undertaking education/training. Measured according to the European definition, the Dutch target is 8% in 2020. The Dutch Government has decided on a more ambitious target than that for the EU, namely a maximum of 25,000 new early school leavers each year by 2016.

The Netherlands compares well with other European countries. In 2012, the average of the EU-15 fell from 14,7% to 13,7% in 2012. In the Netherlands, the figures for 2012 again showed a decrease, from 15.4% in 2000 to 9.1% in 2011 and to 8,8 % in 2012, making the country one of Europe's leaders in tackling the early school leaving problem. Better cooperation between the EU Member States, exchange of know-how, best practices, and focussed use of EU funding can help solve the problem.

EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou had this to say about the Dutch approach: *“Tackling early school leaving is a challenge because it means so many sectors have to work together. In most Member States, this does not yet happen in a systematic way, though some countries such as the Netherlands show the way forward.”* A number of European countries have expressed an interest in the integrated approach and accurate record-keeping system adopted by the Netherlands.

Targets and results

Tackling the problem of pupils leaving school early is one of the priorities of the Dutch government. The target is for there to be no more than 25,000 new early school leavers each year in 2016. An early school leaver is a young person between 12 and 23 years of age who does not go to school and who has not achieved a basic qualification (i.e. a senior general secondary, pre-university, or level-2 secondary vocational diploma). Since 2002, the “Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates” [*Aanval op de uitval*] has already led to a reduction from 71,000 in 2001 to 36,560 (result for the 2011-2012 school year).

Prevention

The Netherlands is adopting a “prevention is better than cure” approach to the problem. Young people have better prospects on the labour market if they have a basic qualification. Partly due to the decreasing early school leaving rate, youth unemployment in the Netherlands is increasing only slightly during the recent crisis and is in fact compared to neighbourhood countries relatively low. Studies show that finishing school has the effect of reducing the number of crimes and other offences against property.

Reducing the early school leaving rate is not a project with a beginning and an end. For long-term success, preventing pupils dropping out of school will need to become one of the primary processes at schools and within municipalities. It demands a long-term perspective, systematic efforts and resources, an integrated approach focussing on prevention, and tight organisation at regional level. All the various links in the chain – education, the labour market, and care – need to form a good basis for preventing young people dropping out of school.

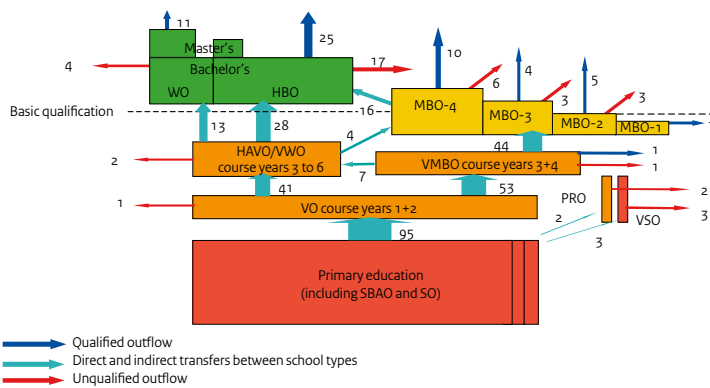
The Dutch education system

The Dutch education system has limited educational facilities for children under the school entry age. Pre-school and early childhood education focuses on children aged 2.5 to 5 who are in risk of developing an educational disadvantage. Most Dutch children enter primary school in the year they turn 4. Primary education lasts eight years. Pupils who require specialized care and support are accommodated at special (primary) schools and secondary special schools. On average, children are 12 years of age when they enter secondary education. This sector offers three levels: pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). In addition, pupils have the option of transferring to elementary vocational training (PRO) or secondary special education (VSO). After special (primary) education, the majority of pupils transfer to VMBO or PRO.

VMBO comprises four programmes: a basic vocational programme (BL), a middle management programme (KL), a combined programme (GL) and a theoretical programme (TL, comparable to the former MAVO). After VMBO, at an average age of 16, students may transfer to secondary vocational education (MBO). Those who have completed the theoretical programme can also choose to transfer to HAVO. HAVO is intended as preparation for professional higher education (HBO). VWO is intended to prepare students for academic higher education (WO). In practice, however, some VWO graduates transfer to HBO.

The school types differ in terms of the duration of their programmes: VMBO takes 4 years, HAVO 5 years and VWO 6 years. MBO comprises a vocational training programme (BOL) and a block or day-release programme (BBL). There are four qualification levels: assistant worker (level 1), basic vocational training (level 2), professional training (level 3) and middle-management / specialized training (level 4). The programmes last a maximum of four years. The four-year HBO programmes lead to the award of a bachelor's degree. In WO, a bachelor's degree can be earned in three years. An academic master's degree programme takes either one or two years. Approximately 95 in every 100 12-year-olds enter mainstream secondary education; 41 transfer directly to HAVO/VWO and 53 to VMBO. Subsequently, these students transfer to MBO, HBO or WO, either directly or indirectly. Eventually, approximately 11 in every 100 children earn a WO diploma while 25 earn a HBO diploma; 19 in every 100 children earn a basic qualification in MBO, viz., an MBO, i.e. an MBO diploma at level 2 or higher.

Figure 1: Movements in Dutch education
In percentages of a cohort of pupils leaving primary education, 2010



1 Integrated approach to early school leaving: prevention

1.1 National measures

Since 2007, preventing pupils leaving school early has been a policy priority in the Netherlands. The “Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates” programme has been successful in implementing various measures at national level:

■ Qualification obligation

The qualification obligation was introduced on 1 August 2007. Since then, young people have been subject to a *compulsory school attendance and qualification obligation*. This means that they must remain in education until the age of 18 (previously 16) until they have achieved at least a *basic qualification* (i.e. at least a senior general secondary, pre-university, or level-2 secondary vocational diploma).

■ Personal education number

All pupils have been allocated an *education number*, which makes it possible to track them. Each pupil at a publicly funded secondary or secondary vocational school is registered in BRON (the Basic Records Database for Education) with a unique number, name, address, date of birth, school, and school type. A young person who is no longer registered in BRON is classified as an early school leaver. This measuring system means that no early school leaver remain unregistered any longer. Statistics on early school leaving rates are available at *national, regional, municipal, and school level*. This data can be linked to socio-economic data by region, town/city, and neighbourhood (including the composition of the population, percentage of Dutch natives and members of ethnic minorities, unemployment, benefit recipients, etc.).

■ Digital Absence Portal

Since 1 August 2009, all schools have been obliged by law to register school absenteeism via the *Digital Absence Portal* [Digitaal verzuimloket]. This has greatly improved the *registration of school absenteeism and early school leavers*. Truancy and missing school are often signs that a pupil is at risk of dropping out and it is important for those in touch with the pupil – the school, the parents, and the school attendance officer – to respond quickly and efficiently. The purpose of the Digital Absence Portal is to utilise a simplified, computerised reporting procedure so as to focus time and effort on engaging with truants and guiding

them back to school. Data from the Portal makes it possible to generate *monthly reports* on pupils who are “absent” or who are “deregistered without a basic qualification”. Transparency about the figures enables secondary schools, secondary vocational schools, and municipalities to identify where the problem lies and to take appropriate action.

■ Career Orientation and Guidance

An *action plan for career orientation and guidance* has been drawn up. One of the primary reasons for someone to drop out of education is the wrong choice of programme. Pupils find it difficult to make the right choice, or they do not have a clear idea of what the occupation involves or how the job market is. Career Orientation and Guidance covers a wide range of activities intended to guide young people into the appropriate programme or occupation. The action plan involves more than merely providing information about choosing an educational programme or occupation. It also comprises mentoring, coaching, and personal guidance. There is also a direct link to business and industry, and work placements ensure that young people have good prospects on the labour market.

