

# Finnish Lessons



What can the world  
learn from educational  
change in Finland?

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Foreword by Andy Hargreaves  
Series Foreword by Ann Lieberman

the  
series on  
school reform

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# FINLAND: The Context

5.5 million people

Parliamentary democracy

EU member since 1995

Competitive market economy

Innovation and research

Prosperous Nordic welfare state

Low income inequality



# Education indicators

3500 schools, 60,000 teachers

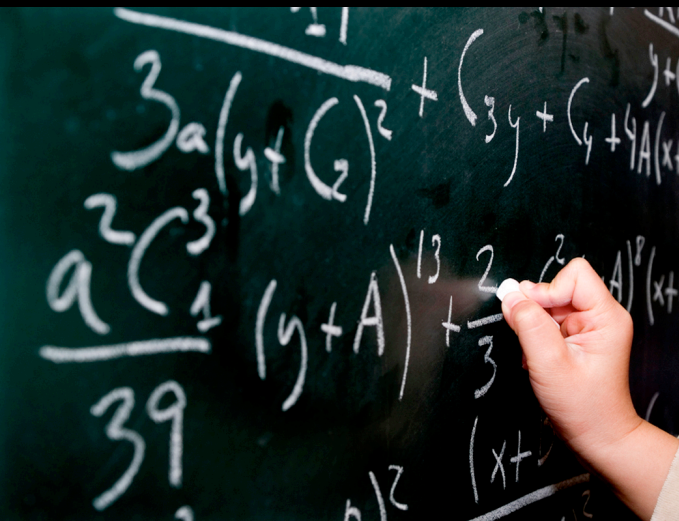
5.9% of national wealth (GDP) goes to education

A primary school student costs USD7100 per annum

99% of all education publicly funded

All teachers must hold a master's degree

95% teachers and principals unionized



# 3 Things You Need to Know

Finland has not always been a high performer

Finland has never aimed to be the top performer

Finland is performing well in many other areas as well

# Finnish Lessons

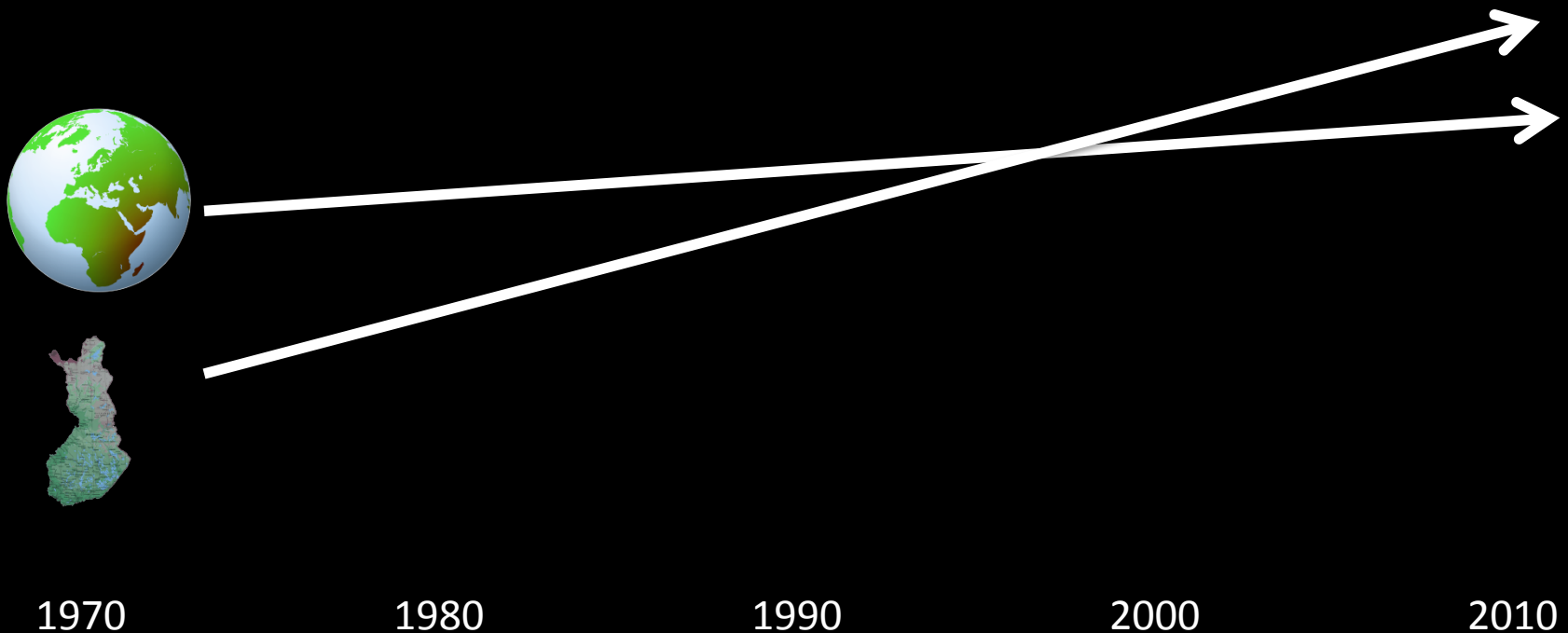
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Finland has an education system in which young people learn well and differences among schools are small—and all that with reasonable cost and human effort.

