

The Netherlands Education System

Where System-Wide School Choice Goes Hand-in-Hand with Smart Regulations and Monitoring

Top-Performing Students

On PISA 2015, the Netherlands' average scores made it one of the top-performing education systems among the 72 participating countries and economies.

Dutch 15-year-olds perform especially well in mathematics. The Netherlands has one of the highest rates of students performing at the top levels of PISA proficiency.

Percent of Top-Performing Students on PISA 2015 in Mathematics

15.5% Netherlands

10.8% OECD Average

5.9% USA

In mathematics, 15-year-olds in the Netherlands are a **full year ahead** of their U.S. counterparts



Mean Math Scores PISA 2015

Demographic Data

2.71 million

Total students in the Netherlands' primary and secondary schools, similar to the U.S. state of New York

16:2

Student : teacher ratio in lower secondary schools, similar to the U.S. ratio of 15:5

\$12,247

Yearly spending per student, less than the U.S.'s \$15,720 per student per year

System Strengths and Goals

Early Childhood Education



Dutch three-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education, compared to OECD average of 70%.

Resources for At-Risk Students



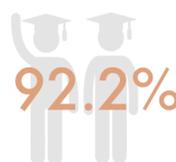
Students whose parents have very low levels of educational attainment receive more than **double** the base student funding.

Instructional Systems



Read about the Netherlands' ongoing nation-wide discussion of curriculum alignment in [Marc Tucker's interview](#) with Sander Dekker, the Netherlands' State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science.

No Dead Ends for Students



Dutch youth are in employment or training, the second highest youth engagement rate in the OECD, compared to the U.S. at only 85.6% of youth in employment or training.

Teacher Quality



Dutch colleges of education have set **higher entrance standards** in response to evidence showing key skills deficiencies in teacher candidates. Despite initial teacher shortages caused by this change, the government hopes this policy will increase the status of the teaching profession and attract higher quality candidates in the long run.

Teachers as Professionals



The Netherlands' Ministry of Education is invested in creating more **attractive career paths** for teachers, including leadership, curriculum development, and research pathways so teachers can advance and grow in their careers without leaving teaching.

Vocational Education



More than 50% of students choose to pursue vocational education in secondary school. Students have multiple opportunities to move to the academic track or on to higher education.

School Leadership



Dutch school leaders have completed a principal training program compared to the OECD average of 85%, and **91%** have completed instructional leadership training compared to the OECD average of 78%.

Governance and Accountability



Around **two-thirds** of primary students attend schools run by private secular or religious organizations. These schools are equally funded by the government and held to the same high standards as public schools, including high quality teacher requirements, national academic standards, national exams to measure mastery, and an inspection system to support school improvement.

Follow CIEB for further analysis and profiling of this high-performing education system during the coming year. For more on how the Dutch approach school choice, see this month's International Reads, [Understanding Education in the Netherlands](#).

Source: [OECD PISA 2015](#) and [OECD Education at a Glance 2016](#)