■ Transfer to follow-up education programme

There has been a decline in the number of early school leavers after *transferring from pre-vocational secondary education to secondary vocational education*. The transfer to a follow-up programme at a different school seems to be a major stumbling block for pupils at a school for pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO). Some of them fail to register for a follow-up programme at a secondary vocational school (MBO). Of those who do make the transition, many drop out in their first few months at the new school. August 2008 saw the start of a “VM2” experiment in which pupils in pre-vocational secondary education who wish to transfer to a secondary vocational programme do not need to switch to a different school. The aim of the experiment is to enable more pupils to achieve a basic qualification at secondary vocational level. They will continue to be taught within a familiar environment by teachers who they already know, by means of a single pedagogical and didactic approach. The first successful pupils in the VM2 programme received their diploma in June 2011.

■ Care structure at school

The *care structure at school and locally* has been strengthened. The gap between education and care has become smaller in recent years, with improved coordination between the two. The growth in the number of care coordinators plays an important role in this. In 2010, 98% of schools had one or more care coordinators. The provision of socio-educational services has become a basic facility at all schools. This systematic approach is an important advance in identifying personal and social problems among pupils at an early stage.

1.2 Previous target: no more than 35,000 new early school leavers by 2012

The objective of the Balkenende II Government (2003-2006) was to reduce the number of new early school leavers to 35,000 by 2012. The result for 2011-2012 at national level is 36,560 new early school leavers.

At the moment, some 4000 young people, particularly at secondary school, are wrongly categorised as early school leavers, for example young people who are at a private school or who have been granted an exemption from the provisions of the Compulsory Education Act. If one takes account of this, the 35,000 early school leavers target has in fact already been achieved. Everything possible is being done to ensure that, with effect from 2012-2013, these young people are no longer wrongly categorised as early school leavers.

The actual results are partly achieved by:

■ Long-term performance agreements (“covenants”) between schools, municipalities, and national government

In order to achieve the target, agreements were concluded in 2007 throughout the country (across 39 regions) between contact municipalities represented by regions, secondary and secondary vocational schools, and national government. These “covenants” set out long-term performance agreements: starting from the 2007-2008 school year, the early school leaving rate must be reduced cumulatively by 10% annually, so that a 40% reduction will have been achieved in the 2011-2012 school year compared to the 2005-2006 school year (later extended with one school year to 2011-2012).

■ The regions to make the next move

Joint action by professionals in each region – schools, municipalities, youth care workers, business and industry – has been vital in tackling the problem of early school leaving. It is, after all, they who know what problems their pupils might be coping with and what problems occur in their region. The contact municipality for the region acts as the coordinator for the agreements, with

each region deciding for itself what measures need to be taken. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has organised a number of knowledge-sharing meetings and has been transparent about providing figures on early school leaving.

■ “No cure no pay”

In order to implement the agreements, schools receive annual performance-related funding of EUR 2500 for each pupil that contributes to a reduction in the early school leaving numbers compared to the 2005-2006 school year. The principle is one of “no cure no pay”. As an extra incentive for the period from 2008 to 2011, funding has been made available for educational programmes and for setting up so called “plus facilities” especially for “overburdened” young people i.e. those who are unable to gain a qualification due to a combination of financial, social, material, and often also judicial problems.

1.3 New target: no more than 25,000 new early school leavers by 2016

In 2010, the Dutch Government tightened up the target, setting it at a maximum of 25,000 new early school leavers by 2016. This objective is an ambitious one, but it is nevertheless achievable. The closer schools get to meeting that target, the more the early school leavers will consist of young people with multiple problems – the “hard core”. The current rate of decrease in the number of early school leavers will be insufficient to achieve the 25,000 objective by 2016. An extra effort is therefore necessary on the part of all concerned. The Government will only be satisfied by achieving the maximum feasible as regards preventing pupils dropping out of school early.

Efforts to achieve the new, tighter target will primarily be based on what has been achieved so far. This is why that policy will continue to be pursued: systematic improvements in education, support from the youth care, public safety and employment sectors, closer monitoring, and stricter enforcement. These measures, combined with close coordination by the municipalities, have led to success. It is an approach that requires long-term policy and the certainty of structured, long-term funding. To achieve the 25,000 target, long-term performance agreements and transparent figures have again been decided on. The motto continues to be “prevention is better than cure”.

Continuing the approach means:

■ New agreements for 2012-2015; regional cooperation

The collaboration between schools, municipalities, and the national government within a region are once more set out in agreements for the period from 2012 to 2015. With the signing of the agreement in March 2012, these

parties take action to further reduce the rate of early school leaving. Schools can also be considered for special funding.

The regional programme to prevent pupils dropping out of school early also involves a three-year monitoring study. The “plus facilities” and the funding to finance them have been integrated into the policy, and now form part of the regional programme for preventing pupils leaving school early.

■ **Truancy policy: improvements are still possible; agreements with those in the field**

Truancy is the clearest sign that a pupil is at risk of leaving school early. Every school is obliged by law to report cases of truancy among its pupils. Since 2009, the Digital Absence Portal has been available to assist them so that they can report truants with the minimum of administrative difficulty. Joint agreements have been made with Ingrado (the association of school attendance officers) and the Secondary Vocational Education Council [MBO Raad]. The core feature here is that secondary vocational schools will be encouraged to also apply the shorter notification deadlines pursuant to the Compulsory Education Act to pupils older than 18. Schools will also be asked to involve parents more closely in the programme and in preventing truancy.

■ **Improved education, specifically at secondary vocational education levels 3 and 4**

Preventing pupils from leaving school early, starts by providing high-quality education. At levels 3 and 4 of secondary vocational education, properly organised high-quality programmes can produce better results. Like last year, early school leavers at these two levels account for 30% of new drop-outs overall.

The new agreements are improved in three respects

- To begin with, the target and results are based on a percentage standard. That is fairer to schools and regions that have low early school leaving rates and to schools and regions that are subject to fluctuations in population.
- Secondly, secondary vocational education level 1 is reviewed and assessed separately. This school level does not lead to a basic qualification – some pupils are in fact unsuitable for further education from the cognitive point of view – but provides a basis for young people to enter the labour market.
- Thirdly, starting in the 2012-2013 school year, the record-keeping methods used will be more accurate. Particularly at secondary schools, this will mean a reduction in the number of pupils counted as having dropped out.

■ **Early school leaving figures: clear and more thorough**
Transparency regarding drop-out figures will remain. Moreover, the measuring system will be further improved so that the figures become even more significant. Schools, municipalities, and the other parties involved will know where they stand, which will keep them on course.

■ **Continuous learning pathway from pre-vocational secondary education to secondary vocational education**

The transfer from pre-vocational secondary education to secondary vocational education involves the risk of pupils dropping out. The highest drop-out rate in the Netherlands is among pupils in their first year after transferring to a secondary vocational school. Now that the VM2 experiment has been running for a number of years, consideration will be given to whether new experiments with more far-reaching cooperation between pre-vocational secondary schools and secondary vocational schools can be implemented for all pre-vocational learning pathways and at levels 2, 3, and 4 of secondary vocational education. The VM2 experiment will therefore be systematically continued and expanded so as to bring about a further reduction in the number of pupils who leave school early. The advantage is specifically that more young people will be able to gain a basic qualification before they reach the age of 18, and therefore when they are still subject to school attendance and qualification obligations.

■ **First year of secondary vocational education**

It is striking that of all four levels of secondary vocational education, it is the first year that accounts for by far the largest number of early school leavers. The drop-out rate in later years of the secondary vocational education gradually decreases at all schools. The focus is therefore on the first year. Increasing the amount of time devoted to lessons, more intensive supervision, career orientation and coaching will help reduce the number of early school leavers during the first year. Starting in 2013 the Government's Coalition Agreement will set aside EUR 150 million for this. Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, the number of lessons actually taught in the first year of the vocational training pathways will be increased. Besides the secondary vocational schools themselves, standard secondary schools can also contribute to reducing the number of pupils who drop out in the first year of secondary vocational education. It is the task of secondary schools to prepare pupils as effectively as possible for a follow-up programme. Effective career orientation means assisting pupils with their choice of an educational programme or occupation with a link to the regional labour market.