# Finnish Lessons

2

This has not always been so.



# Finnish Lessons

3

Teaching is a prestigious profession and many students aspire to be teachers.

# Finnish Lessons

4

Therefore, the Finns have probably the most competitive teacher-education system in the world.

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5

As a consequence, teachers in Finland have a great deal of professional autonomy and access to purposeful professional development throughout their careers.

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6

Those who are lucky enough to become teachers normally are teachers for life.

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7

Almost half of the 16-year-olds, when they leave comprehensive school, have been in engaged in some sort of special education, personalized help, or individual guidance.

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In Finland teachers teach less and students spend less time studying both in and out of school than their peers in other countries.

# Finnish Lessons

Finnish schools lack the standardized testing, test-preparation, and private tutoring of the United States and much of the world.

# Finnish Lessons

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All of these factors that are behind the Finnish success seem to be the opposite of what is taking place in the United States and much of the rest of the world where competition, test-based accountability, standardization, and privatization seem to dominate.

# How Finnish Lessons Can Help American Education Reform?

# 1. Excellence through equality of educational opportunity





Equitable funding of education



School lunch for all



Health care

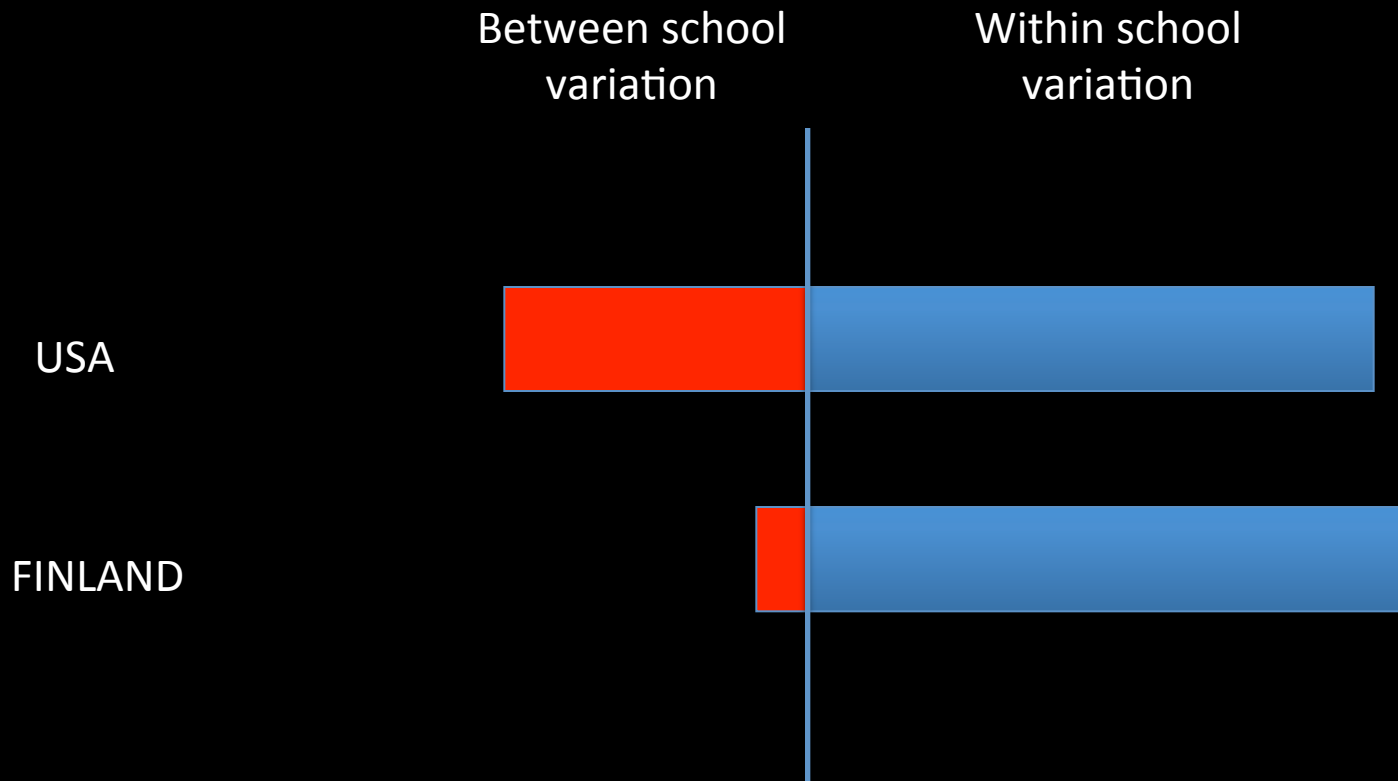


Individualized support

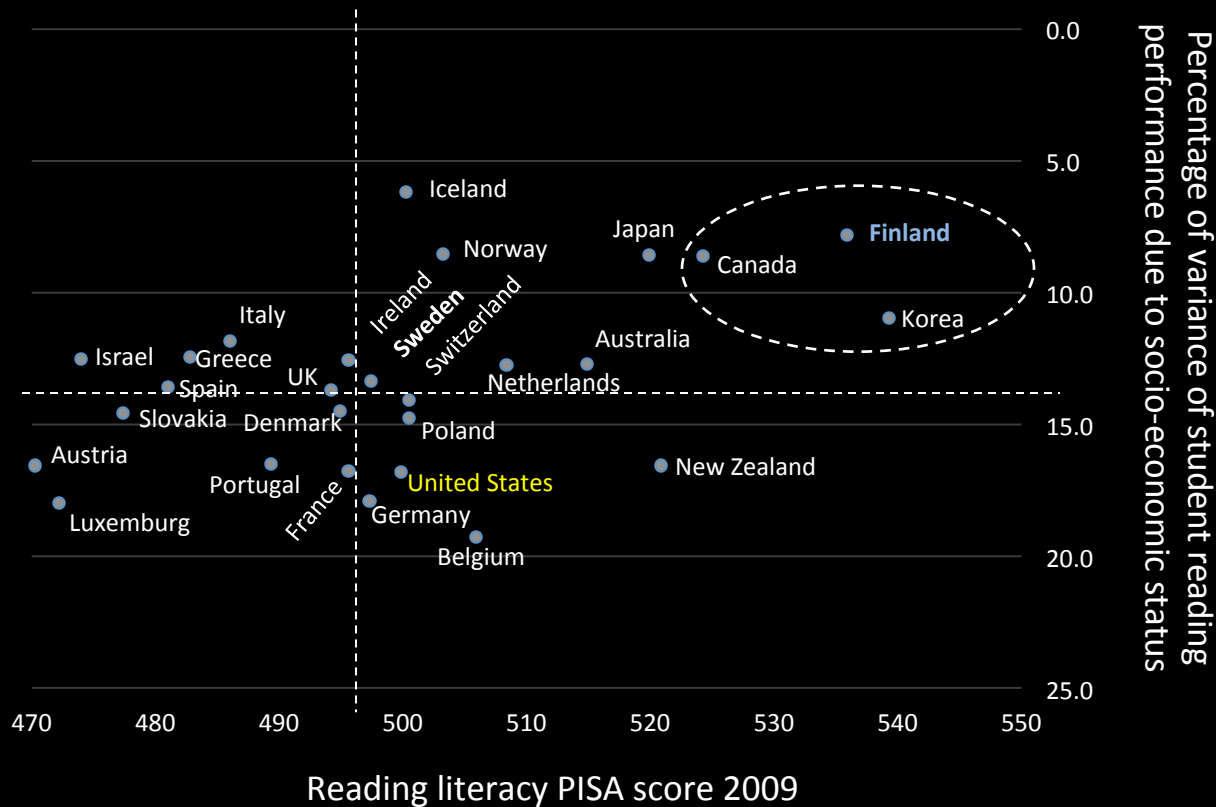


Children must play...

