



Schola Europaea / Office of the Secretary-General

Pedagogical Development Unit

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Digital Education Vision for the European Schools system (DEVES)

Document approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting of 9, 10, 11 and 12 April 2019 in Athens.

Background

European context:

In 2016, the European Parliament and the European Council adopted a Recommendation¹ on the Eight Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which young people ought to have acquired at the end of the compulsory education and training period – and as adults during their life – through formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities. Digital competence (i.e. the confident and critical use of Information and Communication Technologies at work, recreationally and in communication) is one of those eight key competences.

To follow up on the Gothenburg Summit in November 2017, the European Commission adopted, in January 2017, “new initiatives to improve the key competences and digital skills of European citizens. Thus, a **Digital Education Action Plan** was defined and outlines how the EU can help people, educational institutions and education systems better adapt to life and work in an age of rapid digital change by:

- *making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning;*
- *developing the digital competences and skills needed for living and working in an age of digital transformation;*
- *improving education through better data analysis and foresight.*

Initiatives include supporting schools with high-speed broadband connections, scaling up a new self-assessment tool for schools on the use of technology for teaching and learning (SELFIE)² and a public awareness campaign on online safety, media literacy and cyber hygiene³.

In May 2018, the European Council reinforced the definition of Digital competence:

“Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking”⁴.

The EU has now promoted and detailed digital competence across several frameworks, e.g. DigComp⁵, DigCompEdu⁶, etc.

¹ Recommendation 2006/962/EC on the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.

² SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies) is a tool designed to help schools embed digital technologies into teaching, learning and student assessment. It can highlight what’s working well, where improvement is needed and what the priorities should be.

³ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-102_en.htm.

⁴ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance) (2018/C 189/01).

⁵ European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp).
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp>

⁶ Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu).
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcompedu>

European Schools' state of play:

In principle, the European Schools should have the capability to specifically implement the EU's initiatives in the field of education and continue their transformation into 'connected schools'.

As such, it seems necessary to put in place a more strategic and more global approach to the development of digital competence as a key competence, whilst also focusing on its incorporation as a cross-curricular competence into school curricula.

Future steps:

Considering that:

- digital competence is considered to be a key competence,
- measures are taken by the European Commission to develop key competences and digital skills,
- expectations and needs are expressed by the system's teachers,
- expectations are expressed by several stakeholders of the European Schools for the development of digital competence in the system,

it appeared that the 'IT Strategy Group' should define as a priority a **Digital Education Vision for the European Schools** (DEVES) and submit it to the Board of Governors for approval. This priority was placed as objective No 1 (Operational objective) with absolute priority⁷ in the IT Multi-annual Plan (see Annex 1).

Indeed, the European Schools, as an organisation, need a foundational document to declare its objectives and to help all its stakeholders to make decisions and achieve together a set of goals in terms of Digital Education. A vision is the proper way to go in this direction. This vision will help the IT Strategy group as well as the System, to coordinate efficient actions in this area.

Having taken into account all these considerations (the EU measures, the survey launched by the IT-PEDA WG across the schools in 2017 and the analysis from a technological and resources point of view made by the IT ADM WG), the 'IT Strategy Group' drew up and proposed the 'Digital Education Vision' below.

The Inspectors were consulted before finalising the document. This document takes into account some of their remarks.

This vision has to be considered as a long-term general framework. A range of concrete measures should be developed and prioritised in the near future to fulfil its aims. These measures will be based on, among other things, the needs of the actors of the system (students, teachers, schools...) and accompanied by budgeting for implementation (financial and human resources, new technologies...). In addition, all these measures will be discussed and treated in the IT Strategy Group and its subgroups (IT-PEDA and IT-ADM Working groups).

These measures have been defined in the original mandate of the WG (BoG April 2015) and in the IT Multi-annual plan approved by the Board of Governors in April 2018 (see 2018-01-D-79). Some of them have already been prioritised and are being developed by the IT Strategy Group: e.g. IT Policy training, Common Digital

⁷ **Absolute priority:** the achievement of the target is vital for the correct functioning/improvement of the information system and/or the mitigation of a critical risk.

Competence Framework (cross-curricular), SELFIE (see the earlier reference).

Based on the survey, from a structural and technological point of view, the European Schools system is basically going in the right direction. Nevertheless, more significant efforts must be made in some areas such as teacher training and support for schools' digital pedagogical practices to become better 'connected schools'⁸.

⁸ In her report (ref: 2018-09-D-11), the President of the Baccalaureate 2018, Prof. Eve Eisenschmidt, recognises that the examinations reflect the presence of high order skills and generally key competences, but also emphasises that ***“the development of digital competence was not supported by the current examination works, although information and data literacy, online communication and collaboration, and digital content creation (...) are important competences in our everyday life.”***

DIGITAL EDUCATION VISION FOR THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS SYSTEM

DIGITAL EDUCATION VISION for the European Schools system

Mission of the European Schools

At its April 2013 meeting, the Board of Governors expressed being in favour of the wording of the mission set out below (2013-09-D-17):

“To provide all pupils with multilingual and multicultural broad education of high quality, from early education to secondary school, and to equip upper secondary students for adult life and form a basis for further learning.”