■ **Integrated approach by the youth care, public safety, and the labour market**

Preventing pupils leaving school early begins at school

but it does not finish there. Making pupils and their problems the focus of all efforts requires input from schools, regional businesses, the public officials who monitor school attendance and drop-outs, probation officers, debt clearance coaches, youth social workers, and the agencies that deal with youth employment. The 2008-2011 “Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates” has improved regional cooperation between these parties. This approach is bearing fruit. A more far-reaching integrated approach within the region can be even more beneficial. In a number of regions, attempts will be made to ensure collaboration with non-profit organisations, companies that promote corporate social responsibility, and temporary employment agencies.

■ Subsidy and measures

From now on, when we determine whether an institution will be granted a **performance subsidy**, we will be examining the institution’s percentage of new school drop-outs (the number of new school drop-outs in comparison with the number of participants aged 12 to 23). Examining these numbers as a percentage will ensure fairer treat-

ment of educational institutions whose performance exceeds or falls short of the existing standard, which was based on the decrease in the number of school drop-outs in comparison with the reference year, which was the 2005-2006 school year. In order to do justice to the differences between sectors and educational levels, different standards will be established for general secondary and secondary vocational education. The standards are intended to achieve the final goal of having no more than 25,000 new school drop-outs in 2016. Educational institutions may or may not qualify for a performance subsidy in a school year for each level of education, depending on whether the standard for that level of education has been met. In addition to the performance subsidy, each educational institution that signs the school drop-out agreement will receive a fixed amount to be used to maintain their strategy for dealing with drop-out issues.

In addition to the performance subsidy for individual institutions, the revised approach to drop-out issues provides a single subsidy funding stream for the Drop-out Registration and Coordination Centre [RMC] for each



region: **the regional drop-out fund**. This combination of the current funding for 'educational programmes' with that for 'plus programmes' lowers the institutions' administrative costs. A single application will suffice for the 2012-2015 period. Schools and municipalities in every region have developed a joint subsidy application based on their jointly prepared regional problem analysis. The emphasis of this analysis has been embedding drop-out prevention in the education process and reducing the drop-out rate by improving cooperation along the chain (general secondary and secondary vocational education institutions and municipalities working together, possibly in tandem with other chain partners such as Youth Services [*Jeugd zorg*], social welfare agencies, members of the business community, etc.). The objective of these efforts is to ensure that young people who have not yet earned a basic qualification but who are unable or unwilling to stay at their current educational institution are placed in another educational setting as soon as possible.

A wide variety of measures are being implemented to this

end, such as a coordinated approach to truancy, a smooth transition from pre-vocational secondary education [*vmbo*] to general secondary vocational education [*mbo*], better career-planning assistance, guidance counselling, and supervision, and more and better care at school. Pupils who drop out of school are often truant or absent beforehand. A successful strategy for dealing with the problem requires an adequate response to truancy from those in the truant pupil's environment. Keeping coordinated truancy records can serve as a foundation for a timely and adequate strategy. In practice, some schools still lack an adequate strategy for dealing with truancy. Together, pre-vocational secondary education institutions, general secondary vocational education institutions, and municipalities (school attendance officers/RMCs) can significantly contribute to young people's successful transition so that as many of them as possible achieve basic qualifications. Pre-vocational secondary education institutions and secondary vocational education institutions can combine their strengths to implement preventive activities to increase their pupils' chances of a successful transition.



2 Results for school year 2012

2.1 National perspective

The focus in the Netherlands is on preventing pupils from leaving school early. The objective of the Dutch Government is to reduce the number of new early school leavers (ESL's) to 25,000 by 2016 (this is a different definition than the EU-definition). This section deals with the number of new ESL's nationwide in 2011-2012 and the relative trend compared to 2005-2006.

At national level, there were 36,560 new ESL's between 1 October 2010 and 1 October 2011. This figure is based on more accurate records than previously.¹ The national ESL percentage for the 2011-2012 school year has fallen to 2.8%. At secondary schools (VO), that figure has fallen to 0,9% and at schools for (senior) secondary vocational education (MBO) to 6.9%.

that some 4000 young people are incorrectly counted as early school leavers each year. This has been taken into account in the long-term performance agreements and in the performance-related funding.

The "Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates" agreements concluded with RMC regions, secondary schools and secondary vocational schools involve a reduction target of 40% for the 2010-2011 school year. This booklet sets the boundary between "green" and "red" in a number of figures at a reduction of 25%. This is fairer to regions and schools with a lot of young people who are wrongly categorised as early school leavers, for example because they are at a school abroad, a private school, or a special school. It is estimated

A new early school leaver is a pupil between 12 and 23 years of age who leaves school in the course of the school year without a basic qualification (a senior general secondary, pre-university, or at least a level-2 secondary vocational diploma). The ESL percentage is the number of ESL's as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in school at the beginning of the school year.

Figure 2: National target and actual performance in absolute numbers of ESL's

Source: DUO

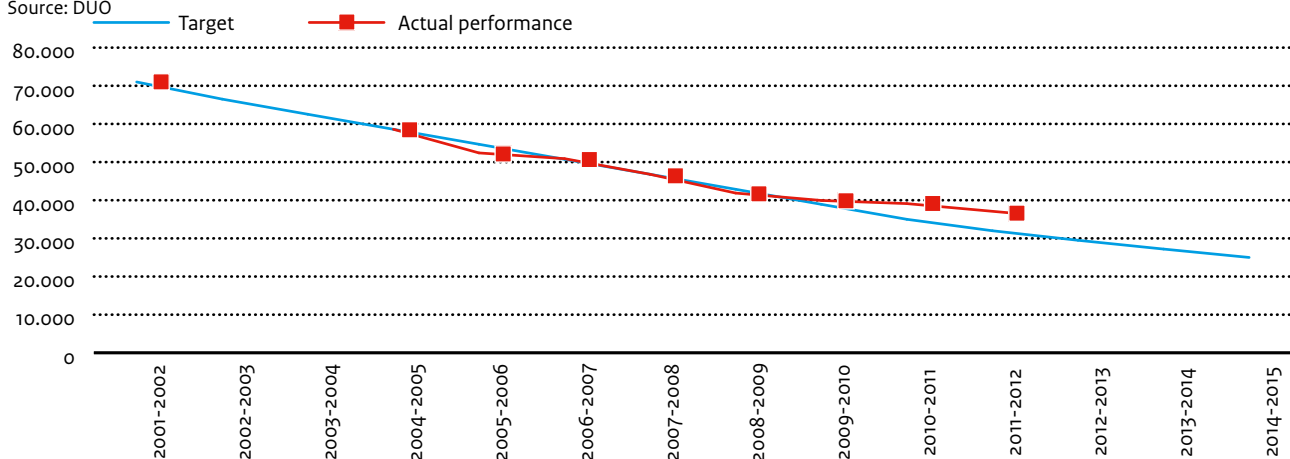


Table 1: ESL's nationally, in numbers and percentages

Source: DUO

	2001-2002	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2014-2015
Actual performance	71.000	58.600	52.700	50.900	46.800	41.800	39.900	39.115	36.560	25.000
% of ESL's	5,5%	4,6%	4,0%	3,9%	3,6%	3,2%	3,0%	3,0%	2,8%	2,0%

¹ The personal education number (BRON) has been introduced at schools for special secondary education (VSO). This makes it possible to determine how many pupils proceed from regular secondary education to special secondary education. From the 2009/10 school year, this results in a correction of 1800 fewer ESL's. No corrections are possible for previous years.

2.2 The RMC regions

In the long-term performance agreements falling under the “Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates” programme, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has agreed with all 39 RMC regions that the number of new ESL’s between the 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 school years should be reduced by 40% compared to the 2005-2006 reference year. The ESL rate should be reduced cumulatively by 10% a year, starting with 10% in the 2007-2008 school year and rising to a 40% reduction by 2010-2011. The aim of a 40% reduction also applies to the 2011-2012 school year. This section deals with the results achieved by the RMC regions in the 2010-2011 school year and with the distribution of the ESL’s aged up to or over 18.