## Variation of students' reading literacy in PISA 2009



# Percentage of variance of student reading performance due to socio-economic status





## 2. Smart time management

Less teaching time





More time for collaboration

Less classroom hours



Less homework



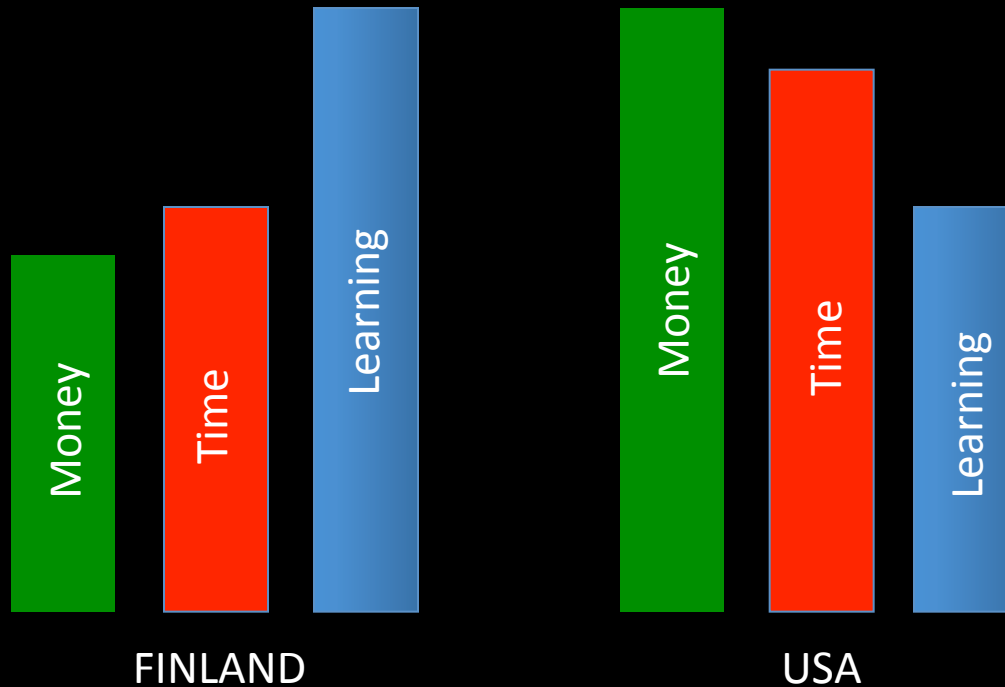


More time to play



Less standardized testing

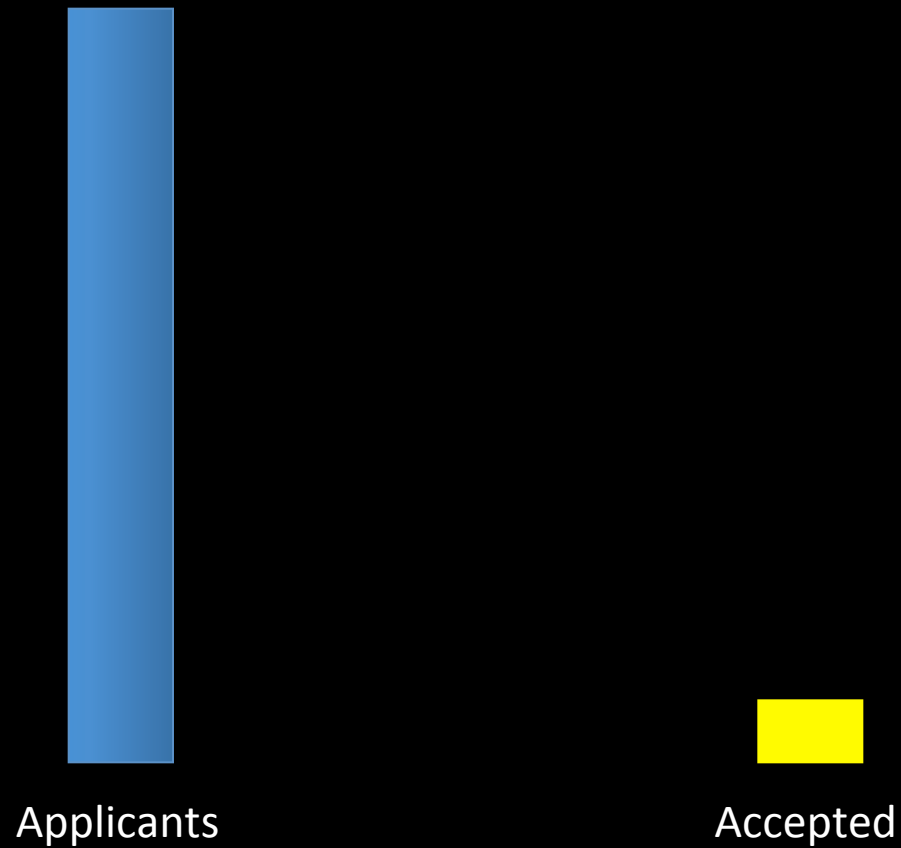
# Cost, Time and Learning



# 3. Professionalism



# Only for the best



Applicants and accepted to primary teacher education in the University of Helsinki in 2011

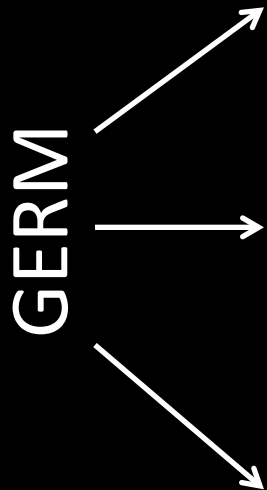


Teaching is a desired way of life

Conclusion:

*“Finnish Lessons reveals ‘wrong’ policies for education reform”*

Testing policy: Standardized testing



Accountability policy: Individual rewarding

Teacher policy: De-professionalization

Thank you!



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