Since digital technologies are an inseparable part of today's learning process, the European Schools share the following vision of a learning organisation:

“Every pupil and student develops throughout his/her European School education the digital competence to foster **confident, critical, responsible** and **creative** use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society.”

***Pupils and students** become **confident** users when they are aware of the potential advantages and risks of digital technologies and media, and therefore they are able to use them in a competent, secure and ethical way. They are **critical** users when they are able to evaluate sources, using higher order thinking skills. They are also **responsible** users when they have sufficient digital competence to enable them to become fully participative and contributory members of a rapidly changing global society. They can choose the best tools and the best media for their needs and goals, whilst using their **creativity** at its best.

One of the main aims of the European Schools is to help pupils and students become better lifelong learners, so that they are able to use digital technologies and media individually and to cooperate with others – both in and out of school. Digital competence and an innovative mind-set will empower them to be autonomous and reflective learners.

***Teachers** possess the competences required to facilitate the acquisition of the digital competence. They use digital tools for creating and sharing digital content to help interactive and collaborative learning and for assessment purposes. They are committed to create the best technology-mediated learning environment. They provide a model for pupils to learn how to use technology in a meaningful, autonomous and responsible way. They are able to use digital technologies for communication, collaboration and continuous professional development.

Digital competence, as a transversal competence, is present across the whole curriculum; therefore, every teacher has a role and a responsibility in developing pupils' digital competence.

***Schools** create environments where digital technologies and media are used for learning, communication and cooperation between pupils, teachers, other staff members, parents and external partners.

Schools make use of digital tools and media to provide support and enhance learning, according to individual needs and potential.

*The **European Schools system**, in order to offer an attractive opportunity in teachers' individual careers, aims to encourage all teachers and members of staff to further develop their knowledge and skills in the pedagogical area, and in this context, particularly in the field of digital competence. The system must also facilitate the development and online sharing of educational resources and tools.

It is one of the key roles of the Office of the Secretary General to provide all possible means of technical, organisational and pedagogical support to schools to be equipped with the required infrastructure in order to create a learner-friendly digital environment.

Finally, the members of the Board of Governors commit themselves to support responsibly the aims set out in this document.

Opinion of the Joint Board of Inspectors:

The JBI expressed a favourable opinion on the document and sent it forward to the JTC for an opinion. It emphasised, however, the need for a gradual implementation plan, ensuring that there was a robust infrastructure in place, in order to allow implementation of the vision in the system over the long term.

It invites the Budgetary Committee to recommend that the Board of Governors approve it with a view to its immediate entry into force.

Opinion of the Joint Teaching Committee:

The JTC expressed a favourable opinion on the Digital Education Vision for the European Schools (DEVES) and invites the Budgetary Committee to recommend that the Board of Governors approve it with a view to its immediate entry into force.

The JTC recommends that the Board of Governors charge the 'IT Strategy Group' with the task of developing measures to facilitate the implementation of this Digital Education Vision for the European Schools (DEVES). These measures will be developed gradually while respecting the multi-annual plan, which should then integrate them as new priorities. At each stage, these measures will be accompanied, if necessary, by a document setting out the financial, human and technological needs related to their implementation.

Although it supports the Vision, the Commission reserves the right to analyse, according to the budget, all the measures that will be taken as it is gradually implemented.

Opinion of the Budgetary Committee:

The Budgetary Committee took note of the document and its proposals as well as the opinions expressed by the JBI and the JTC.

Decision:

The Board of Governors decided:

- 1. to approve the Digital Education Vision for the European Schools system (DEVES), with immediate entry into force,**
- 2. to mandate the 'IT Strategy Group' to develop measures to facilitate the implementation of this DEVES. These measures will be developed gradually whilst respecting the multi-annual plan, which should then integrate them as new priorities. At each stage, these measures will be accompanied, if necessary, by a document setting out the financial, human and technological needs related to their implementation.**

Target 1	Define the vision of the European Schools in the ICT area
Domain(s)	II.A.1; II.A.2
Operational target 1.1.	Define an IT vision for the ESs and get it approved by the board of governors
Main phases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate users' needs 2. Make a summary of European recommendations/policies in the field of ICTs applied to education 3. A joint meeting of IT-ADM and IT-PEDA strategy teams allows a definition of the general framework of the document 4. The two groups work together on drawing up a project 5. The project is presented at different levels
Expected result(s)	The European Schools acquire a vision in the ICT area
Indicator(s) of success	Adoption by the ESs and dissemination of the document
Date of performance	December 2018
Needs/resources	Meetings of IT Collaboration strategy group, with members of this group working on drawing up the project for submission to the right level
Responsibility	Chairpersons of the IT-ADM and IT-PEDA strategy groups