ESL’s in the RMC regions

- In 2 regions, the reduction has been more than 40% compared to 2005-2006: Walcheren (-40,2%) and Kop van Noord-Holland (-41,6%). 8 regions reduced the ESL rate by 30% to 40%.
- None of the regions saw a rise in the number of ESL’s compared to 2005-2006. In one region, the reduction has been less than 10% (Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen).
- The highest percentage of ESL’s is in the Rijnmond (region Rotterdam), Haaglanden/Westlanden and Agglomeration Amsterdam.
- The Rijnmond, Agglomeration Amsterdam, Haaglanden/Westland, and Utrecht regions had the largest number of ESL’s in absolute terms.
- North Groningen-Eemsmond, Southwest Friesland and North & Middle Drenthe have the lowest ESL percentage.

Figure 3: RMC regions, actual reduction in ESL’s in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006
Source: DUO

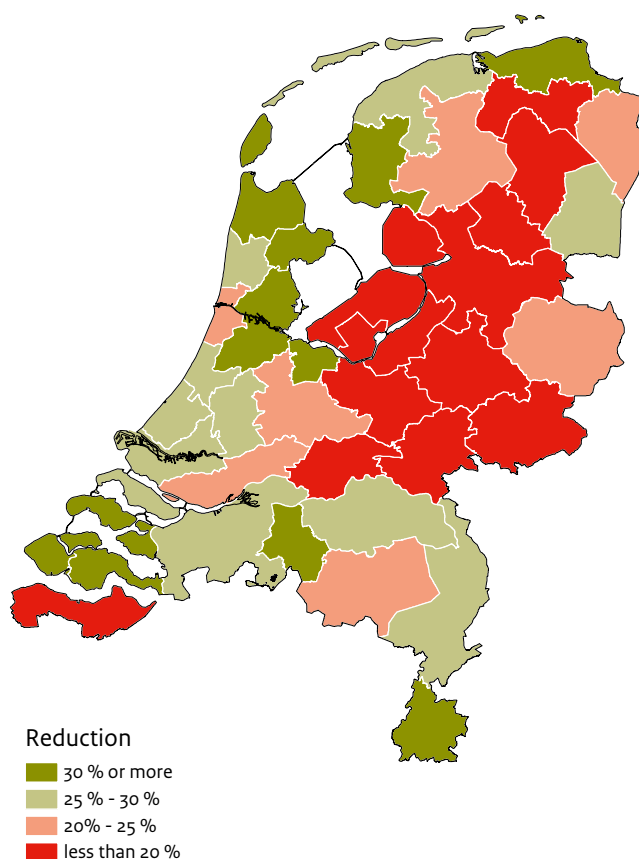


Figure 4: RMC regions, percentage of ESL’s in 2011-2012
Source: DUO

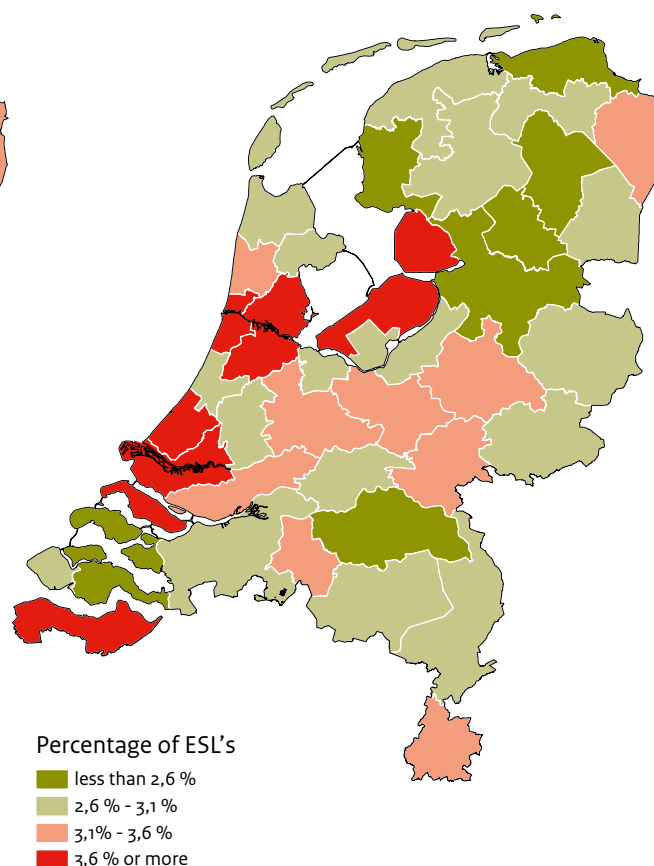


Table 2: RMC regions, trend in ESL's in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006
Source: DUO

RMC region	2005-2006			2011-2012			% of ESL's, trend compared to 2005-2006
	Pupils enrolled	Number of ESL's	% of ESL's	Pupils enrolled	Number of ESL's	% of ESL's	
23 Kop van Noord-Holland	13.707	649	4,7	13.882	379	2,7	-41,6
32 Walcheren	9.352	440	4,7	9.150	263	2,9	-40,2
2 Noord-Groningen-Eemmond	9.228	327	3,5	8.603	210	2,4	-35,8
22 West-Friesland	16.975	770	4,5	17.668	496	2,8	-35,6
5 Zuid-West Friesland	10.203	335	3,3	10.658	222	2,1	-33,7
21 Agglomeratie Amsterdam	91.246	5.790	6,3	96.030	3.850	4,0	-33,5
35 Midden-Brabant	29.864	1.493	5,0	30.156	1.005	3,3	-32,7
31 Oosterschelde regio	13.531	539	4,0	14.044	363	2,6	-32,7
39 Gewest Zuid-Limburg	44.245	2.124	4,8	40.344	1.447	3,6	-31,9
20 Gooi en Vechtstreek	18.784	853	4,5	19.269	597	3,1	-30,0
29 Rijnmond	96.478	5.575	5,8	95.431	3.926	4,1	-29,6
26 Zuid-Holland-Noord	31.758	1.254	3,9	31.184	887	2,8	-29,3
36 Noord-Oost-Brabant	52.565	1.923	3,7	54.223	1.362	2,5	-29,2
4 Friesland Noord	21.846	888	4,1	21.625	633	2,9	-28,7
24 Noord-Kennemerland	21.599	1.018	4,7	22.104	730	3,3	-28,3
34 West-Brabant	52.939	2.306	4,4	53.729	1.662	3,1	-27,9
27 Zuid-Holland-Oost	31.329	1.180	3,8	30.739	857	2,8	-27,4
28 Haaglanden/Westlanden	72.070	3.999	5,5	73.174	2.921	4,0	-27,0
8 Zuid-Oost Drenthe	13.818	558	4,0	14.355	415	2,9	-25,6
38 Gewest Limburg-Noord	40.473	1.481	3,7	40.076	1.104	2,8	-25,5
19 Utrecht	60.556	2.731	4,5	62.107	2.074	3,3	-24,1
6 Friesland-Oost	22.893	804	3,5	23.464	627	2,7	-22,0
30 Zuid-Holland-Zuid	40.477	1.733	4,3	40.778	1.358	3,3	-21,6
25 West-Kennemerland	27.216	1.373	5,0	28.764	1.078	3,7	-21,5
12 Twente	51.006	1.770	3,5	51.930	1.397	2,7	-21,1
1 Oost-Groningen	11.985	492	4,1	11.998	390	3,3	-20,7
37 Zuidoost-Brabant	57.404	2.202	3,8	57.854	1.755	3,0	-20,3
16 Eem en Vallei	49.778	1.999	4,0	51.975	1.621	3,1	-18,9
10 IJssel-Vecht	37.480	1.121	3,0	36.948	910	2,5	-18,8
3 Centraal en Westelijk Groningen	21.769	830	3,8	22.540	677	3,0	-18,4
18 Flevoland	33.364	1.554	4,7	34.330	1.268	3,7	-18,4
17 Noordwest-Veluwe	17.071	580	3,4	17.074	477	2,8	-17,8
7 Noord- en Midden Drenthe	15.587	468	3,0	16.498	390	2,4	-16,7
11 Stedendriehoek	34.269	1.387	4,0	34.883	1.169	3,4	-15,7
9 Zuid-West Drenthe	10.614	318	3,0	10.821	270	2,5	-15,1
14 Arnhem/Nijmegen	52.522	2.075	4,0	54.572	1.796	3,3	-13,5
15 Rivierenland	20.118	696	3,5	21.197	603	2,8	-13,4
13 Achterhoek	26.409	886	3,4	26.856	785	2,9	-11,4
33 Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen	7.762	313	4,0	7.778	282	3,6	-9,9

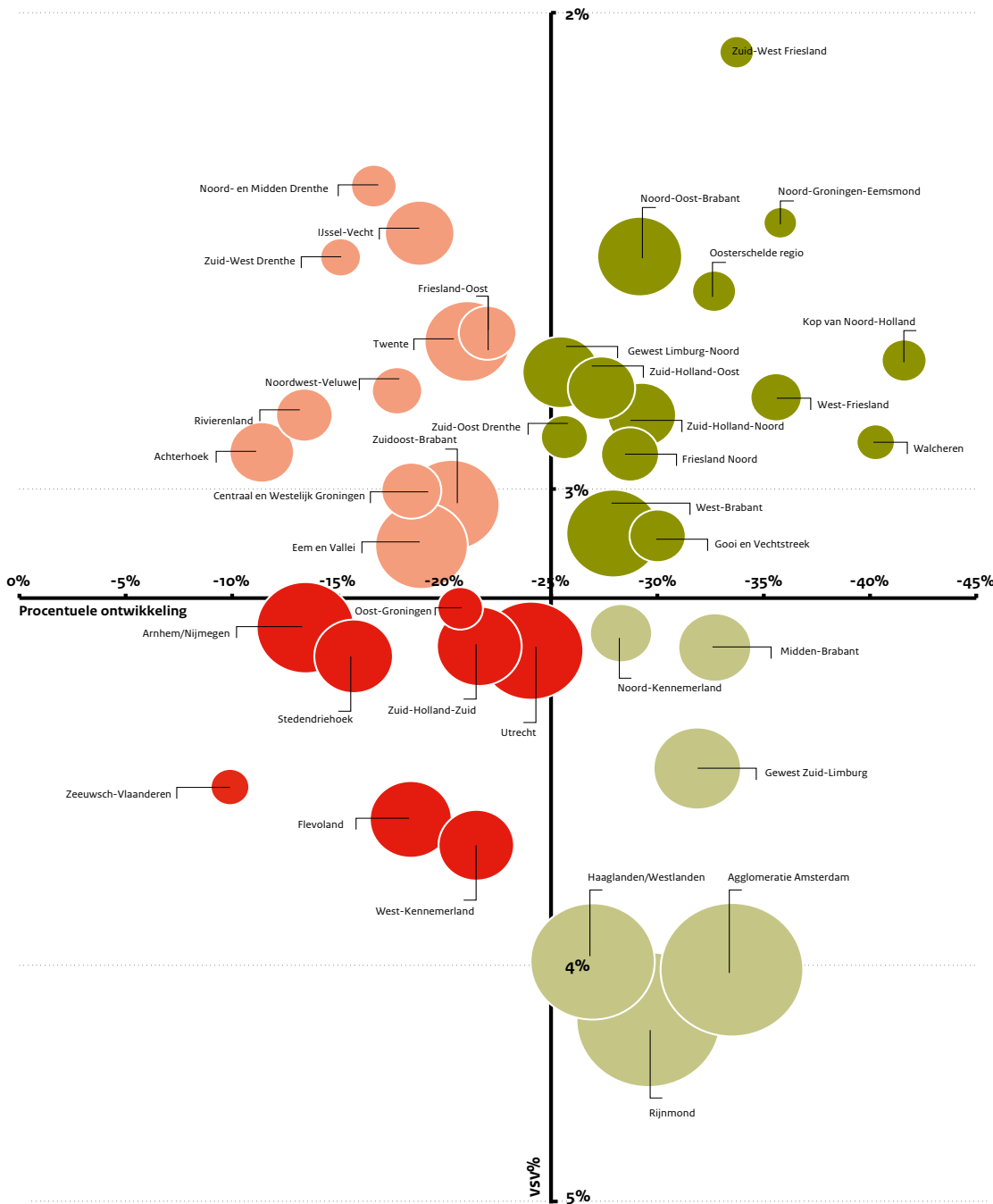


Figure 5:¹ Trend, ESL percentage and absolute number of ESL's by RMC region in 2011-2012
Source: DUO

Explanation of Figure 5

The figure shows three relevant dimensions for each RMC region for the 2011-2012 school year: the absolute number of ESL's; the percentage of ESL's; and the relative trend in the absolute number of new ESL's compared to 2005-2006.

- The size of the circle indicates the number of ESL's; the bigger the circle, the larger the number of new ESL's.
- The horizontal position of each circle indicates the relative trend in the number of new ESL's between the 2005-2006 and

2011-2012 school years. Regions to the right of the vertical axis have reduced the number of ESL's by more than 25%. In regions to the left of the vertical axis, the reduction has been less.

- The vertical position of each circle indicates the ESL percentage. The intersection of the axes indicates the regional average. Regions below the horizontal axis have a higher-than-average percentage of ESL's. Regions above the horizontal axis have a percentage of ESL's that is lower than the average for RMC regions.

- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by 25% or more, and the percentage is lower than the RMC regional average.
- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by 25% or more, and the percentage is higher than the RMC regional average.
- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by less than 25%, and the percentage is higher than the RMC regional average.
- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by less than 25%, and the percentage is lower than the RMC regional average.

¹ This figure sets the boundary between "green" and "red" at a reduction of 25%. This is fairer to regions with a lot of young people who are wrongly categorised as ESL's, for example because they are at a school abroad, a private school, or a special school.

2.3 The schools

This section considers how secondary schools (VO) and secondary vocational (MBO) schools¹ have performed. There are major differences between the results for the various schools. Regional socio-economic factors may affect the number of new ESL's at a secondary school or a secondary vocational school. Educational level also plays a role. The risk of dropping out is greater at schools with a large proportion of pupils at secondary vocational education levels 1 and 2.

Figure 6: Total secondary vocational schools by % change in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006
Source: DUO

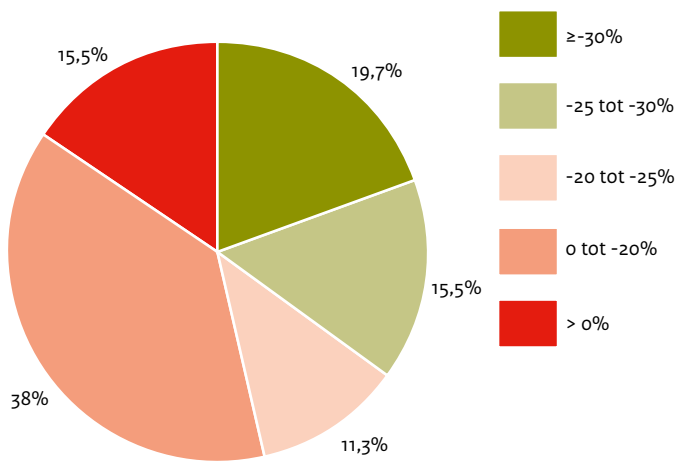
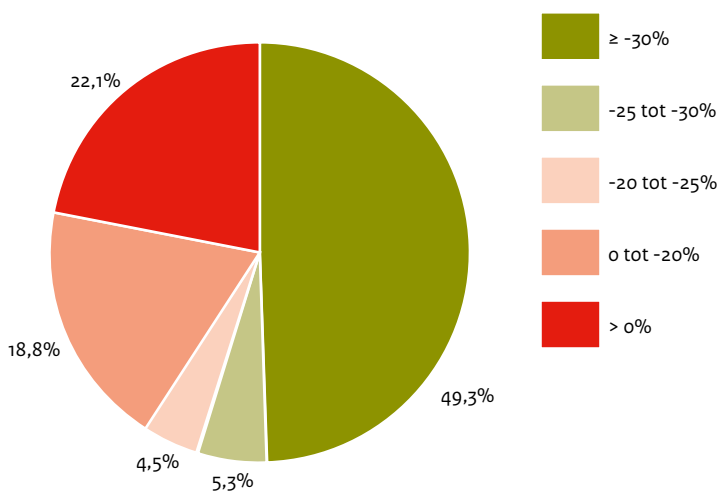


Figure 7: Total secondary schools by % change in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006
Source: DUO



The ESL rate at secondary vocational schools (6.9% average) is higher than at secondary schools (0.9% average). This section therefore looks more closely at the ESL rate in secondary vocational education. Almost 6% of secondary vocational schools have achieved a reduction of 20% or more compared to 2005-2006.

New ESL's at secondary vocational (MBO) schools

- 20% of secondary vocational schools have achieved a reduction of 30% or more compared to 2005-2006.
- 27% of secondary vocational schools have achieved a reduction of between 20% and 30%.
- 21% of secondary vocational schools have achieved a reduction in the number of ESL's compared to 2005-2006.
- 75% of new ESL's in 2011-2012 left secondary vocational education. In the 2005-2006 reference year, 69% of new ESL's were secondary vocational school pupils.

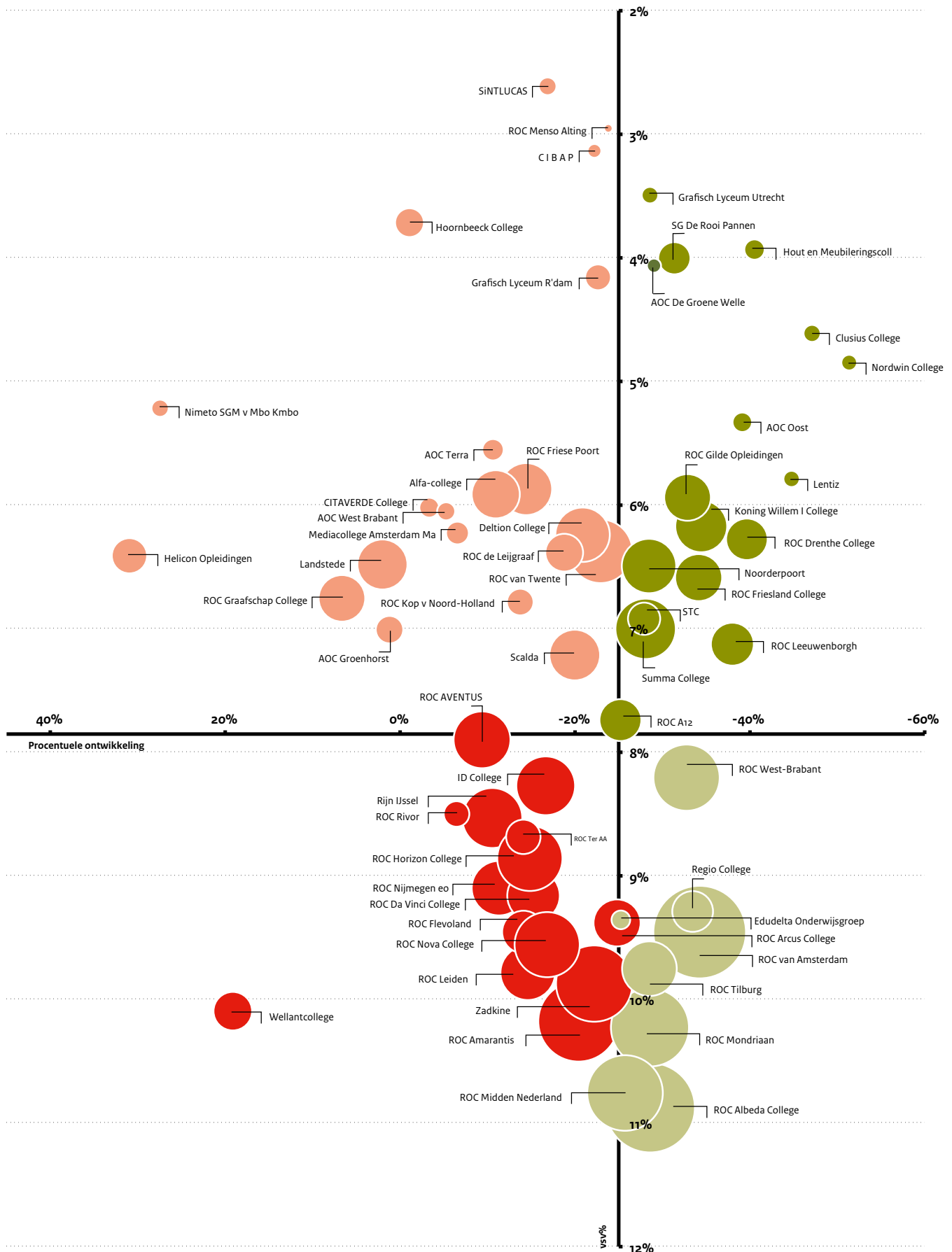
Figure 8 shows the ESL trend for all secondary vocational schools in the 2011-2012 school year compared to 2005-2006. More information regarding the ESL rate per secondary vocational school is available at <http://www.vsvverkenner.nl/english/>. This website provides details of the type of school and background traits for ESL's.

New ESL's at secondary schools

- 49% of schools have achieved a reduction of 30% or more compared to 2005-2006.
- 22% of schools have seen an increase in the number of ESL's.

¹ Secondary vocational schools ("MBO" schools) are taken to comprise Regional Training Centres [ROC], Agricultural Training Centres [AOC], and professional training centres.

Figure 8: Relative trend, ESL percentage, and number of ESL's per secondary vocational school in absolute figures in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006
Source: DUO



¹ This figure sets the boundary between “green” and “red” at a reduction of 25%. This is fairer to schools with a lot of young people who are wrongly categorised as ESL's, for example because they are at a school abroad, a private school, or a special school.

Explanation of Figure 8

The figure shows three relevant dimensions for each secondary vocational school for the 2011-2012 school year: the absolute number of ESL's; the percentage of ESL; and the relative trend in the absolute number of new ESL's compared to 2005-2006.

- The size of the circle indicates the number of ESL's; the bigger the circle, the larger the number of new ESL's.
- The horizontal position of each circle indicates the relative trend in the number of new ESL's between the 2005-2006 and 2011-2012 school years. Secondary vocational schools to the right of the vertical axis have reduced the number of ESL's by more than 25%. At

secondary vocational schools to the left of the vertical axis, the reduction has been less. A number of secondary vocational schools are to the left of the 0% line and show an increase in the number of ESL's.

- The vertical position of each circle indicates the ESL percentage. The intersection of the axes indicates the average for the secondary vocational schools. Secondary vocational schools below the horizontal axis have a higher-than-average percentage of ESL's. Secondary vocational schools above the horizontal axis have a lower-than-average percentage of ESL's.

- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by 25% or more, and the percentage is lower than the average for secondary vocational schools.

- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by 25% or more, and the percentage is higher than the average for secondary vocational schools.

- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by less than 25%, and the percentage is higher than the average for secondary vocational schools.

- Compared to 2005-2006, the number of ESL's has declined by less than 25%, and the percentage is lower than the average for secondary vocational schools.

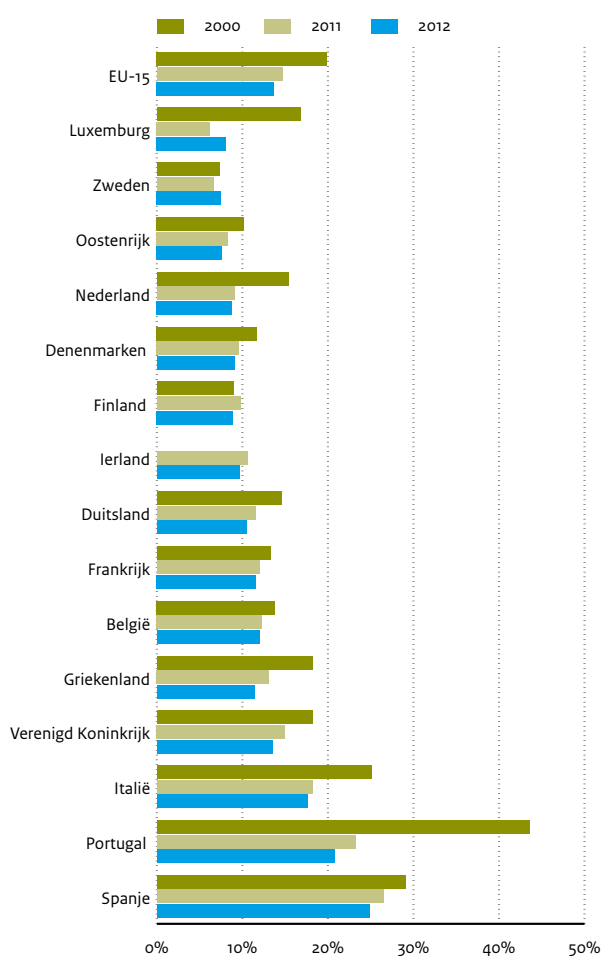


2.4 European indicator

Over 2011-2012 the Netherlands has a relatively low percentage of Early School Leavers (8,8%) compared to the EU-15 member states (13,7%). The proportion of Early School Leavers in the age category 18–25 has been reduced by one third to 10 percent over the past decade. Thus, the Netherlands precisely met the target set by the EU in 2000.

Figuur 9: The development of the percentage of the total group of ESL's in the EU-15, 2000, 2011 and 2012

Source: Eurostat



2.5 Youth unemployment

- Young people without a basic qualification are more likely to be unemployed than those who have obtained such a qualification. Indeed, the unemployment rate among ESL's overall is approximately double to the unemployment rate of young people with a basic qualification. In addition, the unemployment rate fluctuates more among ESL's overall.
- The effects of the economic crisis in 2009 are clearly apparent in the percentage of young people who are unemployed, with the greatest impact being on those without a basic qualification.

- The unemployment rate among men without a basic qualification (15 to 23 age group) was 16.3% in 2012. That is 5,7% higher than among unemployed men with a basic qualification (10.6%).
- The unemployment rate among women without a basic qualification (15 to 23 age group) was 19,2% in 2012. Among women with a basic qualification, the unemployment rate was considerably lower (10.6%).

Figure 10: Unemployment percentage for young people aged 15 to 23 from 2005 to 2010.

Source: Statistics Netherlands, Labour Force Survey 2006-2012

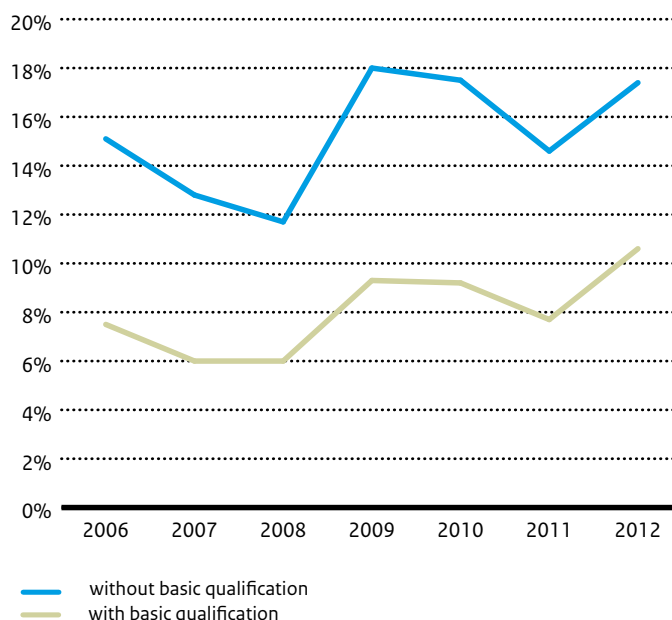


Table 3: Unemployment percentage for young people aged 15 to 23 according to gender.

Source: Statistics Netherlands, Labour Force Survey 2006 to 2012

	% men with basic qualification (15 to 23 age group)	% men without basic qualification (15 to 23 age group)	% women with basic qualification (15 to 23 age group)	% women without basic qualification (15 to 23 age group)
2006	7,5	13,8	7,5	17,4
2007	5,1	11,6	6,8	15,0
2008	5,2	11,4	6,6	12,2
2009	10,9	18,0	7,9	17,9
2010	10,5	16,9	8,0	18,4
2011	7,9	14,9	7,6	14,1
2012	10,6	16,3	10,6	19,2

¹ In July 2010, Statistics Netherlands introduced a new method for calculating unemployment figures. The new method made it possible for Statistics Netherlands to produce monthly unemployment figures for the first time. Quarterly and annual figures from the Labour Force Survey were also aligned with these new unemployment figures by improving the weighting factor. This means that all quarterly and annual figures from the Labour Force Survey in 2001 and beyond have been revised. The years prior to 2001 have not been revised and are the same figures as published previously.

2.6 Crime suspects

- More ESL's are crime suspects,¹ relatively speaking, than non-ESL's. This applies to both secondary schools and secondary vocational schools.
- 20,6% of ESL's from secondary schools have been suspected of a crime. In the case of non-ESL's, the figure is 3,8%. A relatively large number of young people who have dropped out from years 3 or 4 of pre-vocational education have been crime suspects (24,0% and 17,0% respectively).
- In the case of ESL's from secondary vocational schools, 23,4% have been suspected of a crime as opposed to 8,3% of non-ESL's. The percentage of young people who have been suspected of a crime is particularly high among ESL's from level-1 (33,6%) and level-2 (27,5%) secondary vocational schools.

Table 4:² ESL's suspected of a crime in 2010-2012 by year and level

Source: CBS/National Police Services Agency (2008, 2009, 2010)

	ESL's	% ESL's	non-ESL's	% non-ESL's
Netherlands	8.620	20.6	48.760	3.8
total secondary education	1.390	13.5	17.260	1.9
VO years 1-2	330	11.3	3.060	0.8
VO VMBO year 3	310	24.0	4.440	4.4
VO VMBO year 4	640	17.0	5.640	5.8
VO HAVO 3-5/VWO 3-6 (incl. general year)	120	4.9	4.120	1.3
Total MBO	6.790	23.4	30.440	8.3
MBO 1	1.470	33.6	1.870	24.7
MBO 2	3.450	27.5	11.410	13.7
MBO 3	790	16.1	7.540	7.7
MBO 4	1.070	15.0	9.620	5.4
Adult general secondary education (VAVO)	420	18.7	910	9.4

¹ "Suspected of a crime" means registered with an official police report in the 2008, 2009, and/or 2010 calendar years.

² The table concerns a study population of pupils younger than 23 belonging to the Dutch population. The numbers have been rounded off to tens; adding them up may therefore produce a difference to the total. Percentages have been calculated on the basis of the non-rounded-off figures.

Index of tables and figures

Figure 1: Movements in Dutch education	4	Table 1: ESL's nationally, in numbers and percentages	10
Figure 2: National target and actual performance in absolute numbers of ESL's . . .	10	Table 2: RMC regions, trend in ESL's in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006 . . .	12
Figure 3: RMC regions, actual reduction in ESL's in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006	11	Table 3: Unemployment percentage for young people aged 15 to 23 according to gender	18
Figure 4: RMC regions, percentage of ESL's in 2011-2012	11	Table 4: ESL's suspected of a crime by year and level in 2010-2012	18
Figure 5: Trend, ESL percentage and absolute number of ESL's by RMC region in 2011-2012	13	Table 5: Categories of pupils who are/are not counted as ESL's in the various calculation methods	22
Figure 6: Total secondary vocational schools by % change in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006	14		
Figure 7: Total secondary schools by % change in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2006	14		
Figure 8: Relative trend, ESL percentage, and number of ESL's per secondary vocational school in absolute figures in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-200	15		
Figure 9: The development of the percentage of the total group of ESL's in the EU-15, 2000, 2011 and 2012	17		
Figure 10: Unemployment percentage for young people aged 15 to 23 from 2005 to 2010	17		

Glossary

AOC	<i>Agricultural Training Centre</i>
BBL	<i>Day release pathway (at secondary vocational schools)</i>
BOL	<i>Vocational training pathway (at secondary vocational schools)</i>
BRON	<i>Basic Records Database for Education</i>
Transition	<i>Transition year</i>
CBS	<i>Statistics Netherlands</i>
DUO	<i>Education Executive Agency</i>
EBB	<i>Labour Force Survey</i>
G4	<i>The four largest Dutch cities</i>
G32	<i>Cooperative group of 33 large/medium-sized municipalities</i>
GBA	<i>Municipal Personal Records Database</i>
HAVO	<i>Senior General Secondary Education</i>
HBO	<i>Higher vocational education (universities of applied sciences)</i>
KLPD	<i>National Police Services Agency</i>
LWOO	<i>Learning Support Education</i>
MBO	<i>(Senior) Secondary Vocational Education</i>
MBO 1	<i>Secondary vocational education (MBO) level 1</i>
MBO 2	<i>Secondary vocational education (MBO) level 2</i>
MBO 3	<i>Secondary vocational education (MBO) level 3</i>
MBO 4	<i>Secondary vocational education (MBO) level 4</i>
MBO	<i>School (Senior) Secondary Vocational School</i>
PRO	<i>Practical Education</i>
RMC	<i>Regional Registration and Coordination Function</i>
ROC	<i>Regional Training Centre</i>
VAVO	<i>Adult General Secondary Education</i>
VM2	<i>Combination of the upper classes of basic vocational programme at an VMBO school and the MBO 2 programme</i>
VMBO	<i>Preparatory (Senior) Secondary Vocational Education</i>
VO	<i>Secondary Education</i>
VO school	<i>School for Secondary Education</i>
VSO	<i>Special Secondary Education</i>
VSV	<i>Early School Leaving</i>
VSV-er	<i>ESL</i>
VWO	<i>Pre-university education</i>
WO	<i>University education</i>

Sources and calculation method

Personal education number

All young people in the Netherlands who attend a publicly funded school have been assigned a personal education number that makes it possible to keep track of them. Personal traits such as age, gender, ethnic background, and education level are also linked to this number. In the case of publicly funded education, the data is stored in BRON (the Basic Records Database for Education). The anonymized education number makes it possible to map ESL's at national, regional, municipal and school level. This method of calculation has served since 2005 to produce consistent and reliable comparisons between years and to spot trends. The 2008-2011 "Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates" agreements were concluded on the basis of this method.

Provisional and final figures

Early each year, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science presents the provisional school ESL figures for the previous school year to the House of Representatives. The figures in this booklet are based on the provisional figures for the 2010-2011 school year. The ESL figures are only finalised when the auditors have issued their report on the registration and deregistration data submitted by the schools. The final figures are made available nine months after the provisional figures in the School Drop-out Atlas [VSV-Atlas].

National and regional figures

A small group of young people are included in the tallies of ESL's even though they are in fact currently enrolled in an educational programme; that is because the education sectors in which they are enrolled do not (yet) work with the personal education number. It is possible to adjust the national ESL figure for some of these young people because additional information is available about them at national level. These adjustments are not yet possible for the figures at regional, municipal, and school level.

The national ESL figure is adjusted by the number of pupils who transfer to special secondary education (VSO) in the course of a school year. This has been possible since the 2009/10 school year because of the introduction of the BRON records for special secondary education (VSO). No corrections are possible for previous years. That means that the time line was interrupted briefly in 2009-2010.

Whenever a pupil drops out during a school year without first obtaining a basic qualification, he or she will be considered an early school leaver. Every year on 1 October (T), the relevant officials check which pupils had been enrolled in the previous year (T-1). If a pupil is no longer enrolled on 1 October (T) and has not yet obtained a basic qualification, then he or she is a early school leaver according to the definition. Pupils who drop out during the school year but are once again enrolled on 1 October are not counted as early school leaver.¹

One element of the ESL policy is to tighten up the new measurement method. The national ESL figure will also be adjusted by the number of examination candidates, other non-funded pupils attending secondary vocational schools, and pupils enrolled in adult general secondary education. Although examination candidates and other non-funded pupils in secondary vocational education are in fact pupils enrolled at a secondary vocational school, they are not counted in the school's application for funding. The national figures shown in this booklet were derived using the national calculation method. The regional, municipal and school figures were derived using the regional calculation method and are based exclusively on the registration and deregistration figures that schools furnish to DUO for funding purposes. The adjustments applied at national level cannot be applied here.²

The fact that examination candidates, other non-funded pupils and pupils in adult general secondary education are not included in the agreement-linked calculation reduces the number of new ESL's. This is because these pupils are not counted at the start of the school year and therefore cannot become new ESL's later. On the other hand, pupils without a basic qualification who go on to become examination candidates or become part of the group of non-funded pupils or pupils enrolled in adult general secondary education are counted as new ESL's. This increases the number of ESL's. The increase is greater than the reduction, so that on balance there are more new ESL's at regional, municipal and school level than at national level.

¹ This is the calculation method for early school leavers defined in the 2008-2011 agreements in the "Drive to Reduce Drop-out Rates". The ESL Registration and Coordination legislation stipulates, however, that a pupil should be reported and registered as an early school leaver as soon as he or she has been absent for a month without permission.

² It should be noted, however, that if a region, school or sector already had a low percentage of ESL's in the reference year, this will influence the reduction achieved.

New record-keeping methods from 2012-2013

When interpreting the ESL figures, one should bear in mind that the picture is incomplete regarding the school careers of a small group of young people (0.2%-0.3% of the 1.3 million pupils in general secondary and secondary vocational education). This means that the number of new ESL's as recorded is too high. This is because of:

- private general secondary education;
- private secondary vocational education;
- the police academy;
- Ministry of Defence programmes (those not provided through an ROC);
- classes for juveniles in detention;
- transfer to a school abroad during or after general secondary or secondary vocational education;
- some of the “newcomers” who return to their country of origin after spending a period at school in the Netherlands;
- young people enrolled in general secondary or secondary vocational education who are issued an exemption under the Compulsory Education Act based on their physical or psychological condition;
- young people who have found a job for at least 12 hours a week after obtaining their level-1 secondary vocational certificate.

Several studies were carried out in 2010 to assess the size of these “blank spots”, legislation was prepared to allow for an adjustment to the ESL figures at regional and school level by means of BRON and a national registration of exemptions under the Compulsory Education Act. The legislation was recently finalised. The aim is to present an improved new measurement method at school level for the 2012/13 school year. Since the situation already existed at regional level in the baseline measurement for the current agreement (2005-2006), this has had no implications for the calculation of the performance-based funding.

Table 5: Categories of pupils who are/are not counted as ESL's in the various calculation methods

	National figures	Regional figures
Pupils older than 22	No	No
Living abroad	No	No
Migration	No	No
Deceased	No	No
Persons no longer registered in the Municipal Personal Records Database (GBA)	No	No
Pupils in Practical Education	No	No
Examination candidates and other non-funded pupils enrolled in secondary vocational schools	Yes	No
ESL's from adult general secondary education	Yes	No
International Baccalaureate/English Stream pupils	No	No
Estimate of pupils who transferred to special secondary or practical education	Yes	No

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